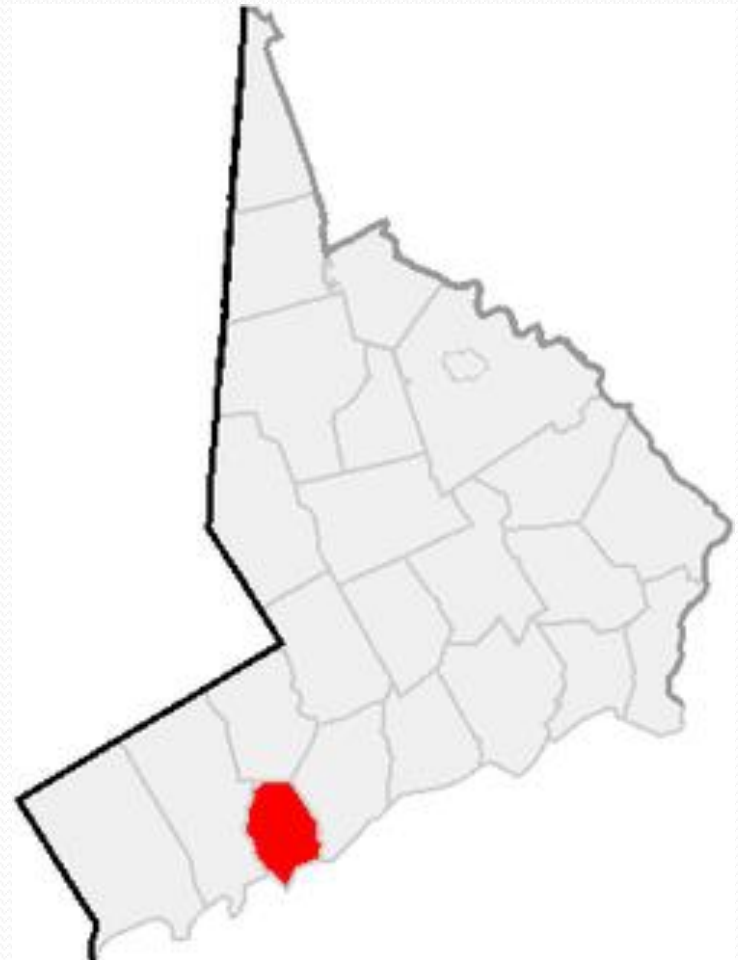


Local Government

A guide to Darien's Town Government

Darien Demographics

- Darien is a town of 20,452 residents.
- Houses go for a median price of about \$1,000,000
- Population is approximately 96% white.
- Families in Darien earn roughly \$195,000



Town Government Breakdown



- Darien's Town Government is classified as a Representative Town Meeting or RTM for short.
- This form of government, has many similarities to state and federal governments including the use of different branches, representatives, and of course checks and balances.

Democracy in Action – A Breakdown of the Town's Branches

- Darien's Government is broken down into three basic groups-
 - Executive Branch – The Five member Board of Selectmen
 - Legislative Branch – 100 member Representative Town Meeting
 - Boards and other elected officials– Elected Boards of Finance, Education, Planning and Zoning, Clerk, Tax Collector, Etc.



Who am I?



- Prominent Business Owner
- Long Time Darien Resident
- Recently Elected
- Could be considered most powerful man in town government

Board of Selectmen

- The Board of Selectmen acts as the town's Executive branch, much like the country's President, a state's governor, or a city's mayor
- Of the BOS only the First Selectman is paid, all others are volunteer.
- The BOS cannot have more than 3 members from any one party.



Key facts about your Board of Selectmen

- Elected to a 2 year term
- 5 members
- Powers
 - General Overseers of the Town
 - Control appointments to numerous Boards (Zoning Board of Appeals, Architectural Review Board, Commission on Aging, Youth Commission, over 20 other Boards)
 - Hiring of 9 Town officers such as Fire Marshall, Town Counsel, Finance Officer, others.



Who am I?



- Darien Resident
- DHS Graduate
- Former Student of Mr. Balazs
- Recently Elected
- Could be least powerful person in Darien government.

Representative Town Meeting

- The RTM acts as the Legislative arm of the Darien Town government.
- Members are all volunteer
- Members are elected to a 2 year term



Key facts about your RTM

- Any expenditure over \$50,000 must be approved by the RTM
 - Most importantly being the budget
- All decisions of the RTM are subject to town-wide referendum if 5% of the town petitions
- All RTM members serve on at least one committee designed to monitor and report on town activities.
- RTM Committees –
 - Education
 - Finance and Budget
 - Public Safety
 - Planning, Zoning and Housing
 - Health and Social Services
 - Park and Recreation
 - Public Works
 - Town Government Structure and Administration

Other Key Political Offices

- Board of –
 - Education – makes financial, curriculum, and other crucial decisions about your education (also over 60% of town budget)
 - Finance – approves any financial decision, including budget, appropriations, etc
- Planning and Zoning – determines rules, regulations, and approval of new buildings and renovations in town

Be an informed citizen!

- Learn the key issues in town, such as:
 - Affordable Housing
 - Flooding
 - Property Taxes
 - Education Spending
- How?
 - Darien Times
 - Darien News Review
- Darien Patch
<http://darien.patch.com>
 - League of Women Voters
 - Contact your representative
cummings.dennis@gmail.com
 - Ask the people around you!

Other Questions?