

Supervisor's Report

2022- It was a Very Good Year!

After two years of isolation, masks and remote meeting, Copake emerged this year with new energy. Looking back, it was a busy 12 months. Here are some highlights.

Town Hall

Town Hall Project August 13, 2022 was the Grand Opening of a permanent historic exhibit in Town Hall including 24 historic panels in addition to a display of enlarge historic post cards and various original paintings of Copake scenes. Particularly exciting are two paintings by Nick Fritsch which are on loan to the Town and depict the First Meeting House and an old railroad depot. The three person committee which created this exhibit include Nick Fritsch, Howard Blue and Vana Hotaling.

Infrastructure

Park Building Parking Lot The Park Building is used for the summer camp and social events and is also the site of the Columbia County Office for the Aging Luncheon Program. This summer we paved the lot and in so doing expanded it to include more handicapped spaces and a turnaround area very close to the front entrance.

Generators The outdated generators at the Park Building and the Town Hall were replaced this year with automatic, energy efficient generators

Cold Storage Building The Highway Department has run out of space to store trucks and other equipment. In 2022 we contracted with an engineering firm to design a storage building which would be unheated. This project will put this out to bid in January 2023.

Streetscape Consultant Columbia County is on schedule to start construction in the Hamlet of Copake in 2024. The Town is responsible for streetlights, benches, plantings and other improvements. To provide the Road Advisory Committee the Town Board has approved hiring Starr Whitehouse, a firm that did very successful work in Hudson.

LED Streetlights Late in 2021 the Town Board agreed to convert NYSEG owned streetlights to LED. Those new lights are expected to be installed this month.

Energy Audit and improvements to Town Hall The Town received an \$8000 grant from Local Champions- Partners for Climate Action. We will use this money to pay for an energy audit of our Town Hall. Town Hall is about two decades old and we want to understand what needs to be improved to repair some problems and also be more

efficient and climate smart. We are working with an engineering firm which submitted our application to NYSERDA earlier this month. NYSERDA will pay 50% of the cost of the audit and so the total cost of the audit will be paid for with NYSERDA and Local Champions funds.

Technology And Communications

Town Emails As of 2020 all the Town emails were with Fairpoint Communications. Town Board members were using their own personal email for Town Communications. This presented numerous issues including threats to cyber security, As of 2022 all Town Board members and all employees have TownofCopake.org email addresses (and the Google suite capabilities which go with it.)

Town Website The current Town website was created circa 2013. It was long outdated and could not be upgraded. As reported elsewhere in this edition, the Town will launch a new website, today.

Town Government

CEDAC- Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee This committee was created in 2020 and has taken a proactive role in seeking a developer for the Roeliff Jansen School. The Committee has applied for and won a **Wastewater Grant**. A report is expected this month regarding an engineering study.

Copake Conservation Advisory Committee This year Committee added two sub committees- the **Climate Smart Committee** and the **Historic Preservation Committee**.

Short Term Rental Working Group This ad hoc committee was appointed earlier this year and this month held a very successful informative public forum. The Committee will be making recommendations to the Town Board in early 2023.

Confidential Assistant Administrator to the Supervisor As of 2020 the total support staff for the Supervisor was a Bookkeeper who worked 7 hours a week. In 2022 the Town Board passed a law to create this new expanded administrative position to increase the efficiency of Town Government. The Town has hired Gwen Menshenfriend to fill this new position.

NYS Deferred Compensation Plan The Town has approved a NYS Deferred Compensation Plan which will be available to employees beginning in January 2023.

Town of Copake Bicentennial As we have reported in this edition, a committee has been appointed and will begin meeting in January.

A final note: all of this has been done without raising taxes. The 2023 budget does not include any increase. The Town has received record amounts in sales and mortgage tax in the past year, but the Town Board has also been fiscally responsible in managing the budget. We have availed ourselves of ARPA funds and various grant sources. In January 2022 we passed a Fund Balance Policy and this year we have made prudent use of the town's fund balance.

Jeanne E. Mettler

Supervisor