



## The REALTOR® Rap Spring 2017

### *A Letter from our President*

Happy Summer Everyone!

I hope you are enjoying the season and your business has picked up from the first quarter. It appears that the market has turned in the right direction. Closed units of single-family homes for the first half of 2017 was 354 vs. 320 for the first half of 2016 (increase of 10.6%). For condos, those numbers are 324 for 2017 vs. 304 for 2016 (increase of 6.5%). Average price for SF homes in Stamford was \$676,286 for the first six months of 2017, vs. \$643,773 for the same period in 2016 (increase of 5%). For condos, the numbers were \$332,542 for 2017 and \$360,961 for 2016 (decline of 7.9%). [Data from CMLS]



This seems to bode well for 2017. In fact, most of the "Gold Coast" towns have seen an increase in average sale price for single families in the first six months of 2017 vs. the full year 2016. Greenwich, Norwalk, Westport and Fairfield are up 9.1%, 0.5%, 7.5%, 5.7% respectively. [Data from CMLS and GMLS]

I am pleased to say the Board has been quite busy the first half of this year. We are always trying to add more value to your membership, and welcome your suggestions. In the first half we presented a very informative, FREE presentation by NAR Director of Digital Engagement, Nobu Hata. We also presented a FREE CE-credited class on safety for the first time. Both of these free events were well attended.

We have raised money for Inspirica and the Stamford Animal Shelter through our events and will continue to support worthy causes in Stamford throughout the year. We hope you will make time to attend our next event in October for the Boys and Girls Club of Stamford. Did you know that due to our charitable events and donations, we have been on Channel 12 News three times this year? And our Frank N. Green Scholarship recipients were on WEBE 108 radio. Our positive media exposure has increased due to the great work of our Public Relations Committee headed by Viktoria Cooper.

Finally, I want to mention that the SBOR Young Professionals Network is officially up and running and holding monthly meetings with guest speakers. They will also hold a Zumba event fundraiser in August. If you are a young professional, I urge you to get involved with our YPN. If you know a young professional who is a member of our association, please tell them about YPN.

We still need volunteers for committees and encourage you to reach out. If you want to serve on a committee, please contact me and I will put you in touch with the appropriate committee chair.

Have a wonderful summer and look for great events in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year.

Live long and prosper,  
Len

### **CT REALTOR Rally, May 9**

Traffic congestion, gloomy clouds, and menacing drizzle were not enough to keep the Stamford Board of REALTORS® from joining their REALTOR colleagues from across the state at the first ever REALTOR Rally at Bushnell Park, in Hartford CT.

Can't help but wonder what thoughts crossed the minds of our Legislators at the sight of over 2000 REALTORS with signs reading,

"GIVE US A CONNECTICUT TO SELL!"

### **PLAY BALL! SBOR a Supporter of the Stamford American Little League (SALL), April 24**

"Do you have any more Doritos?", "Can I have some water?" asked a little leaguer looking to beef up before PLAY BALL was called on April 24th, opening day. The Stamford Board of REALTORS was a sponsor this season.

Our banner was proudly displayed in the outfield along with Lexus of Greenwich and Katchko & Sons Construction to name a few of the notable local organizations.

Thanks again for the SBOR generosity at our (Stamford American Little League) opening day ceremony and for setting up a table and donating waters and snacks for the kids." Mike Deenihan, SALL representative.

The SALL is devoted to fair play and sportsmanship. It's a pleasure to sponsor a League that mirrors the way the SBOR practices real estate.

### **First Quarterly Meeting: Mayor David Martin, the State of City Address, March 22**

At the State of the City Address, Mayor Martin addressed inquiries surrounding tax increases and this year's budget. In short, the Mayor touched on the weight of activity that affected this budget such as the new school on Strawberry Hill, the Police Station and more. Also of interest to the realtor body is the extent of construction taking place namely the rental units sprouting around the downtown area. On the near term, we see incoming corporations such as Henkel USA, bringing its laundry, home care and beauty care headquarters to 200 Elm Street.

Before closing the meeting, one final jab at the condition of our infrastructure was voiced by one of our REALTORS, "what about the potholes?" I guess that's weighing on the budget, too.

Present at the meeting was CAR President Michael Barbaro to remind us of the importance of participating at the REALTOR Rally.

### **Happy Hour for a Good Cause, March 29**

The first happy hour of 2017 was held at Tomato, Tomato on March 29th! Once again, we feasted on what seemed an endless supply of scrumptious appetizers. If the food didn't keep your spirits up, the libations did! Overall a fun time was had and all for a great cause, raising money for our furry friends at the Animal Shelter. News12 rolled in to cover our event. Thank you, Lara Winters for representing us so professionally!



### ***Lunch-n-Learn with Nobu Hata, April 6***

It took more than a fire at The Italian Center to put a damper on our plans to host a Lunch-n-Learn event featuring Nobu Hata, Director of Member Engagement for the National Association of REALTORS® on April 6th.



An industry veteran since 1996, Nobu is a student of marketing, communications trends, social media, and technology in the real estate industry, having implemented and adapted various new school techniques to his successful brick and mortar business, Edina Realty, in Minneapolis until July 2012.

An "accidental" speaker, instructor, and volunteer NAR leader since 2009 (NAR YPN, Communications, Equal Opportunity/Diversity, Strategic Planning Committees), Nobu brings to NAR a skill set that includes insight and context of agent, brokerage, and association issues up the pipeline, and delivers value-added information down, both in person and through the digital domain.

Nobu's Ten Tips for 2017 Business included; Be Memorable (like the adorable puppy we couldn't get enough of), Own your Reputation (ask for testimonials!), use a CRM (customer relationship management system), use Video to tell your story, and Educate our client better than Google can, and don't forget to say THANK YOU.

Let's take this moment to publicly acknowledge and praise Carmela Dallas who secured the Knights of Columbus as the venue for our Lunch-n-Learn upon very short notice due to the fire that morning. And, a round of applause to Celebrations Catering and Christopher Gautrau, new to the Knights of Columbus, who came to our rescue and was able to set up the dining room with round ten seater tables, coffee, tea, and coordinated with Atria Senior Living to ensure their delicious, warm lunch was enjoyed by all. Thank you Celebrations!



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### ***SBOR Presents the Frank N. Green Scholarship to Ten High School Graduates and the Gates Scholarship to Two REALTOR Affiliated Graduates, June 5***

The Rotunda Room at the Knights of Columbus was brimming with pride as parents huddled with their soon-to-be graduates awaiting the scholarship presentation on June 5th.



The Frank N. Green Scholarship, in memory of Past President of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® and Past President of the Stamford Board of REALTORS® with a membership for 40-years, was awarded to ten outstanding graduating seniors. These exceptional young adults have contributed countless hours of service to their community and their schools, as well as demonstrated superb leadership skills. This year the Stamford Board of REALTORS® Scholarship Committee received over 30 eligible applications from which ten students were awarded the \$1,000 Frank N. Green Scholarship. Frank N. Green Scholarship recipients demonstrated excellent academic strength, citizenship, defined goals, and a strong sense of self. The Frank N. Green Scholarship recipients are Nicole Matura, Kyra Yacavone, Erica Stietzel, Samuel Berkun, Brandon Hoak, Mariel Barocas, Daniel Altamura, Vivek James, Joshua Mensah, and Ayah Elmansy.

Despite some negative publicity in recent years, Stamford schools remain a source of pride for students and residents. "Growing up, I was constantly hearing that Stamford was not a great school district," said Barocas, who will join Elmansy at Yale University, while James will enroll at the University of Pennsylvania. "From what I experienced firsthand, that reputation is totally false. It aggravates me when I hear that. I could not be where I am without it. The opportunities, the experiences, the students and the diversity helped me become who I am. There is diversity in intellectual thought and in socio-economic circumstances. I was not in an isolated bubble. I'm extremely grateful for the people and teachers I've met in Stamford."



The Raymond F. Gates, Jr Memorial Scholarship was established in 1976 in memory of Raymond F. Gates, Jr following his tragic death in an automobile accident. Mr. Gates was the Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®. Over the past 41 years, children of REALTORS have been awarded scholarships totaling more than \$886,000. For the 2016-2017 academic year, the Connecticut REALTOR® Foundation received 122 eligible applications. This year, 37 outstanding children of Connecticut REALTORS were selected to receive a total of \$36,500. The Stamford Board of REALTORS® is proud to announce two local recipients were among the 37 selected. Tara Troy, a 2016 graduate of Westhill High School and daughter of James Troy, the Designated REALTOR for Independent REALTORS and a member of the Stamford Board and Jared Tuttle, a 2017 graduate of Greenwich High School and son of Jarah Tuttle, a REALTOR with Newbridge International Realty LLC and a member of the Stamford Board.



These outstanding students will grace the academic halls of some of the nation's prestigious colleges and universities. Cornell University, Dartmouth College, University of Maryland, University of Vermont, Penn State, University of New Hampshire, UCONN, Syracuse University, University of Pennsylvania/Wharton, John Hopkins University, Northwestern University, Yale University, and others have extended admissions to our Stamford stars.

Our graduates bid farewell to alma maters Academy of Information Technology (AITE), Stamford High School, and Westhill High School and prepare to become future leaders.

### ***Second Quarterly Meeting: Sandy Goldstein Downtown Special Services District and Greg Stackpole, City of Stamford Assessor's Office***

Sandy Goldstein, President of the Stamford Downtown Special Services District was brimming with pride as she describes Stamford's downtown transformation on it's Silver Anniversary! In a span of 25 years downtown has gone from unwelcoming to unbelievable.



Complete with dining al fresco, rockin' Alive @Five, new retail stores, Mill River Park, beaches and more, Stamford's downtown is a destination and an experience for all, the young, the young at heart, and for furry paws too!

### ***It's Revaluation time again!***

Benjamin Franklin once said "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and TAXES." While there's no evading the former, there is some control over the latter - taxes. Tax Assessor, Gregg Stackpole introduced Chris Kerin and Michael Fazio of Municipal Valuation Services (MVS). It is required by law to re-value both residential and commercial properties every five years. It's time.



Municipal Valuation Services is nearly finished with their work and new results will be mailed sometime in the November / December time frame. Property owners looking to challenge the results might contact realtors for comparables in an effort to support their claim. This process has not changed. Perhaps some property owners will be able to successfully manage their taxes.

### ***Stamford Animal Care and Control Shelter Receives \$1,170 from the Stamford Board of REALTORS®***

On May 23rd, dogs, cats and kittens, bunnies, birds and other domestic animals at the Stamford Animal Care and Control Shelter at 201 Magee Avenue received a \$1,170 donation from the Stamford Board of REALTORS® (SBOR) that will be allocated towards the shelter's capital improvement project.



Resembling a mini Noah's Ark, the Shelter houses a range of animals from dogs to cats to rabbits and guinea pigs. The facility has grown in services as well as in furry residents. Plans are in place to relocate to a larger building.

Animal Control Officer Cobb, Officer Wargo and the rest of the team actively seek stray dogs and cats and provide them with medical attention, clean surroundings, and food. The more important service they provide is the spaying and neutering program. The next important role for the officers is in preparing the animals for adoption. After a background check Officer Cobb calls the prospective pet owner in to adopt their furry friend.



An enthusiastic "it's great to have this [donation] from the Stamford Board of REALTORS®!" shared by Officer Katina Wargo who received the \$1,170 donation on behalf of the shelter, which drowned the background barking of the resident dogs.

The Shelter is happy to accept donations; Pedigree Can Dog Food (no chunks), Purina One Dry Dog Food, Can Cat Food (pate only), Dry Cat Food (Purina One), Paper Towels, and Laundry Detergent, are in need.

### ***2017 REALTOR BENEFITS® PROGRAM***

#### ***Are You Taking Advantage of Your Discounts?***

Designed with you in mind, the REALTOR Benefits® Program is your official member benefits resource, bringing you savings and unique offers on products and services just for REALTORS®. Program Partners are carefully selected, so you can be assured they understand the unique needs of real estate professionals and are committed to your success.

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