



OUR TOWN

A Digital Newsletter from the Town of Dover, MA

Welcome to the December Edition of OUR TOWN!

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- Board of Selectmen
- Town Clerk
- Parks & Recreation
- Dover Library
- Chickering School
- Fire Department
- Council on Aging

Boards and Committees

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- Open Space Committee
- Town Report Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Board of Appeals
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If you are part of a town committee or department and would like to submit content for the January issue, please contact

newsletter@doverma.gov

What's Inside



THIS EDITION

VOL. 4 NO. 12

Welcome to the December edition of OUR TOWN! As we wrap up the year, this month's issue brings you a full roundup of community news, events, and seasonal highlights.

You'll find updates on festive winter programs from Parks & Recreation, the Town Library, the Council on Aging, and the Conservation Commission. We're also sharing important reminders from the Town Clerk, Chickering School, the Fire Department, the Planning Board, the Tree Committee, and the Recycling Committee to help keep everyone informed, safe, and prepared for the months ahead.

This issue also includes recent decisions from the Board of Appeals, new public health efforts from the Board of Health, and upcoming activities from the Open Space Committee, which continues to highlight Dover's remarkable protected landscapes. And finally, the Town Report Committee invites residents to submit photos for the 2025 Annual Report—your images could become part of Dover's historical record.

Board of Selectmen

Town of Dover Introduces Online Permitting!

The Town of Dover launched a new online permitting system on Monday, November 17th, providing residents and contractors with a simpler and more accessible way to apply for and track permits across multiple departments.

For the first time, Dover will transition its permitting process from paper to a unified digital platform through [OpenGov Permitting & Licensing](#).

The new system will enable users to submit applications online, upload required documents, track their status in real-time and receive updates as permits progress through review and inspection. All permit records will be stored electronically, improving long-term recordkeeping and providing staff with faster access to parcel histories and past activity.

The project is supported in part by a \$148,000 state grant that helped fund software acquisition, implementation and training.

The shift to online permitting is an important step that will streamline internal operations, reduce manual paperwork and improve communication among departments involved in land use and community development.

[Visit Dover's Online Permitting Portal](#)

Town Clerk

It's That Time of Year!

The Town Clerk's Office will be sending out the Annual Street Listing/Census, as required by the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on **December 29**. Please take a few minutes and review the information, sign it, and send it back quickly!

We will also mail out the Annual Dog License Packet. The applications, along with appropriate fees and paperwork, are due by **March 1**. Don't wait to get your 2026 license!



Register For All Programs HERE!

Parks and Recreation

Adult Winter Programs

Adult programs are now open for winter registration. Warm up the season with hands-on cooking classes, creative art workshops, and energizing fitness programs designed to keep you active and engaged through the colder months. Space is limited, so make sure to register today.

Welcome Winter Event

Join us on Thursday, December 11th, at 5:30 pm for our Welcome Winter celebration. We will kick off the season with our annual tree lighting and a visit from the Lolly Jolly Waffles food truck. Bring the family and help us welcome winter in the best way together.

Dover Library

New Children's Librarian: Reilly Scott

Please join the Library in warmly welcoming Reilly to her new role as the Head of Children's Services. If she looks familiar, it's because she's been a wonderful Library Assistant for the past year! Reilly shares creativity, musicality, and a great game of chess as she leads the Children's Room. Stop by to say hello!



Upcoming Library Events

The Library hosts a wealth of activities for all ages each month. Visit our calendar to see what's coming up! December highlights include gingerbread houses, sea glass pictures, the Thursday Shakespeare Club, a new youth chess club, a tween and teen karaoke party, and so much more. All events are free, but some require advance registration.

Visit the Dover Library Events Calendar

Chickering School

Chickering School is establishing a Kindergarten pre-registration list of students who are eligible to enroll in Kindergarten for the 2026-2027 school year. The criteria are that children must be five years old by September 1, 2026, and be residents of Dover.

We also invite parents and guardians of incoming Kindergarteners to our upcoming Information Meeting, **Thursday, February 12th** (snow date February 26th) **from 3-4 PM**. This event is for parents and guardians only.

We look forward to sharing information about Chickering Kindergarten and having time to visit classrooms. Our PTO representatives, nurses, teachers, and administration will be available to answer questions. Please respond by **December 5th** via email to Sheila Briggs at briggss@doversherborn.org

Fire Department

Home Escape Planning

The increasing severity of home fires due to modern building contents and open space configurations makes it crucial that people are prepared to leave their homes immediately in the event of fire. Fires in condominium and apartment buildings are especially dangerous. Residents should know where all the exit stairs are and how to escape in an emergency.

Safety Tips

- Fire is fast! A residential fire becomes deadly in three minutes or less.
- Fire is dark! House fires create heavy, choking smoke that can make it impossible to see or breathe.
- Working smoke alarms and a practiced home escape plan are important tools for surviving a fire at home.
- Check the door for heat with the back of your hand. If the door feels cool, open it slowly. If you don't see fire, crawl to escape. Signal others by calling or banging on walls.
- Do not open a hot door. Put a towel or blanket at the base of the door to keep smoke out. Crawl to a window and open it. Turn on a light.
- If you can, close doors behind you. This will limit the spread of dangerous smoke and fire.
- Pick a family meeting place outside where everyone can gather after they escape. Choose a permanent landmark a safe distance from the front of your house.
- If you can safely reach the ground, exit through the window. Otherwise, shout for help. Don't jump. A firefighter's first priority is to rescue people.
- When you get out, stay out! Never re-enter a burning building. Call 9-1-1 when you're safe outside.

See the flyer below from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services and the National Fire Protection Association for more information.

Learn More from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services

Council on Aging

The Dover Council on Aging invites you to their upcoming programs! You can check out the November/December Newsletter with our full slate of programs. Some December highlights are listed below. Sign up for programs by emailing coa@doverma.gov or by using our Online COA Program Sign-Up Form.

SAND FOR SENIORS

Dover COA, in partnership with the Men's Breakfast Group at The Dover Church, will once again prepare and deliver buckets of sand/salt to Dover seniors. If you would like a bucket of sand/salt (complete with lid and scoop) for your steps or walkway, email coa@doverma.gov or call the COA at 508-315-5734. Buckets will be delivered on December 13. Funded by Friends of Dover COA.

READING OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Monday, December 8, 1:00-2:30 PM *Community Room*

Experience the magic of the season with Charles Dickens' novella. Join Johnny Kinsman in a dramatic reading (with illustrative slides) derived from the script Dickens himself followed during the story's 1867 United States debut, which just happened to be in the good old city of Boston!

PAGE TURNERS BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, December 9, 2:00-3:00 PM *Dover Town Library, 56 Dedham Street*

This is Happiness by Niall Williams

Page Turners is led by Dover Librarian Liz Fogarty. Copies of books are available at the Library. For more info, contact Liz at 508-785-8113 or efogarty@minlib.net

TALK WITH THE TOWN: DPW DIRECTOR

Wednesday, December 10, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM *Activity Room*

Join us to hear updates from Department of Public Works Director Kevin McCabe on current projects, winter preparedness, road maintenance, and more. It's a great chance to learn how the DPW keeps Dover running smoothly year-round and to ask questions.

BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Thursday, December 11, 12:00 PM-1:00 PM *Conference Room*

With Gael Varsa, RN, BSN, Dover Board of Health

Check your blood pressure and get tips from Public Health Nurse Gael Varsa at the monthly clinics. Quick, easy, and important for your health!

SETTING UP & MANAGING EMAIL ON IPHONE & IPAD

Wednesday, December 17, 11:00 AM -12:00 PM *Activity Room*

Join the experts from Kev Tech Services to learn about the basics of email and the Apple Mail app. Explore the Mail app to learn about sending/reading emails, checking your inbox, and clearing junk and archive folders.

HOLIDAY COOKIES AND CONCERT

Thursday, December 18, 2:00-3:00 PM *Community Room*

With The Golden Tones Chorus

Celebrate the season at our annual event! Enjoy an assortment of cookies baked by volunteers, while being serenaded by The Golden Tones Chorus. Now in their 37th season, this lively group of retired but young-at-heart performers delights audiences with singing, dancing and humor. Enjoy popular classics, folk songs, and festive holiday favorites. Sweet treats and joyful music—what could be better?

COA OUTREACH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, December 22, 9:00 AM-11:00 AM *COA Office*

with Nan Vaida

COA Outreach Coordinator Nan Vaida holds monthly office hours. Whether you have questions about in-home services, or resources available, Nan is here to help. Please call the COA at 508-315-5734 to schedule an appointment.

Online COA Program Sign-Up Form

COA November/December Newsletter

Planning Board

DID YOU KNOW DOVER HAS A SIGNS BYLAW?

Before posting a sign in Dover, be sure you are in compliance with the Town's signs bylaw! This bylaw limits the size, lighting, and placement of signs to keep our town safe and beautiful. Learn the rules before you post!

Permanent Signs:

- Up to 2 per commercial property (unless more are approved).
- 1 per residential or noncommercial property.
- Must fit the building's style, be proportional, and use complementary colors.
- No lighting allowed in residential areas.

Temporary Signs:

- Commercial: 1 temporary sign allowed for a new business or event (max 30 days or event duration).
- Residential (contractor/landscaper): Permit required if displayed more than 30 days; up to 4 signs at a time.
- Noncommercial: Personal or community messages allowed if they don't block visibility.

Subdivision Signs:

- Treated as commercial signs and follow the same rules and permit requirements.

Questions? Contact the Planning Board office at planning@doverma.gov or 508-785-0032 x238. Learn the rules before you post!



Board of Health

Hands-Only CPR Clinic a Success!

The Board of Health and Parks and Recreation partnered with Dover resident Lauren Quint to provide residents with training on Hands-Only CPR and the use of an AED on November 16. Joining the training were Public Health Nurses Emily Dellaglio (Medfield) and Jennifer Gangadharan (Needham). We look forward to offering more training opportunities for the Dover community.

Tree Committee

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE NEW DOVER TREE PROVISIONS?

The Town's NEW Stormwater Management Bylaw has updated project and tree considerations that may apply to your project.

The bylaw applies if any one or combination of the following project conditions is met:

- Any change of existing grade of more than 5,500 sq. ft. or 25% of the lot, whichever is smaller, OR
- Clearing of existing vegetation of more than 5,500 sq. ft. or 25% of the lot, whichever is smaller, OR
- Storage of more than 100 cubic yards of excavate or fill, OR
- Any activities within Wetland Resource Areas and their Protected Buffer Zones require separate permits from the Dover Conservation Commission before any activities may be performed.

Should your project fall under the Stormwater Management Bylaw, please keep in mind that no tree removal/site work is allowed until after a Chapter 159 Stormwater Permit is obtained. Detailed survey plans of work areas are required for review and approval. Contact the Dover Town Engineer at engineer@doverma.gov to discuss proposed site work and tree removal.

Keep in mind that this new bylaw requires that all Protected Trees 6' diameter or greater, and their root systems in the perimeter setbacks, must be preserved and protected with a marked and maintained Tree Protection Zone during construction activities.

Required Mitigation may include the replacement of protected trees and/or contributions to Dover's Tree Protection Revolving Fund.

Open Space Committee

2nd Saturday Stroll & Cider in Hale

December 13th, 10:30 AM

Please join us for a guided walk with a break to warm up with cider & donuts and celebrate the conservation efforts at Hale, sponsored by the Dover Open Space Committee (OSC).



On December 13th, we will walk through Hale and sample a few of the over 20 miles of interconnected trails that are part of the Town of Dover's Larrabee Estate, the Trustees' Noanet Woodlands, and Powisset Farm. This forms a contiguous landscape of over 2300 acres of protected open space and over 3500 acres accessible through a network of recreational trails!

You will be rewarded at the end of this relatively shorter walk with hot cider & donuts at the Powissett Lodge. Come hear about all Hale's great programs, and enjoy their newly protected land: the largest land protection project in Greater Boston in 100 years!

Walks will not be too strenuous but will be over uneven and possibly wet ground, so wear appropriate footwear and bring walking sticks, gloves, binoculars, and cameras. Polite dogs on leash are welcome. We will stroll in misty rain to shine.

Parking & meet-up information will be emailed to registered participants on Friday morning before the walk and again at 7:30 am on Saturday, the day of the walk.

[Register Here!](#)

Town Report Committee

DTRC Seeks Your Photos

Let your photography become part of Dover's historical record! The Dover Town Report Committee is seeking photos for publication consideration in the 2025 Dover Town Report. Themes include nature (flowers, wooded trails, farms, water scenes, etc.), wildlife, farm animals, architecture, landscapes, and 2025 Dover events and activities (Dover Days, library programs, school sports, theater, music, and club activities, Parks & Rec programs, concerts, races, Memorial Day program, Powisset Farm classes, etc.).

No fancy camera required! Good-quality cellphone shots (and drone shots) are welcome. If your photo is selected, you'll receive a credit line (and retain copyright). Multiple submissions are OK! Whether pumpkins on a stone wall, skaters on Channing Pond, or even a busy crowd at the Transfer Station, everyday sights make the report special.

Email questions to DoverTownPics@gmail.com. Please consider participating. We count on you every year!

[Find Ideas & Submit Photos!](#)

Conservation Commission

Come Celebrate Nature & the Winter Solstice

Thursday, December 18, 2025

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

The Conservation Commission encourages residents to come celebrate nature and the Winter Solstice on the first day of winter with this **FREE family-friendly event at Hale Reservation**. From 5:00 to 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 18th, we'll gather with a roaring fire and light treats and mark the start of winter and celebrate the holiday season. If you're interested in exploring Hale's trails, we'll also offer a family-friendly, guided hike.



The Winter Solstice holds spiritual meaning as a time of reflection, renewal, and rebirth, symbolizing the end of the longest night and the return of light. It is seen as a period for introspection and letting go of the past, while also embracing new beginnings and the cycle of life, with nature resting before bursting forth in spring. Many traditions celebrate the solstice with rituals that honor nature, resilience, hope, and the promise of brighter days to come.

Please access Hale Reservation via the main entrance at 80 Carby Street, Westwood, and park at the Cat Rock Parking Lot located past the Main Office.

Hale Reservation is open to the public and has over 20 miles of trails available for passive recreation throughout the year.

Register & Learn More!

Board of Appeals

In November, the Board conducted a public hearing to consider the Town's request to redesign and replace a deteriorating culvert under Wilsondale Street. Due to the work's proximity to Powissett Brook, it was necessary for the Board to grant a Special Permit under the Town's Bylaw that protects rivers and streams. After considering the submission of the Town's independent engineers and responses from the Highway Department Director, the Board granted the Special Permit. Work is expected to commence next year, provided that funding is obtained through state grants and/or Town Meeting.

Recycling Committee

'Tis the season for our annual guidelines for recycling during the holidays:

The NAUGHTY List (not recyclable)

- **WRAPPING PAPER:** Wrapping paper, bows, and ribbons all go in the trash, NOT the Mixed Paper Trailer. Wrapping paper is chemically treated with fire retardant and cannot be recycled.
- **PLASTIC LINERS:** Throw in the trash.
- **BLACK PLASTIC:** Throw in the trash.
- **WAXED CARDBOARD:** Milk, juice, soup cartons - throw in the trash.
- **HOUSEHOLD ALKALINE BATTERIES:** Throw in the trash.

The NICE list (Recyclable):

- **CHRISTMAS TREES, WREATHS, AND PLANTS:** Strip all ornaments, tinsel, and wires and deposit in the yard waste section of the Transfer Station.
- **FOOD WASTE:** Bag all food waste, including turkey carcasses, egg shells, bones, fruits, and vegetables, and deposit in the Food Waste barrels at the Transfer Station.
- **HOLIDAY STRING LIGHTS (TANGLERS):** Place in the bin marked for string light collection in the Swap Shop or in the metals bin at the Transfer Station.
- **CARDBOARD BOXES:** Break down and flatten all boxes and remove plastic liners and Styrofoam. OK to include greasy pizza boxes, just remove the crusts!
- **REFUNDABLE BOTTLES AND CANS:** Place in the barrels at the deposit trailer.
- **TEXTILES:** Bag dry textiles (old clothes, shoes, bedding, etc.) in clean condition and place them in the textile bins at the Transfer Station or the Middle and High Schools.
- **ELECTRONICS:** If you're replacing electronics, please place old phones, tablets, laptops, TVs, etc. at the Electronics Trailer
- **BATTERIES:** Non-alkaline and button batteries should be given to Transfer Station personnel.
- **HOLIDAY CARDS:** Recycle plain paper cards and envelopes in the Mixed Paper Trailer. Cards with glitter, foil, or metallic ink, and photo cards printed on glossy paper should be placed in the trash.
- **TISSUE PAPER & PAPER GIFT BAGS:** Can be recycled in the Mixed Paper trailer as long as they are free from contaminants such as foil and glitter

DON'T TOSS THAT PACKING STYROFOAM!

The Transfer Station is holding a **SPECIAL COLLECTION OF STYROFOAM – JANUARY 10-11, 2026**
Packing Peanuts are not accepted. Styrofoam must snap when bent to be acceptable. Watch this newsletter, the Dover Facebook page, and the Dover Town Website for more info.

Did you know? Holiday edition

According to a recent study, 90% of Americans agree: they wish the holidays were less materialistic. That's up from 78% in 2005! In that spirit, here are some ideas for Greener Holiday Gifting:

- Gift an experience, like tickets to a local event or classes
- Shop secondhand for personalized, unique finds
- Give homemade treats, like baked goods or hand-crafted treasures
- Share alternative gift ideas with friends and loved ones

A RecycleSmartMA tip!





Try email & social marketing for free!