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MAYOR'S MONTHLY

The Village of Millbrook Monthly Newsletter By Mayor Tim Collopy



Mayor Tim Collopy

If you have questions or comments, please
contact me at:

845-677-3939 option 5

villageofmillbrookmayor@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER DELIVERIES

If you didn't receive the last 2 copies of my newsletter, it's probably because it was sent to your spam folder (which is what happened to me). Blackboard tech support changed the email which sends such messages so this shouldn't happen anymore. As always, we keep a copy of all my [newsletters](#) on the Village [website](#).

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BENNETT PARK

George Whalen III attend last week's board meeting and gave us an [update on the park](#). I first expressed what everyone is saying, which is that the community greatly appreciates what the [Millbrook Community Partnership](#) (MCP) has already done in removing the eyesore that was Bennett College. George stated that the park is being built in 3 phases. The 1st phase is well underway with the completed demolition of 170,000 sq ft of college buildings. Work is now underway to bury the power lines, re-pave pathways, reseed the lawn and add lighting. The completion of this phase is scheduled for later this year and will result in the eastern side of the park (roughly between Bennett Commons Way and the Millbrook Golf & Tennis Club) to be opened to the public from dawn to dusk. Phase 2 is primarily focused on converting the old "President's House" into a museum while phase 3 will focus on building a new bandshell and adding walking trails throughout the park & to Franklin Avenue. A date is not yet available for full completion and George was also not able to say when the public fundraising effort will begin ("quiet" fundraising is still underway). Suffice it to say that none of this would've been possible without the efforts of the MCP, to which I am thankful!



VERIZON ISSUES

Last week's board meeting couldn't be shown live because of issues with Verizon wireless service. I contacted their Director of Network Operations earlier in the week because of spotty outages in the Village as well as in the Town of Washington. Their tech support said that they found issues with their Network Interface Device which was replaced and re-wired Wednesday. I will continue to monitor my service and would appreciate any outage feedback from residents which I will forward to Verizon (please include specifics of what type of failure and when it happened).



SNOW ORDINANCE

Bob Collocola stated that there is an increasing number of residents disobeying the [snow ordinance](#) by leaving cars parked overnight on the street. Although there has been minimal snow so far this winter, the highway crew does salt the roads whenever there is icing due to sleet or rain or runoff. Cars parked on the street may be damaged by distributing this salt and the area under the parked car may not get the proper treatment. I've asked OIC Witt to ticket violators of this ordinance to keep our roads safe.



ARBOR DAY RESOLUTION

We are very proud that the Village of Millbrook has been recognized as a "Tree City USA" for the past 30 years. In recognition of this, I read a [proclamation](#) at last week's board meeting designating April 28th of this year as Arbor Day in the Village of Millbrook.

10% PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR FIRE AND RESCUE VOLUNTEERS

As a result of a NYS law allowing such, the Village board [introduced a local law](#) to provide a village property tax exemption to village residents who are active fire & rescue volunteers. The requirements and restrictions are listed in the “[meeting docs](#)” of last week’s meeting on our website. At the March board meeting we will hold a public hearing to get resident feedback before voting on making this a Village law.

FIREHOUSE AIR BOTTLE REFILL STATION

A few months ago, there was an age-related failure of the cascade refill station in the Firehouse. The system was found to be unrepairable and insurance was sufficient to cover the cost of replacement. However, to improve the safety of the operation, the FD wished to install a generator that would eliminate many of the cylinders which are stored in the station. The \$40K cost of the generator was going to be an out-of-budget expense for the FD until an anonymous donor offered to cover the cost. The FD, Village and Town very much appreciate this anonymous donation!

NON-READABLE OR INACCESSIBLE WATER METERS

VRI has identified about 30 residences in which the water meter is unreadable, resulting in estimated water bills. While the repair or replacement of such meters is (with rare exception) at no cost to the resident, VRI has had difficulty getting access to the meters, despite placing notices in individual water bills. Hence the board has approved a procedure ([details included in the “meeting docs”](#) of the last board meeting) which gives multiple notices before a \$250 non-compliance fee is added to subsequent bills. Waiving of the fee is allowed if an appointment is scheduled with VRI before the 4th billing notice.

CHAPTER 220 VEHICLE & TRAFFIC LAW

The board introduced a [resolution](#) to update [Chp 220](#) to address a variety of outdated issues with the current law. A public hearing of these changes will be held at the March board meeting and the details are included in the “[meeting docs](#)” of last week’s board meeting. While many of the changes are simply to update the law to reflect current traffic control signs that are in place, there are additions:

- 1.Codifying handicap parking on Merritt & 10-minute parking on Church and Washington;
- 2.Adding a weight limit on Harts Village to reduce truck traffic;
- 3.Converting Alden to alternate-side of the street parking during school days;
- 4.Putting a Yield sign at the intersection of Russell Knolls and Front, and a Stop sign at the intersection of Washington and Church;
- 5.Adding a crosswalk on Alden and Bartel.



SOUTH MILLBROOK PUMP STATION

There is an immediate need to replace the sewer pump between Bennett Park and Franklin Avenue. While there is over a year lead time for the generator, at last week's board meeting we approved going [out to bid](#) for both the [sewer pump](#) and [generator](#), knowing that this will be a 2-staged replacement of the current pump which is 36 years old. In order to reduce the estimated \$250K cost of this project, Deputy Mayor Contino and I have presented requests for funding assistance from each of the offices of Representative Ryan, NYS Senator Hinchey and NYS Assemblyperson Barrett.



POLICE MANUAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES UPDATE

Officer-in-Charge Witt presented a plan to update the Millbrook Police Manual over the next few months which is one of the actions committed as part of our [Police Reform & Modernization Plan](#). Working with another member of the [police force](#), he intends to modify the manual used by the DC Sheriff's Office, personalizing it for the Village police.

WATER TOWER FENCE

Last summer we were able to convince T-Mobile to replace the fence which surrounds their equipment lying behind the water tower. To complete the project, we have accepted a quote from Salem Fence for \$4800 to replace the fence along the neighbor's property which is in even worse condition and has needed replacement for many years.

SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT

We continue to make progress towards replacing the sidewalk in phase 1 of our 4-phase plan. Phase 1 consists of the sidewalk on the south side of Franklin between Front and Church Streets. Final plans should be submitted to NYS DOT this month so we can go out to bid this Spring for the project to be completed in the Summer/Fall time period. Since all but 1 of the trees along this stretch will need to be replaced, the [Shade Tree Committee](#) has recommended that they be replaced with male Ginkgo trees with a 3" caliper. Our request to DC for a CDBG of \$150K to partially fund Phase 2 (south side of Franklin from Church to Friendly) has yet to be approved.

SHORT TERM RENTALS

Trustee Doro is working to add short term rental requirements to [our zoning law](#). He has proposed using the [law implemented by Rhinebeck](#) as a foundation for us to build upon. While we have not yet experienced many of the problems which motivated Rhinebeck to act, there currently is nothing in our code about short term rentals, so we need to address it. Details will be discussed at future board meetings and updating the local law will require a public hearing when a final proposal is ready (date TBD)

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

Along with the Town of Washington and Town of Clinton, the Village of Millbrook has been awarded conservation assistance by NYS DEC to create a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which will allow us to identify and learn about the many floras, fauna and habitats that coexist with residents in Millbrook and the surrounding area so we can preserve them for future generations.

In December of 2021, the Village of Millbrook was awarded a Resiliency Grant to study ways to improve our ability to deal with severe storms and their effects. Gillian Matthews from Cornell Cooperative Extension in Kingston has been reviewing the Village's Comprehensive Master Plan, Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Mitigation Plan and Annex, and our Storm Water Rehabilitation Project Plan. She is now working with Trustee Herzog to compile a report which will include recommended actions to prepare the Village for extreme weather conditions and climate change. The final report should be ready for Board presentation by March.