



Mayor's Message for December 2019 - Village of Rhinebeck Informational Notice

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Village of Rhinebeck

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Wednesday, December 11, 2019

For Immediate Release

Mayor's Message for December 2019

Our holiday season in Rhinebeck Village is fully underway. Two of our annual holiday events, the Parade of Lights and SinterKlaas, went smoothly to the delight of the many people who turned out.

While the snowstorm caused us to lose some parking spots, planners and Police were able to make adjustments to allow for the crowds. For example, we opened the lot behind Town Hall during SinterKlaas to allow for handicapped parking close to the parade route. And, five visitors took us up on the offer.

Keeping our roads clear is one of the biggest jobs we have. The Village and the Town of Rhinebeck have joined up in an Inter-Municipal Agreement in order to share equipment, routes, crews and supplies with each other. This allows us to be faster and more efficient in snow plowing and winter road treatment, while saving taxpayers money. For example, the Village will now maintain Closs Drive from the intersection of Mill St to Rt 9, while the Town handles Mill Road from Rt 9 to the Village line. Wynkoop Lane will be maintained by the Village in even numbered years, and by the Town in the odd numbered years, preventing duplication of services and saving money.

The Village Board has hired Tighe and Bond Engineering to study a proposal by Grasmere Farm, a proposed resort-style development proposed off Mill Road in the Town of Rhinebeck. The proposal requests permission to connect to the Village's existing water and sewage systems. We are investigating the potential impact on Village services and facilities as well as making certain the costs are covered before granting any usage. Additional engineering work needs to be done, including the NYS Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) before any decisions are made.

The Village Board has approved a request to continue the exemption granted to Wells Manor Senior Housing Project. Northern Dutchess Hospital, which managed the property for years, is in the process of selling it to a non-profit called Foundation Housing, as the hospital wants to

focus on its core mission of health care. Foundation's mission is to preserve affordable housing. 100% of the units are covered by a housing assistance payment contract with HUD. As a result, rent for its residents is subsidized based upon their income. A 100 percent exemption from County, Town, Village and School taxes has been in place for years, according to the Towns Assessor. The Village Board voted to approve a resolution endorsing continuing the exemption, even though we do not have statutory authority over this matter as the Town handles assessments.

We are taking a big step towards becoming a Climate Smart Community(a program run by the NY State Department of Conservation). Climate Smart Community Coordinator Vanessa Bertozzi is announcing that we will be filing for "Bronze Certification" in January. This is impressive, as only 32 municipalities in the whole state have achieved this. We owe this not only to the hard work of the Climate Smart Community Task Force Committee, but also the dedication and hard work of our past Village Trustees and Mayors. Among the reasons we have reached this goal:

- replacing lights in municipal buildings with LEDs
 - installing an EV charging station and solar at Village Hall
 - the extensive sea-level rise research and improvements at the water treatment plant
- accomplishments:

The Climate Smart Community Program, developed a decade ago by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, serves as a roadmap that leads municipalities through a transformation to be cleaner, greener and more efficient. This is an official program, with public filings.

Our Veterans Committee is moving forward on the restoration of the Doughboy Statue at the Municipal Park. They got a bid from R.V.W Sculpture in Fishkill for labor and materials to clean and wax the statue. The Rhinebeck Garden Club is donating \$250 towards the expense! The Committee is also hard at work on the restoration of the area around the flagpole at Crystal Lake in Legion Park. The park is part of the expanded boundary for the Rhinebeck Historic District, which means we can apply for historic preservation grants to cover the cost. The Village is currently working with Neil Larson on getting the property listed to make it eligible to apply for a grant from the State Environmental Protection Fund. The committee consulted Daniel McEneny, of the Division of Historic Preservation, and Jennifer Betsworth, a Historic Preservation Specialist, on the application.

We are happy to announce several new appointments to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Welcome to Kevin Curry and Christopher Tavener who are joining the Board. Larry Garrick and Lydia Hill Slaby have been appointed as alternates. This will bring this hard working group up to full strength. The ZBA addresses requests from property owners for area and use variations and interpretations of our zoning code. Appeals Board Members serve five year terms. Their work is very much appreciated.

As always, please reach out to me with any questions or comments. You can reach me by phone 845-876-7015 ext 2 at Village Hall or via email to MayorBassett@VillageofRhinebeckny.gov or come to see me during open hours from 1pm to 2pm daily.

Enjoy the Holidays and Happy New Year!

Gary Bassett
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