

KNOW

YOUR

TOWN

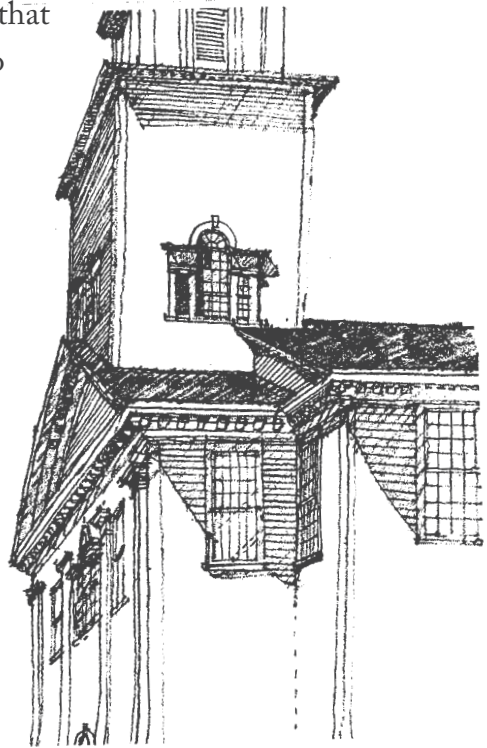
**Canton, Connecticut**



Published by the Canton League of Women Voters

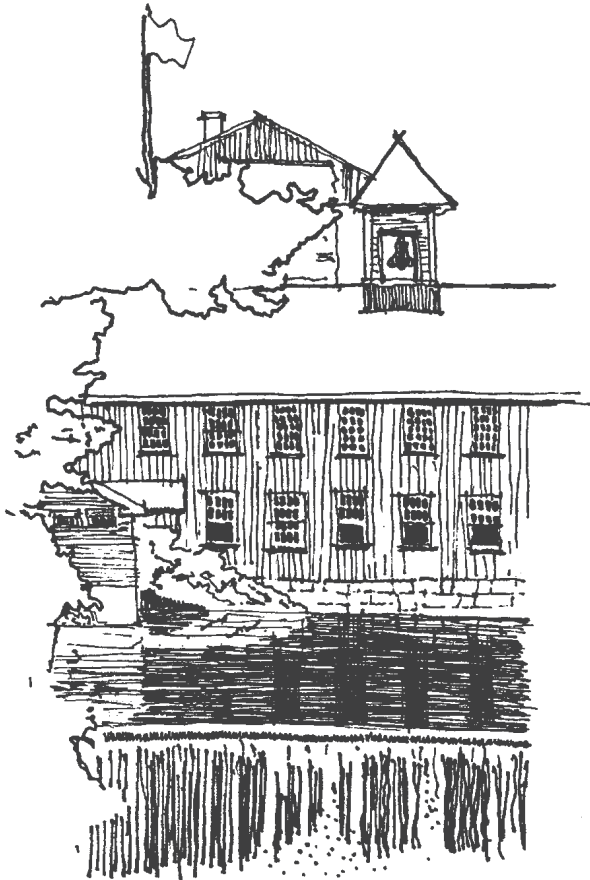
## For Roger Clarke 1936 – 2011

We dedicate this edition of *Know Your Town* to Roger Clarke, a longtime member of the Canton League of Women Voters. Roger was an architect, an excellent artist, and one of several who contributed to the artwork you see in *Know Your Town*. Roger personified many of the attributes that the League works to inculcate in all of us. He was a citizen activist. He attended and spoke up at town meetings, was a member of the Collinsville Historic District Commission, and was active in other town committees. He was a knowledgeable observer of town development. He asked questions and made suggestions. He believed that all of us share a responsibility to make our town a better place.



# KNOW YOUR TOWN

## Canton, Connecticut 2014



*Know Your Town* is written and published by the Canton League of Women Voters as a public service to newcomers and longtime Canton residents who wish to learn more about their town's government, history, resources and opportunities.

In this small town, it is frequently apparent how much difference *one* person can make by voting, volunteering or participating in any way in the community. We hope you find this book informative and that it will inspire you to become more involved in Canton's government or community organizations.

Thank you to Canton League members Marjorie Clarke and Carlene Rhea for their help in writing and editing this edition, and to the artists who contributed their original drawings to this publication (see Drawing Credits inside the back page.)

You are invited to join the Canton League of Women Voters. It is a nonpartisan political organization of men and women that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

—Jane Latus, *President, Canton League of Women Voters*



LEAGUE OF  
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OF CANTON

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**The Town of Canton and Canton Schools Online:**

Visit [townofcantonct.org](http://townofcantonct.org) and [cantonschools.org](http://cantonschools.org) for information on events, meetings, services, staff contact information and volunteer opportunities; to sign up for email notifications; and much more.

# I. HISTORY

Carbon-dated artifacts (some of which are on display at the Canton Historical Museum) tell us that the earliest residents of what is now Canton lived here as long ago as 4,000 – 2,000 B.C. But it was not until the 17th century that the Tunxis, Massacoe and other Farmington Valley Native Americans first faced negotiating co-existence with new settlers from England. Later still, the 18th century brought the first white settlers to what was then called West Simsbury. This settlement was incorporated as the Town of Canton in 1806.

The four sections that comprise the Town of Canton – Canton, Collinsville, Canton Center and North Canton – evolved over time through the influence of geography, available resources, transportation routes and the occupations of the settlers. As these geographic areas became established, they were reflected in the location of four separate post offices: Canton Village (est. 1798), Collinsville (est. 1831), North Canton (est. 1837) and Canton Center (est. 1841). (In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service announced it would close the North Canton post office because the small number of patrons made its operation cost-prohibitive.)

## **Canton/Canton Village**

Richard Case II and his wife Mercy Holcomb Case were the first English settlers, building a log house in 1737 on East Hill Road near Morgan Road. Between 1740 and 1800 other settlers followed, building houses along what are now East Hill Road, Albany Turnpike, Old Canton Road and Dowd Avenue. Some of those original 18th century homes still stand and are in use today. Many pioneers, most of them farmers, were named Dyer, Humphrey, Mills and Case and some of their descendants still live on or near the original homesteads. This area was called Suffrage until the State legislature incorporated the Town of Canton with its current borders in 1806. This area of Canton then was called Canton Street or Canton Village.

Canton Village experienced considerable prosperity during the early 1800s primarily due to passenger and commercial traffic

along the newly constructed Albany Turnpike, the stagecoach route from Hartford to Albany. During that period a church, schools, hotels, offices of lawyers and doctors and the shops of various artisans (shoemakers, tailors, weavers, coopers, harness makers) were established in the area.

Around 1828, Samuel Collins succeeded in rerouting the stagecoach through Collinsville to serve the new Collins Company. This diverted much of the traffic and commerce from Canton Street for many years.

During the first half of the 20th century, the production of soft drinks, industrial chemicals and metal parts developed in the Canton Village area. These businesses increased, then decreased and finally ceased. Today a shopping mall, strip malls, retail establishments, automobile businesses, professional offices, banks and restaurants line a heavily traveled Route 44.

### **Canton Center**

In 1738 widow Sarah “Mercy” Barber settled in the Cherry Brook Valley with her four sons and two daughters. Her sons in turn purchased land, settled and had 33 children. The area was then known as Barbourtown, after which Barbourtown Road was named.



Other families who moved to Canton Center in the 1700s and early 1800s include Bidwell, Bristol, Case, Crowley, Foote, Griswold, Humphrey, Lewis, Mills and Tuller. Many of the homes they built along these roads still exist and some of their descendants still live on or near the original homesteads.

By 1825 many apple orchards with cider mills and brandy distilleries had located in the valley along Cherry Brook. Other small industries of importance in the 19th century included sawmills, gristmills, blacksmiths shops, a flax mill, carding and fulling mill, carriage repair shop, cobbler’s shop, tannery, cooper shop and shin-



## HISTORY

gle mill. Since the 1870s the Canton Center General Store has occupied the same building next to the Canton Center Congregational Church. A short distance south on Cherry Brook Road, the Canton Clayworks, established in 2000, is housed in a building built in 1893 for the Canton Creamery. The Creamery was organized by a group of dairy farmers to facilitate the marketing of their milk and butter to Hartford. Eventually, animal feed and gardening supplies became the primary products of the Creamery.

### North Canton

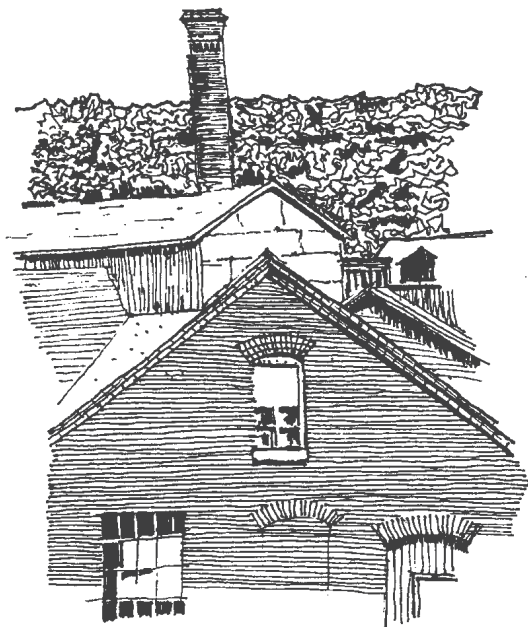
Lt. David Adams and his wife Mindwell Case Adams moved from Simsbury to West Simsbury

around 1743. In the late 1700s and early 1800s settlers named Adams, Barber, Brown, Case, Clarke, Graham, Messenger, Moses and Wilcox built homes in North Canton along what are now Cherry Brook Road, Case Street, West Simsbury Road and the northern sections of Barbourtown and Bunker Hill Roads. These settlers established the town's second cemetery (the first being Dyer Cemetery) and numerous businesses including gristmills, sawmills, cider mills, a button factory, and a carriage manufacturer. The Messenger House at 650 Cherry Brook Road was one of a few inns that served passengers of the stagecoach that ran from Hartford to outlying stations in Barkhamsted and Hartland.

### Collinsville

In 1826 Samuel Collins purchased land along the Farmington River in what was then South Canton and, with his brother David and his cousin William Wells, began building an axe factory. The Collins Company added other edge tools to its line and by mid-19th century grew to be the largest operation of its kind in the world. But Samuel Collins produced more than axes, machetes and





knives. He literally created the village of Collinsville, laying out its streets, donating land and/or money for the construction of a store and the Collinsville Congregational church, and building company offices and housing for several hundred employees.

Most of the large houses on The Green and nearby streets in Collinsville were built for officials of the Collins Company. Samuel Collins' home, long since destroyed

by fire, was on Collins Road overlooking the Farmington River. In 1831–32 the company constructed 45 duplex houses and rented them inexpensively to its workers and their families. With the exception of a few that have been destroyed or moved, these houses are still occupied.

Samuel Collins set out to achieve more than just making a profit; he wanted to create a healthy and enjoyable life for his employees and their families. He wrote, "I would rather not make one cent than to have men go away from here worse than they came."

The Collins Company survived the Depression and World War II but production would never return to its peak. This decline accelerated after the catastrophic flood of 1955, which caused extensive damage to factory buildings and houses – some of which were not rebuilt.

In 1966 the Collins Company closed, putting 175 people out of work. Stanley Works of New Britain bought the machete business and Mann Edge Tool Company in Pennsylvania acquired the axe and edge tool line.

A year later, Canton resident and manufacturer Thomas Perry and other local investors bought the mill buildings and renamed the complex The Collinsville Company. Their plan for the factory was that it would provide incubator space for small and innovative

## HISTORY

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businesses. The buildings soon attracted new tenants including light industry entrepreneurs and artists. Their success spilled over to other businesses in town and drew an increasing number of visitors and home buyers to Collinsville.

Local developer James Tilney purchased the factory complex in 2002 and received zoning permission to renovate it into a mixed-use project called @COLLINSville. This project has not been developed and as of 2013 the factory buildings were deteriorating and had a dwindling number of tenants.

However, also in 2013, a local team of realtors and architects had created a new plan for a mixed-use redevelopment of the Collins Company and was working to secure enough condominium reservations to prove the project's viability to investors.

At a 2011 public meeting regarding the update of Canton's Plan of Conservation and Development, many residents identified the Collins factory's restoration as critical for Canton's economy and the preservation of Collinsville's character.

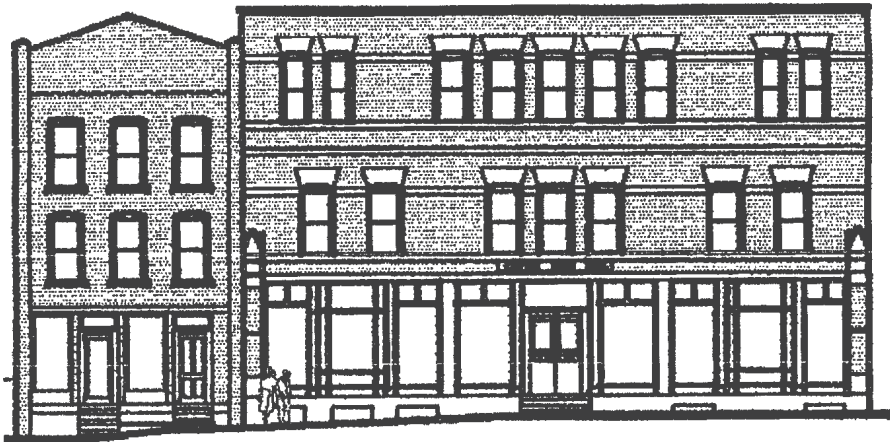
## II. STRUCTURE OF TOWN GOVERNMENT

### Background

From its incorporation as a town by the State legislature in 1806 until 1985, state statutes specified the nature and working of Canton's local government. The legislature's Home Rule Act of 1958 allowed towns greater autonomy in the formation and management of their governments. However, widespread opposition prevented passage of a Town Charter written by Canton's first Charter Commission in 1976. The Town did approve proposals of the second Charter Commission in 1985, which essentially codified the long-standing Selectmen/Board of Finance/Town Meeting form of government while expanding the Board of Selectmen from three to five members and instituting an Annual Town Meeting for discussion purposes only. The First Selectman remained the full-time chief administrative and executive officer of the Town.

The adoption of the 1991-92 Charter Revision Commission's proposals resulted in significant change, most notably that the Board of Selectmen hire a full-time Chief Administrative Officer and maintain the First Selectman as the Chief Executive Officer. Other proposals eliminated the Police Commission, Board of Assessors and Office of the Treasurer; created the Finance Officer/Treasurer position and changed the Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective to appointive positions.

The second Charter Revision Commission in 1999 created the



## STRUCTURE OF TOWN GOVERNMENT

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Library Board of Trustees; made terms on all boards and commissions four years except the Board of Selectmen; increased to over \$100,000 the size of unbudgeted expenditures requiring town meeting approval, and defined procedures for removing an appointee for cause.

A third charter revision, in 2010, increased Selectmen's terms from two to four years; gave the Board of Selectmen power to enact, amend or repeal ordinances – a power previously only given to Town Meetings – and added a Capital Improvement Fund to the Board of Finance section of the annual budget.

### **Town Meeting**

The town meeting's pivotal role in Canton government reflects traditional New England democracy. As the legislative body of the town, it has the power to enact town ordinances and approve budgets, taxes and major expenditures. All registered voters in the town may vote at any town meeting, and owners of \$1,000 of assessed local property may vote on money matters. At the Annual Town Meeting in January, residents discuss, and perhaps take a non-binding vote, on items of general interest. On the second Monday in May the Annual Budget Meeting allows citizens to vote on the budget for the following fiscal year. A petition filed with the Town Clerk prior to this meeting can request a referendum vote. Also, a referendum is required if fewer than 150 eligible voters attend the Annual Budget Meeting. While the Board of Selectmen usually calls special town meetings, citizens may petition the Board of Selectmen to schedule a special town meeting to consider a new item or to reconsider an item previously voted at town meeting. The Town Meeting Moderator or one of three Alternate Moderators conducts all town meetings.

### **III. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

#### **Board of Selectmen**

One of New England's oldest institutions, the term "selectman" was used first in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1635. As early as 1639, Hartford, Connecticut had selectmen, called "townsmen," and in 1650 the first Code of Laws of Connecticut directed that "the Selectmen shall superintend the concerns of the town." From this simple statement derives the unique position of the Board of Selectmen.

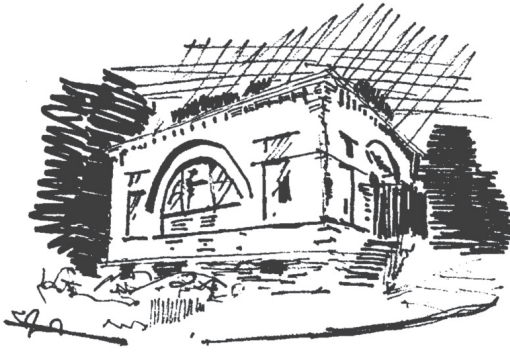
Excluding Board of Education matters and policies relating to land use boards and commissions, the Board of Selectmen originates overall town policies, directs management of town affairs and conducts a constant review of the existing and likely administrative and fiscal needs of the town. Specifically, the Board of Selectmen appoints the Chief Administrative Officer, Finance Officer/Treasurer, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Library Director (with participation of the Library Board of Directors); appoints Town Counsel; sets policy for the Police Department; fills vacancies on all appointive boards and commissions; appoints temporary replacements for some elected officials; and reviews and alters the Chief Administrative Officer's budget proposal before submitting it to the Board of Finance.

Under state statutes and Home Rule, the elected Board of Selectmen once consisted of a full-time, paid First Selectman and two part-time, unpaid Selectmen, each elected for two-year terms. The Charter of 1992 and subsequent charter revisions enlarged and modified the Board to a part-time, paid First Selectman and four part-time, unpaid Selectmen, all serving four-year terms. The Board must meet once each month and provide time for the public to speak to it about any matter.

#### **First Selectman**

Prior to the adoption of the 1992 Charter, the First Selectman served as a full-time chief executive and administrative officer. The 1992 Charter designated the First Selectman to be the Chief Executive Officer and created the full-time position of Chief Administrative Officer. Duties remaining with the First Selectman include supervising the collective interests of the town, conducting





Board of Selectmen meetings, serving as a non-voting ex-officio member of all town boards and commissions, presenting the Board of Selectmen's policies to the Board of Finance and to the citizens of the town, representing the town in state and re-

gional organizations, directing the Chief Administrative Officer to carry out the policies and decisions of the Board of Selectmen, and declaring public emergencies.

### **Chief Administrative Officer**

Canton's 1992 Charter established the position of Chief Administrative Officer, employed by and responsible to the Board of Selectmen. The Chief Administrative Officer coordinates the administration of the officers, boards, commissions, agencies, committees and authorities of the town appointed by the Board of Selectmen; hires town staff that are not appointed by the Board of Selectmen; reports the town's fiscal and general condition to the Board of Selectmen; executes the ordinances and policies voted by the Board of Selectmen or Town Meeting; supervises public works operations and maintenance of all records and accounts; negotiates contracts for services and materials; and prepares the Annual Report and the preliminary annual Selectmen's Budget.

### **Board of Finance**

The Board of Finance, which is composed of six members, is the budget-making authority and is required annually to analyze and report long-range financial planning and debt management. It determines the mill rate and acceptance of grants up to \$100,000. During the fiscal year the Board of Finance may make special appropriations from surplus or from the Contingency Fund to the Board of Selectmen or Board of Education up to \$25,000, with majority vote, or up to \$50,000 with five affirmative votes.

The annual budget contains three sections: Board of Education; Board of Selectmen, and Board of Finance, which includes a Capital

Improvement Fund, Contingency Fund, Reserve Fund for Capital and Non-recurring Expenditures, bonding and borrowing, and estimates of revenue. On or before the second Monday in March, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education present their proposed annual budgets for the fiscal year starting July 1 to the Board of Finance, which reviews them and can make bottom line adjustments.

Two weeks or more prior to the Annual Budget Meeting, the Board of Finance holds a public hearing to present the proposed annual budgets and income estimates for voter scrutiny and comment. Notice of the hearing must be published in the newspaper at least five days before the meeting.

Subsequent to the public hearing, the Board of Finance prepares a Recommended Budget and submits it to the Annual Budget Meeting. Detailed information is published in the newspaper and in a town-wide mailing before this meeting convenes at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday in May. By majority vote any appropriation or item may be decreased or deleted before a secret ballot to adopt. For the purposes of budget adoption, 150 voters constitute a quorum; if fewer than 150 are present the budget must go to a referendum. Following budget approval, the Board establishes the new mill rate.

### **Board of Assessment Appeals**

The Board of Assessment Appeals hears appeals from Canton property owners who feel their properties are valued unfairly. The Board renders a decision that can be appealed to the State Superior Court.

### **Board of Ethics**

The Town adopted a Code of Ethics in 2009 that created standards for ethical conduct of public officials, officers, employees and consultants of the Town. This created the Board of Ethics, which is appointed by the selectmen and made up of citizens who are responsible for administering the code. The Board of Ethics is responsible for: advising public officials, officers, employees and consultants of the town who seek guidance about ethical issues connected with their service to the town; evaluating ethical issues and concerns initiated by a complaint of a citizen of the town, and rendering decisions regarding compliance with the code.



## **IV. LAND USE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Planning and Zoning Commission**

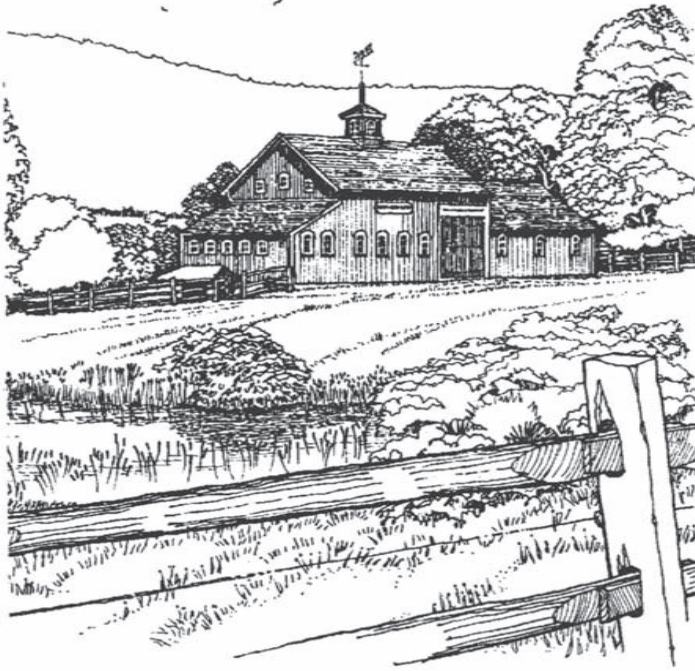
The Board of Selectmen in 2013 enacted an ordinance that eliminated the previously separate Planning and Zoning commissions and replaced them with a combined Planning and Zoning Commission. In approving this change, Selectmen cited a shortage of volunteers that made it difficult to staff two boards, and their goal of streamlining the land use application process.

The Commission establishes property use zones, writes and interprets regulations to control these zones, and reviews and approves changes to the zoning map. These regulations and the large, detailed map are available to the public at the Canton Land Use Office in the Town Hall and on the town website. Following required public hearings, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviews, then approves or rejects, all commercial and industrial projects. The decisions of the Commission are monitored and enforced by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Since September 2004, in accordance with state statute, the Commission also serves as Canton's Aquifer Protection Agency.

The Planning and Zoning Commission also examines, approves or rejects all applications for subdivision of land within the town. It reviews and makes recommendations for municipal improvements such as streets, parks, playgrounds, schools, land acquisition, and sewer and water extensions. It prepares, adopts and amends the Plan of Conservation and Development, which is a statement of policies, goals and actions for the physical and economic development of the town. To insure conformance with the Plan, the Commission reviews changes to zoning regulations and the zoning map.

### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

Zoning Board of Appeals cases originate when people appeal the decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The board also hears requests for variances to the zoning regulations, and may grant these exceptions if the applicant proves a "hardship" exists. A parcel of land that has an extremely unusual condition that would make its development in accordance with regulations exceptionally difficult is an example of a hardship.



Following Zoning Commission approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals endorses or denies plans to sell gasoline or repair or sell motor vehicles. The Department of Motor Vehicles requires Zoning Board of Appeals approval before issuing a license to such a business.

### **Economic Development Agency**

Created by town ordinance in 1974, the Economic Development Agency seeks to expand and diversify Canton's tax base and create new jobs. It cooperates with local and state agencies and with local and regional business groups to attract new commercial and industrial development, to encourage expansion of existing businesses and to improve the business climate in Canton.

### **Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency**

Established by state statute in 1973, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency is charged with conserving wetlands and watercourses and regulating activities in and around them. It is mandated to assure adequate, non-polluted water supplies and to prevent damage to streams and their adjoining wetlands and natural ecosystems.

The Agency maintains an inventory of wetlands and water-courses and designates an Authorized Agent to oversee enforcement. Its regulations and the town's Inland Wetlands map are available at the Canton Land Use Office and on the town website. Changes to property adjacent to wetlands and/or streams may require a permit.

### **Design Review Team**

Voters approved the creation of this board in 2006, and the Zoning Commission adopted design review regulations for it to follow. At the behest of citizens, the Board of Selectmen had appointed a committee to study the advisability of creating this board. The study committee unanimously endorsed the idea, saying a Design Review Team would relieve the Zoning Commission "of the burden of administering the aesthetics of new development so that it can concentrate on broader issues," would save applicants time and money, and would help new development fit the "sense of place" of different areas in Canton. The Design Review Team is a required stop for most zoning applicants.

### **Water Pollution Control Authority**

The Water Pollution Control Authority maintains and operates the sanitary sewer system that serves approximately 1,600 residences and commercial establishments primarily in Collinsville and along Route 44. The plant was built in 1965 and physically upgraded in the 1990s to a discharge capacity of 800,000 gallons of effluent per day. A 2011 permit from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection now authorizes the plant to discharge 950,000 gallons per day. Today the facility removes more pollutants from wastewater than the original plant did, resulting in a clean discharge into the Farmington River. Chlorine gas is no longer used for disinfection because its byproducts are toxic to river life; instead, ultraviolet lighting is used to kill bacteria.

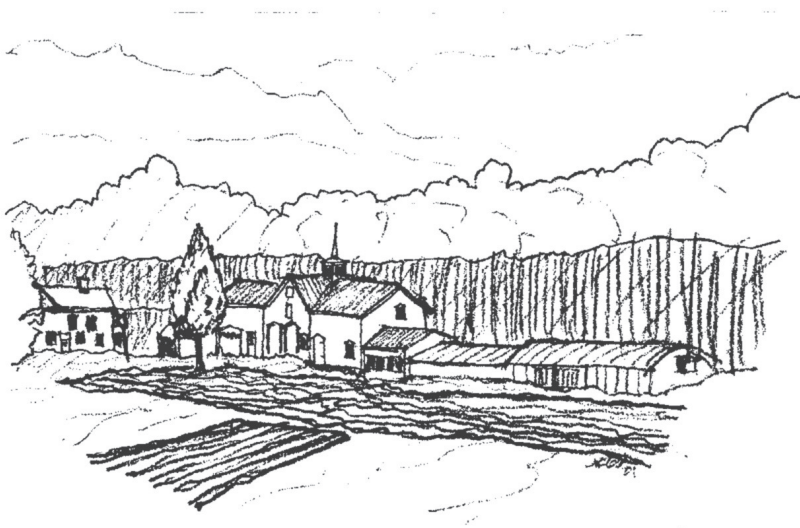


### **Conservation Commission**

In 1966 Canton created the Conservation Commission to advise on development and conservation of its natural resources. The Commission evaluates subdivision applications and makes open space recommendations to the Planning Commission to enhance passive recreation and address environmental concerns. Through the efforts of the Conservation Commission, the town received a Ford Foundation grant in 1972 to establish the Canton Land Conservation Trust, which is incorporated and managed by a private board of directors.

As of 2013, the Conservation Commission also took on the role of open space preservation when the Board of Selectmen voted to consolidate it with the Open Space and Acquisition Commission. Voters had approved in 2003 an ordinance creating the Open Space Commission, charged with identifying open space areas suitable for preservation and recommending and directing their acquisition or the purchase of development rights. The goal is to preserve land that would be a valuable asset to the community either for agricultural use, recreational use, natural resource preservation, or to maintain quality of life.

Selectmen consolidated the Planning and Open Space boards, whose statute-mandated duties overlap, in response to the difficulty of filling both boards with enough volunteer members.



### **Historic District Commissions**

After receiving approval from 75% of effected property owners, the Historic District in Canton Center was formed in 1975. A similar approval process established the second historic district in Collinsville in 1986. Each District has its own Historic District Commission with the power to preserve and protect the buildings within the designated area. The governing Commission must issue a Certificate of Appropriateness before a visible change can be made to a building's exterior or before a new building can be constructed.

### **Transfer Station**

Environmental concerns closed Canton's sanitary landfill in 1985 and replaced it with a transfer station. Residents may purchase annual stickers at the Town Clerk's office. Residents may also pay bulky waste disposal or one-time use fees either at the Town Clerk's office or at the transfer station. Payment at the transfer station must be made with either a personal check or credit card; cash is not accepted. The town accepts household refuse, single stream recycling, propane tanks, scrap metal, white metal, furniture and other bulky waste, waste motor oil, anti-freeze, leaves and brush. No permit sticker or token is required to dispense of electronics, batteries or e-waste. All waste and most recyclables are sent to the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) Mid-Connecticut Project to be burned, buried or recycled. The transfer station also provides a Salvation Army bin for clothes donations and a "swap shack" where residents can leave or pick up reusable goods.

### **Permanent Municipal Building Committee**

Though most major construction projects have an expanded building committee, Permanent Municipal Building Committee members oversee all municipal and school building projects and provide continuity and expertise. The committee issues an annual report to the Board of Selectmen on the status of town buildings.

## V. PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUDICIARY

### **Police Department**

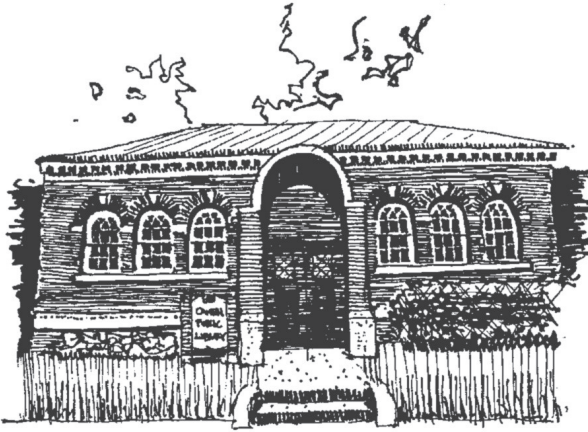
Established in 1970, the Canton Police Department is located on River Road. Prior to the 2001 referendum authorizing construction of this building, headquarters was located in the lower level of the Town Hall. The Department consists of a chief, deputy chief, four sergeants, one detective, eight patrol officers, four full-time and three part-time dispatchers, and one administrative assistant. It participates in regional police task forces such as SWAT, accident reconstruction, DUI enforcement and drug enforcement, and is Canton's emergency communication center, answering 911 calls and dispatching police, fire and ambulance personnel.

### **Fire and Emergency Medical Department**

In 1945 the Canton Volunteer Fire Company and the North Canton Volunteer Fire Association were established. With the Collins Company Fire Department, which became the Collinsville Volunteer Fire Department in 1966, they provided fire protection for Canton for almost 50 years. During this period each department maintained its own station, equipment and administration. Following the recommendations of a professional study conducted in 1994, the Board of Selectmen mandated that the three departments unite. Now a Fire Chief, who is paid a stipend, reports to the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Selectmen and administers the Town of Canton Fire and EMS Department. The Chief is supported by three administrative structures: Fire and Rescue Division, Fire Police Division, and Emergency Medical Services Division.

The three fire stations each conduct annual fundraisers to help support the cost of their work: the Jamboree and Fireworks in June (Collinsville station); Lobster Fest in August (Canton station); and The Little Red Phone Book (North Canton station). The Collinsville Fire Station is owned by the town, while the Canton and North Canton stations are owned by private associations. The town pays for costs associated with maintaining the facilities, purchases equipment and supplies, and pays a stipend for volunteers who respond to calls.





Volunteer firefighters meet weekly for training and respond to fires and accidents when alerted by police dispatchers through individual radio monitors. Their equipment includes four engines, a ladder truck, two tankers, a rescue truck, a Zodiac boat and several utility vehicles.

The Emergency Medical Services Division, called the Town of Canton Memorial Ambulance Service, responds to 911 emergencies that include accidents, fires and illness. With their advanced life support ambulance, EMS-trained volunteers participate in the 24-hour Central Connecticut Medical Service sponsored by the University of Connecticut Health Center. The Service includes Hartford Hospital's Life Star helicopter and the Health Center's paramedic unit that respond when necessary.

The ambulance service was entirely volunteer-staffed from 1950 through 1998, when the growing number of calls necessitated hiring one full-time EMT to work weekdays. When the annual number of calls increased to over 600 in 2003, a second EMT was added to the weekday shift. Volunteers continue to run the service on nights, weekends and holidays.

The Fire Department, in association with the Boy Scout Explorer Post, supervises the Canton Fire Cadet Program for boys and girls 14–17 years old who are interested in medical service or fire fighting. The cadets train once a week and work with fire fighters and ambulance personnel.

### **Juvenile Review Board**

The Juvenile Review Board was created in 1999 within the Police Department to assist youths who are in trouble. The Board considers cases referred to it by the Police Department and offers recommendations for dealing with the juvenile offense. A case is eligible for Juvenile Review Board consideration when a person under 16 years of age is involved, parental authorization is secured, and guilt is acknowledged. In addition, it must be a first-time offense for the specific charge, not classified as a serious juvenile offense, and involve a youth who has not appeared before the Board for six months. All proceedings are confidential.

### **Simsbury Regional Probate Court**

In 2010, as part of State-mandated court consolidation requirements, the Canton Probate Court consolidated with those of Simsbury, Avon and Granby to form the Simsbury Regional Probate Court. A Judge of Probate, elected for a four-year term, holds Court sessions in the Probate Office in the Simsbury Town Hall. The Probate Court oversees the settlement of estates of deceased persons, appoints conservators and guardians, and processes passport applications. The Court has jurisdiction over trust estates of deceased persons, termination of parental rights, adoptions, commitments of mentally ill persons, name changes and waiver of marriage license requirements.



## VI. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### **Commission on Aging**

In 1973 a newly appointed Committee on Aging surveyed the needs of Canton's senior population. The findings led to the establishment of the Commission on Aging, charged with evaluating, coordinating and assisting in implementing programs and services for the elderly. The Commission identified a need for low-cost elderly housing. It promoted the foundation of the Housing Authority and the construction of apartments at 21 Dowd Avenue in 1974-79. Since then, the Commission has been involved in providing many services for Canton's elderly in the areas of transportation, health and socialization. This Commission supports and assists the full-time Director of Senior and Social Services in facilitating programming for older and aging adults at the Community Center. The department offers transportation services such as Dial-A-Ride and medical transportation; nutritional services such as meals at the Community Center and Meals on Wheels; wellness and fitness programs; educational and informational presentations and special events. The department also administers social services, providing intake, assessment and social work services to all Canton residents. The Director of Senior and Social Services, with the support of the Commission on Aging, also serves as the Connecticut Department of Aging's Municipal Agent for the Elderly in town.





### **McLean Community and Home Care Services**

The McLean Community and Home Care Services is a not-for-profit agency that provides home health care to individuals and their families in 12 area towns including Canton. McLean offers visiting nurses, home health aides, medical social workers, and occupational and speech therapists. Registered nurses provide 24-hour service, seven days a week. McLean also provides Meals on Wheels through the town Department of Senior and Social Services. This department provides Canton residents with information on McLean and other area homecare and health organizations so that they may make educated decisions on their personal health care.

### **Housing Authority**

The Housing Authority helps people who meet income and other eligibility guidelines to secure affordable, safe and quality housing in Canton. After the Authority was established in 1974, it applied for and received a state grant to build 40 elderly housing units at 21 Dowd Avenue that are owned and managed by the Authority. In addition, the Housing Authority approves applications for purchase of homes in two affordable housing complexes in Canton and administers Section 8 vouchers for families seeking assistance with rent payments. The Housing Authority also oversees the contracted companies and agencies that run the affordable living properties in town. The Authority meets monthly at 21 Dowd Avenue in the Community Room.

### **North Central Regional Mental Health Board**

Canton is represented on a group that advises the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services on the determination and evaluation of programs and services for residents of the area.

The First Selectman appoints Canton's representative to Catchment Area Council (CAC) 18 (which covers the towns of Canton, Avon, Simsbury, Farmington, and West Hartford). The Catchment Area Council elects members to the North Central Regional Mental Health Board, a body that represents the 37 towns of the North Central Region. The North Central Regional Mental Health Board and its six Catchment Area Councils distribute information about services in the region, listen to all constituencies including consumers, family members and providers, evaluate the programs funded by the state, and advocate for more and better services.

### **Youth Services Bureau**

As an advocacy group for teenagers in Canton, the Youth Services Bureau assesses programs and identifies needs. It then initiates programs, frequently in cooperation with the school system, Parks and Recreation Commission, the Senior and Social Services Department, and community groups. The Bureau created and operates The Cave, a popular hangout for high school and middle school students, in space donated by the Collinsville Congregational Church where teens play music, ping pong, foosball and pool. In 2012, the Canton Substance Abuse Council/Community of Concern was placed under the Bureau's oversight.

### **Housing Rehabilitation Program**

The Board of Selectmen created the Housing Rehabilitation Program in 1991 after receiving a \$1 million state grant. This Community Development Block Grant is also known as the Small Cities Program because the state Department of Economic and Community Development provides it only to municipalities with populations under 50,000. The town uses this funding to provide loans to low- and medium-income families for home improvements at terms and interest rates appropriate to individual situations. Qualification guidelines and applications are available online and in person from the town Land Use office.

## VII. EDUCATION

### **Board of Education**

The Board of Education, acting as an agent for the State of Connecticut, is responsible for making public education policy for Canton. Board policies are subject to Connecticut law, regulations of the State Commissioner of Education and courts' decisions. The Superintendent of Schools bears responsibility for executive decisions as delegated by the Board of Education.

The Board operates under the guidance of a Strategic Plan, which is updated every five years by stakeholders in the community. The Plan is centered upon core values that define the educational environment and resources that all children deserve.

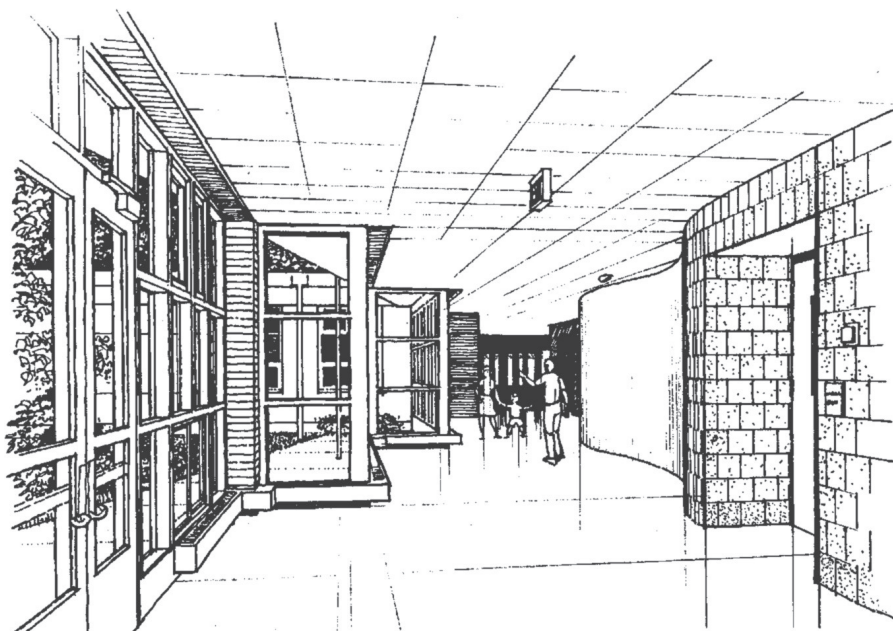
### **Canton Schools**

Approximately 1,700 students are divided among four schools. Cherry Brook Primary School houses preschool through grade 3 and Canton Intermediate School includes grades 4 through 6. The Canton Middle School is located in the same building as Canton High School. It includes grades 7 and 8 and Canton High School includes grades 9 through 12. Canton High School and Middle School underwent an extensive renovation in 2005. In 2013 a state-of-the-art track was added to the campus.

Canton schools are a source of pride in the community. Canton is one of the state's smallest towns, but its students benefit from a community that is strongly committed to supporting education. Canton's test scores are consistently high compared to other Farmington Valley towns, and to similarly-sized school systems in the state. Canton High School has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Newsweek* as one of America's best high schools.

The arts are extremely important to the Canton education experience. The NAMM Foundation, a non-profit organization sponsored by the National Association of Music Merchants, has named Canton one of the nation's "Best Communities for Music". Canton High School has thrice been named a Grammy Signature School Finalist in recognition of the outstanding music program.

Community support and parent participation account for innumerable opportunities for Canton school children. Travel abroad is



possible through academic classes at the High School. Recent trips have been to Spain, France and Mexico. The High School has a sister relationship with The Affiliated Middle School of Jining Institute in China. Faculty and students have traveled multiple times to China and they have hosted Chinese visitors here. Parent support is also strong in the area of athletics. Because of this support, Canton students have a wide array of sports to choose from.

Education begins early in Canton—the Canton Parents as Teachers (CPAT) program begins educating and supporting families during pregnancy and continues until their child enters kindergarten. CPAT is nearing its 30-year anniversary. In grades K through 12, the Open Choice program welcomes children from Hartford to attend school in Canton.



## VIII. CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

### **Canton Public Library**

Founded in 1913, the Canton Public Library has served the town from its present 16,000 square foot facility since 1999. It is part of the Canton Community Center located at 40 Dyer Avenue.

The library collection numbers over 86,000 items and includes books, magazines, newspapers, books on compact disc, DVDs, Blu-rays, musical CDs, downloadable audio- and ebooks, circulating ebook readers, Wii games, and a fine local history collection. The library belongs to Library Connection, Inc. (LCI), a network of over 30 public and academic libraries in the Greater Hartford area that cooperate to provide stronger patron services.

Assistance in finding resources and information is available in person, by telephone, and via email. Materials not available locally can be obtained from other libraries through the interlibrary loan system. Fourteen public computers offer access to the Internet, word processing and other standard software, and a collection of online information databases. The entire building is Wi-Fi accessible. A



self-service copier and several color and black-and-white printers can be used by the public for nominal fees.

Homebound residents may enroll in a delivery service through which items are brought to those who cannot visit the library. Two rooms for quiet study may be used by speaking with the information desk staff.

The library sponsors programs for all ages: story times, craft events, and live performers for children; special activities and a book club for teenagers; lectures, musical concerts, and book groups for adults; and passes to 20 museums and cultural sites. All programs are listed in the local media and on the library's website.

The Friends of the Canton Public Library, an active support group, sponsors events and fundraisers that purchase library enhancements. New members are always welcome.

The Library Board of Trustees, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, monitors the operations of the library and works with the Library Director to develop policy and the annual budget.

Library hours are Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Except during July and August, when Saturday hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.).

### **Canton Historical Museum**

The Canton Historical Society created the Canton Historical Museum in 1969. Using the 19th century building that was once used by the Collins Company for assembling, painting and crating plows, many volunteers repaired the structure and restored and organized artifacts.

Most exhibits related to the Victoria era, 1837–1901, particularly as it developed in the Collinsville area. These include a general store, barbershop, blacksmith shop, postcards, photographs and Collins Company tools and equipment. A bridal salon exhibit features a number of bridal gowns from Canton brides from the 19th century. A diorama of turn-of-the-century Collinsville and Canton features models of historic buildings, the railroad tracks that traversed the town and a working model train.

The museum in 2013 began a series of improvements to make the building more handicapped accessible. An accessible entrance has been completed and future plans include accessible bathrooms, an elevator and more.

### **Gallery on the Green**

The building that houses the Gallery on the Green was a school for Canton children from 1872–1949 and then headquarters for the Canton Volunteer Fire Company until 1960. Then the Canton Artists' Guild, formed in 1960 as a non-profit cultural organization, moved into the facility. The Gallery features a wide variety of exhibits in its three galleries, as well as an outdoor sculpture garden. Guild membership is open to juried artists, non-artists, seniors and juniors (those under 18).

### **Canton Land Conservation Trust**

Since 1972, the Canton Land Conservation Trust has acquired 2,000 acres. Land Trust volunteers maintain 17 trails for the public to enjoy. In addition to preserving the priceless natural beauty of much of Canton's land, the Land Trust's properties also provide the large, unfragmented tracts that many kinds of wildlife require to survive. The largest such tract, the 130-acre Sun, Wind and Woodland parcel along Breezy Hill Road, abuts the Breezy Hill Farm's 28 acres, the Capen parcel's 33 acres and 100 acres donated by Thomas Perry. Additionally, the 107-acre Mary Conklin Sanctuary is almost contiguous. Songbirds and large animals depend upon these uninterrupted tracts.

The Land Trust receives support from members, through private donations of land, grants and fundraisers including an annual Christmas tree sale.

### **Roaring Brook Nature Center**

Roaring Brook Nature Center had its beginnings in the Gracey Road backyard of Canton resident Una Storrs Riddle in 1948. Affiliated with The Children's Museum (West Hartford) since 1973, the Nature Center features natural history exhibits, seasonal displays, a replica of a Native American longhouse, a small collection of animals including reptiles, amphibians and raptors, and a native plants butterfly garden. Open throughout the year, the Nature Center offers guided walks, lectures, demonstrations, youth vacation camps, a gift shop, and a folk concert series featuring regional and national performers.

Visitors can hike on more than five miles of trails in the adjoining Werner Woods, now owned by the Connecticut Department of





Energy and Environmental Protection. Werner Woods, encompassing forests, fields, wooded swamps, streams and ponds, was left to the State by Canton residents Flora and Maurice Werner, who wanted the land to remain a refuge for wildlife and to be utilized by area residents for passive educational and recreational pursuits. The state purchased an additional 65-acre abutting parcel in 2002. More than 150 bird species have been spotted on this bird-watchers' destination.

### **Parks and Recreation and the Farmington River**

The Parks and Recreation Commission manages community-owned recreational facilities and provides an extensive range of year-round recreational, fitness, cultural and social programs for children and adults in Canton.

Many of the facilities are located in the Mills Pond Recreation area: Olympic-size and wading pools; bathhouse; tennis and basketball courts; soccer, baseball and softball fields; ice skating; fishing; a playscape; picnic tables and a skateboard park.

Residents may take advantage of the Community Garden located next to the Library and Community Center on Dyer Avenue.

Other local recreational opportunities abound. Residents can



fish, kayak, canoe, tube and paddle board on the Farmington River. They can bike and walk on the Farmington River Trail. They can play sports and exercise at privately-owned facilities in Canton.

### **Antiquing, the Arts, Farmers Market and Community Events**

Canton is a destination for antiquing, with numerous shops throughout town and multiple dealers in Collinsville's former ax factory. The town is also a haven for artists. The artist community

organizes events including the popular annual Collinsville Halloween Parade that attracts costumed people of all ages.

The Maxwell Shepherd Memorial Arts Fund brings world-renowned classical musicians to a public concert series in the Collinsville Congregational Church and holds an annual Maxwell Shepherd Memorial Invitational Exhibition at the Gallery on the Green. Mr. Shepherd was a pianist, Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Connecticut at Hartford, designer, lifelong supporter of the arts and Collinsville resident.

During the summer, town-organized weekly band concerts at Mills Pond Recreation Center are free and open to the public.

The Collinsville Farmers Market is open rain or shine every Sunday from June into October, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Town Hall parking lot. The Farmers Market was founded by Canton Advocates for Responsible Expansion (C.A.R.E.) and is entirely run by volunteers.

The third Saturday in September is Sam Collins Day, an event that gives exposure to Canton businesses, non-profits and community organizations, political groups and candidates and local. Games, rides, music and food add to the festivities.

## IX. POLITICS, VOTING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

### Voting Information

A Canton resident who is an American citizen, 18 years old or older and not a convicted felon may register to vote in Canton. Seventeen-year-olds who will turn 18 before a general election may also register to vote.

One may register in person at the Town Clerk's office during regular business hours, by mail or (as of Jan. 1, 2014) online. Additionally, the Motor Vehicle Law provides the option to register when obtaining a driver's license or registering a motor vehicle.

Voters may register up to and on the same day as an election.

A registered voter who is unable to vote in person on Election Day may apply for an absentee ballot from the Town Clerk either in person or by mail. Election officials must receive the ballot before the polls close on Election Day.



For current voting and election information, see the website [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) or check with the Town Clerk at [townofcantonct.org/Vote](http://townofcantonct.org/Vote), by phone, or in person.

State and national elections are held during even numbered years, and local elections during odd numbered years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The polling station, located at the Town Hall, is open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### Political Parties

At the time of registration or any time thereafter, a voter may choose to join a political party or to remain unaffiliated. Only voters registered with a party can participate in that party's caucus or

primary. Local Democratic and Republican Town Committees endorse candidates, arrange caucuses, organize campaigns, maintain contact with party members, get out the vote on Election Day and appoint delegates to regional and state nominating conventions.

### Minority Representation on Town Boards

State law mandates the maximum number of members on elected and appointed boards and commissions who can belong to the same political party.

The Board of Selectmen consists of a First Selectman and four Selectmen. However, the First Selectman is not included when determining minority representation.

Total Membership	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	More than 9
Maximum Number	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	2/3 of total number

### Citizen Participation

To seek membership on an appointive board, see the town website at [townofcantonct.org/Volunteer](http://townofcantonct.org/Volunteer) or contact the First Selectman's office for an application. The Board of Selectmen interviews and appoints volunteers to serve on these boards.

To become a candidate for an elective board, contact the Chairman of the appropriate local political party. The Town Clerk's office can provide this information.

## Elective and Appointive Opportunities to Serve

<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Years of Term</b>
Board of Ethics .....	5	2
	2 alt. ....	2
Building Code Board of Appeals .....	3	4
Canton Center Historic District Commission .....	5	4
	3 alt. ....	4
Collinsville Historic District Commission .....	5	4
	3 alt. ....	4
Commission on Aging .....	7	4
	3 alt. ....	4
Conservation Commission .....	7	4
Design Review Team .....	5	4
Economic Development Agency .....	7	4
Housing Authority .....	5	4
Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency .....	5	4
	3 alt. ....	4
Juvenile Review Board .....	6	4
	1 alt. ....	4
Parks and Recreation Commission .....	7	4
Pension Committee .....	5	4
Permanent Municipal Building Committee.....	4	4
Planning and Zoning Commission .....	7	4
	3 alt. ....	4
Public Library Board of Trustees .....	9	4
Town Meeting Moderator .....	1	2
	3 alt. ....	2
Water Pollution Control Authority .....	5	4
Youth Services Bureau .....	7	4
Zoning Board of Appeals .....	5	4
	3 alt. ....	4

### **Elected**

First Selectman .....	1	4
Board of Selectmen .....	4	4
Board of Education .....	9	4
Board of Finance .....	6	4
Board of Assessment Appeals .....	3	4

## DRAWING CREDITS

<i>Cover</i>	<b>Kent McCoy</b> , Town Hall
<i>Inside Front Cover</i>	<b>Roger Clarke</b> , Canton Center Church detail
<i>Title Page</i>	<b>Myles Brown</b> , Mill with pond and dam
<i>Page 3</i>	<b>Roger Clarke</b> , Library/school, Canton Center
<i>Page 6</i>	<b>Bill Clegg</b> , Gallery on Green and Gazebo
<i>Page 7</i>	<b>Eloise Marinós</b> , Canton Center Creamery
<i>Page 8</i>	<b>Myles Brown</b> , Mill Buildings
<i>Page 10</i>	<b>Peter Clarke</b> , Town Hall and shop
<i>Page 13</i>	<b>Myles Brown</b> , Collinsville Savings Society
<i>Page 16</i>	<b>Richard Swibold</b> , Cherry Brook Farm, North Canton
<i>Page 17</i>	<b>Don Tarinelli</b> , Farmington River bridge
<i>Page 18</i>	<b>Bill Clegg</b> , Bristol Farm
<i>Page 21</i>	<b>Myles Brown</b> , Former Collinsville library
<i>Page 23</i>	<b>Bill Clegg</b> , 105–107 Main St., Collinsville
<i>Page 24</i>	<b>Don Tarinelli</b> , Canton Intermediate School
<i>Page 27</i>	<b>Richard Swibold</b> , Cherry Brook Primary School interior
<i>Page 28</i>	<b>Roger Clarke</b> , Canton Historical Museum
<i>Page 31</i>	<b>Kent McCoy</b> , Gallery on the Green
<i>Page 32</i>	<b>Bill Clegg</b> , Bike and foot bridge, Collinsville
<i>Page 33</i>	<b>Don Tarinelli</b> , Collinsville Congregational Church
<i>Inside back cover</i>	<b>Kent McCoy</b> , Canton Center General Store
<i>Inside back cover</i>	<b>Peter Clarke</b> , House, Collinsville Green
<i>Back cover</i>	<b>Roger Clarke</b> , Canton Center Congregational Church





