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Village of Montebello Annual Jazz Festival

Performances by:

The Klezmatiks

The Bill O'Connell Quartet featuring Craig Handy

3D Rhythm of Life

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH
1:00 - 6:00 PM

At the Gazebo at Village Hall Bring Your Own Seating!





Village of Montebello

Lance N. Millman, Mayor
Stacy Caridi, Deputy Mayor
Bruce Egenhauser, Trustee
Michael Humphrey, Trustee
David Rose, Trustee

September 2025 Edition

Greetings from Mayor Lance N. Millman



Montebello is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Our Village government is here to help you. Information about available services, a calendar of events, forms for download, and contact information are available on our website:

www.villageofmontebello.org

Montebello's laws and zoning code are available at <https://ecode360.com/MO1927>

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Mayor Lance Millman

Happenings Around the Village



Braemar Ribbon Cutting

On Wednesday, May 7th a ribbon-cutting was held to formally open the Braemar senior living community at Montebello. The property is a 133-unit, 133,675-square foot, four-story facility located on 6.2 acres at 250 Lafayette Avenue. The ceremony was attended by Mayor Lance N. Millman and other dignitaries from within the County. The 133 apartments are fully furnished and feature kitchenettes, private bathrooms, luxury vinyl flooring and wireless Internet. All apartments feature the latest in safety and monitoring systems. This facility will address the severe shortage of high quality senior housing in the region.

Arbor Day 2025

The Village of Montebello celebrated Arbor Day at our annual celebration on Friday, April 25th. Mayor Lance Millman dedicated this year's tree and issued a proclamation. Mayor Millman encourages everyone to plant a tree to better the environment.



Memorial Day Observation

The Village celebrated Memorial Day on Sunday, May 25th with a ceremony on the side lawn of Village Hall. The ceremony was kicked off with Welcome by Mayor Millman, followed by singing of God Bless America by, Montebello resident, John Moroski, then a reading of the Gettysburg Address by Montebello Elementary School 5th Graders, Lily Chen, Violette Doaman, Logan Farrison, and Izzy Valderrama. The guest speaker was Barry Fixler, who served in the U.S. Marines during Vietnam. The Marine Corps League Rockland County Detachment presented the flags, laid a wreath, fired a rifle salute, and played taps in memory of those who made the greatest sacrifice for our nation.

Montebello High School Seniors Achieve Top 10%

Congratulations to the Montebello graduates on their accomplishment in being named in the Top 10% of the Class of 2025 from Suffern High School! Mayor Millman and the Board of Trustees congratulate the following seniors for achieving Academic Excellence: Ava Epstein, Dylan Palmiotto, Kaila Quinn, Lindsay Rivera, Ethan Schwartz, Eli Swerdioff, Daniela Trubiano and Lauren Zangrilli. We wish everyone much success in college.





From the Desk of Building Inspector Adam Gordon

I just wanted to let all residents and commercial property owners know that as of February 19, 2025, the Village Board instituted a new Tent Law which regulates a single or aggregation of tents that exceed 200 square feet in size. The intent of this Law is to set criteria and a process by which we can properly enforce the provisions of the NYS Fire Code, which does regulate temporary tents and membrane structures. If you are planning any outside events at your homes or businesses that include the use of a tent or tents larger than 200 square feet, please contact the Building Department to apply for a Tent Permit. Our staff will help you with the application.



We also continue to issue many violations and stop work orders for work being done without a permit. While certain finish types of work such as painting, wallpapering, tiling and molding do not require a building permit, most other types of work do. Please call us before doing any work to find out, we are always willing to go out of our way to help people to do things the right way.



From the Desk of Assistant Building Inspector Marcos Padilla
Residential Gathering Places – A Primer

Zoning plays a key role in maintaining the character and functionality of any municipality, but none more crucial than in residential neighborhoods. One such Zoning Law in the Village of Montebello regulates the use of private homes for regular gathering places, meaning, if there is a gathering of any kind in a single family home at least twelve times per year of up to , a special permit from the Planning Board is needed. §195-79 of the Village code outlines the standards for these residential gathering places, and following these regulations is essential for a myriad of reasons, most notably to preserve the neighborhood character and quality of life.

Section 195-79 ensures that regular gathering places, whether for secular or religious purposes, are integrated into the community in ways that respect neighboring properties, promote public safety and encourage community harmony.

The Planning Board reviews all applications for Residential gathering places to make sure that use is limited to the principal structure, complies with all applicable building, zoning, and fire codes and contains enough parking spaces commensurate with the Table of General Use.

If you have any questions or concerns about these regulations, feel free to contact the Planning and Zoning department.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

Any motor vehicle used for commercial purposes, such as the transportation of goods, wares and merchandise or passengers for hire (taxis) and having a load capacity in excess of one ton; or any type of vehicle used as a place in which any business or commercial enterprise is conducted, or which is objectionable for reasons such as noise, fumes, vibration, odor, dust, gas or lights.

§ 195-33. Commercial vehicles.

- Not more than one commercial vehicle, of 25 feet or less in length, may be parked on a developed lot in any residence district, but not within the required yards of such lot and in no case between the street line and the principal building.
- Not more than one commercial vehicle of 25 feet or less in length may be parked within a private garage in any residence district.
- Commercial vehicles are permitted as accessory to a commercial farm use in any residence district but shall not be stored or parked within any required yard.
- No other commercial vehicle shall be parked on a lot in a residential zone.

Recycling Bins

Recycling of paper, cardboard, plastic, metal, glass and cartons takes place every Wednesday. Recycling bins should be placed curbside for pick up either the night before or early Wednesday morning. If you have excess cardboard boxes, they should be broken down and tied together and left at the curb. Do Not placed recyclables in plastic bags or they will not be picked up.



If you are in need of recycling bins, stop by Village Hall to pick them up. We can also provide you a Recycling Guide from Rockland Green if you have questions of what can and can not be recycled.



From the Desk of the Village Justice, Judge Kenneth Gobetz

The Village of Montebello is home to the Village’s Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park, the County’s Kakiat Park, a town pool and the Spook Rock Golf Course. Focusing on the latter, the Spook Rock Golf Course in Montebello draws its name from local legend. The term “Spook Rock” comes from Dutch settlers; spook meaning ghost or hobgoblin in Dutch. In 1931, The Rockland County Times reported that the rock was a sacred and ancestral meeting place for many of the Indigenous people in the region. The “Spook Rock” is a glacial boulder located at the corner of Spook Rock Road and Highview Avenue and is marked with a plaque inscribed “To insure the preservation of Spook Rock as a public monument this plot of ground was donated to the Rockland County Society by David Carlough July 23rd, 1931.”

The Historical Society of Rockland County identified two legends (not factual accounts) surrounding this rock. One involved the taking of revenge against a Dutch settler who was accused of mistreating the Native American population. The alleged offender’s daughter was kidnapped and brought to Spook Rock. After conducting the appropriate ceremony, the innocent girl was sacrificed on the rock. Almost immediately afterward, the tribe learned that the Dutch settler was in fact innocent, leaving the tribal chief with guilt and remorse. Legend says that the ghost of the murdered girl, visible to only the chief, haunted him every night for the rest of his life. Other versions of the story say that the entire tribe saw visions of the girl.

Another version of the story claims that a Dutch woman fell in love with a Native American and they met at Spook Rock for secret meetings. According to this version, the local chief did not approve, and she was sacrificed by tribal leaders at the rock and since then her spirit appears on the anniversary of her death, said to be around Halloween.

The golf course remains a significant asset within the Village. Those of us who play the course can take solace in the fact that some of our shots are not influenced by our skill but by the spirits that may haunt the place.



The Montebello HPPC: Doing Our Village’s Part to Help Keep Rockland Beautiful!
By HPPC Chairman, Matthew R. Moetzinger



The Montebello Historic Preservation and Parks Commission (“HPPC”), is composed of 7-members (5 regular plus 2 ad hoc members), comprised of dedicated Village residents and tasked with an important role under Montebello's municipal code.

Since the official merger in 2019 of two previously separate Village bodies responsible for Preservation and Parks, the HPPC has been charged with both preserving historical designations and standards within our Village, as well as maintaining and improving Montebello’s several parks, nature preserves, and other open spaces. More recently, the HPPC has sought to partner with like-minded community organizations to help accomplish our mission of preserving and maintaining the beauty of our unique suburban setting for the use and enjoyment of all for generations to come.

On May 17, 2025, the HPPC organized and held its first Village-wide Cleanup Day in several years, in cooperation with Keep Rockland Beautiful (“KRB”). KRB is a local non-profit organization headquartered in New City, and vigilantly dedicated to the maintenance and beautification of Rockland’s various municipalities county-wide. KRB’s Board of Directors and numerous volunteers often rely on other local community groups and leaders (including government commissions, student and Scouting groups), by supplying much-needed resources, supplies, and guidance to successfully support Rockland’s towns and villages.

For more information, please see the following KRB website link: <https://keeprocklandbeautiful.org>

Our Montebello Cleanup Day event was planned in coordination with KRB’s participation in the national 2025 “Great American Spring Cleanup,” a semi-annual program organized and coordinated by many dedicated volunteer organizations across the nation. Specifically in Montebello on May 17th, approximately 30 adult, teenage and child/student volunteers collected over 20 total large bags of refuse and recyclable materials (and even 2 hubcaps!) from our Village's roadways, parks and green spaces. Some of the key locations with improved appearances included the Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park, various sections of Viola, Airmont, Montebello, and Spook Rock Roads, and the Warren E. Berbit Nature Preserve. This inaugural event was considered by all participants to be a significant success.

The HPPC wishes to extend sincere thanks and gratitude to KRB Executive Director Marisa Marrone, Community Programs Assistant Anna Hickey, and KRB Board Member Melanie Schlosser for their valuable guidance, materials, and time in helping to organize and execute our local event. In addition , after the successful completion of our Village’s May event, the HPPC intends to continue Montebello’s participation in future KRB-assisted events (including the 2025 "Great American Fall Cleanup"), and the HPPC encourages all Village residents to get involved and take an active role in Keeping Montebello Beautiful!



Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park By Deputy Mayor Stacy Caridi

The tranquil setting of Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park, located off Senator Levy Drive, offers visitors a spot to explore winding trails around several ponds. This is an idyllic park to visit on a warm summer or fall day to enjoy nature.

Although the Village does it’s best to keep the park up and running, recently we were notified that the pond algae systems were vandalized. The controls were ripped off the mounts and we are currently having all of them replaced and put in a secure locking apparatus. That does not mean it will not happen again, it just means it will be more difficult to do so. After it gets up and running again, we will give it some time to work. We are trying not to use chemicals to treat the pond as we have done chemical free for the past year or so.

To supplement our regular Litter Patrol person, we also have hired summer help to keep the park in its beautiful state. In the past several weeks, he has removed numerous bags of trash! Please remember to pick up your trash! Garbage bins are located in the parking lot area.

We also work to keep the trails clear of debris. Our landscaper is cleaning up the woody vegetation, including Japanese Knotwood, which we understand is an ongoing struggle. Our landscaper also removed a couple of downed trees that were blocking the paths. Additionally, we will be doing trail work within the park to alleviate the trenching caused by rain.

As the summer weather wanes, come enjoy the park for a leisurely walk or just to watch the ducks in the ponds.



Back to Kakiat Park: A Local Gem! By Trustee Bruce Egenhauser

This past weekend, my dog Cooper and I traded our usual neighborhood stroll for the natural splendor of Kakiat Park, a County park and a true jewel nestled right here in Montebello. While enjoying the peaceful surroundings, I heard a trimming noise and discovered Ranger John diligently maintaining some of the lower trails. I quickly thanked him for his hard work, and as I left, I was truly amazed by how beautifully maintained the entire park is.



From the two relatively new, clean bathrooms in the parking lot to the relatively new bridge crossing the meandering Mahwah River, and even the gazebo and grill, which is perfect for a small birthday party, every detail is nicely cared for. Plus, the park boasts an enclosed dog run and several well-marked and maintained trails. It truly is a hidden gem!



As we move through summer, Kakiat Park transforms into a vibrant canvas of lush greenery, offering a refreshing retreat for hikers, birdwatchers, and anyone seeking a peaceful connection with nature. We encourage you to visit and experience the tranquility and beauty that Kakiat Park so generously offers our community.



2025 COMMUNITY GARDEN

As fall quickly approaches, another season of the Community Garden will be coming to an end. The garden flourished this year with an abundance of crops (even with all of the earlier rain this year!). We hope your gardening efforts were a success. Just a reminder to clean out your plots by the end of October to prepare them for the 2026 season. All bags with debris are to be placed within the dumpster. The hoses will be turned off at the beginning of October (we will post the date once confirmed). Wishing everyone a Happy Fall!



Savoring the End of Summer and Welcoming Fall in Montebello By Trustee Michael Humphrey

As August arrives and the final golden days of summer unfold, I’m reminded of just how lucky we are to live in the Village of Montebello, a place where nature, community, and peace blend seamlessly. Whether you’ve spent your summer walking our trails, relaxing in the backyard, or simply enjoying a slower pace, I hope you’ve had time to take in the small moments that make our village so special.

The changing seasons in Montebello always seem to offer the perfect rhythm for reflection. As the long summer evenings begin to shorten, and a crispness starts to creep into the morning air, it’s a gentle reminder to pause and savor where we are. Children prepare to return to school, families shift back into routines, and our trees, so rich and green right now, will soon glow with autumn color.

Fall in Montebello is nothing short of breathtaking. It’s the perfect time to enjoy a walk through our parks, watch the leaves turn, and breathe in the fresh air that reminds us just how fortunate we are to call this place home. It’s also a time when we begin to think ahead, not just to cooler months, but to the future of our village and how we continue to care for and preserve its beauty and character.

So, before the summer fades completely, take a moment to enjoy that sunset a little longer, have that picnic in the yard, or take one last evening stroll. And when fall does arrive, let’s welcome it with the same appreciation and presence.

Wishing you a peaceful end to summer and a vibrant start to the fall season.



Serving Montebello - By Trustee David Rose

I am honored to serve as your representative on the Montebello Village Board of Trustees. Thank you, old friends, and new neighbors, for the trust you have placed in me. This certainly is not what I imagined I would be doing when Rebecca and I moved to Montebello 35 years ago!

A little about the Rose family: Rebecca was born in Good Sam and has lived in Rockland almost her entire life. I am originally from Long Island, but even back then, I was in love with this area—hiking, camping, and even some ice climbing during those much colder winters. We raised our four children here, all of whom attended Suffern schools. And if I may be allowed to *kvell* (beam with pride) just a little—two are in business, and two hold master’s degrees in the sciences.

Like many of you, we chose Montebello for its peace and its beauty. We chose it because it feels different than where we came from and different than the other local options: Wesley Hills, Pomona, or New City. Certainly, different than Bergen, Westchester, Brooklyn, or Long Island. Montebello is green, quiet, and dark. Montebello is community and family oriented. Montebello is rich in both nature and history, with three homes on the 1778 tax maps, dozens more built in the 1800s, and still more from the first half of the 20th century.

I ran for trustee to help preserve what makes Montebello unique - a place that feels as rural and scenic as a suburban village can be. A place where long-time residents and neighbors who are still unpacking moving boxes can all feel equally at home.

Everyone deserves a voice in Village government. When we agree, that is great. And when we do not, I will do my best to help bridge the gaps. I do ask for your understanding. Some decisions will make people happy, others may not. But I promise that every choice I make will come from a sincere commitment to what I believe is the best for Montebello.

And with that, allow me to segue into an issue I think - I hope - we can all agree on. Litter. As we walk and drive around Montebello, many of us have seen trash in supermarket or Amazon boxes blowing down streets or into the woods (these boxes should be broken down and tied up and placed in the recycling bin for collection). Every Saturday I walk past a black 50-gallon trash bag sitting just out of reach in the wetlands off Spook Rock. Enough Wendy’s bags to save a tree someplace. Too many trash cans are often left out the entire week. Not only against code but unsightly, it makes our neighborhoods prone to rodents and bears and could be telling any potential burglar no one is home all week!

Simply stated: litter does not belong in Montebello. Not in our woods, not on our roads, not blowing through our neighborhoods. Let everyone who lives here or passes through our village know this. We have our own garbage, thank you and we do not want to live with yours. Let us keep Montebello clean, not just because it is code, but because it is home.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at TrusteeRose@MontebelloNY.gov or anyone else at Village Hall. If we have not met yet, I hope we will soon. And if we have, I hope you will say hello again, do not be a stranger.

Thank you again for your trust and support. It is a privilege to serve.



From the Desk of...
Village Attorney Warren E. Berbit

“So, what were things like in the black and white days?”, my younger son asked at age 5, as we drove down Route 17 towards an event in the Meadowlands in 1987. We looked at each other in puzzlement. “What do you mean?”, I asked. He responded, “Like all those old photos, before there was color in the world.” We pondered and then laughed about his interesting observation, explaining how photography advanced over the years (thinking privately about my father and his darkroom in Brooklyn so many years ago).

So, what makes me mention this now? I rode around the Village last week just to see how things are doing which I often do. Afterwards I proceeded on an errand to Wykoff, New Jersey. It was quite apparent that virtually every new home going up was white or off-white, with black windows and roofing (and doors). This was also true of most renovations and expansions noted along the way on both sides of the border. Plus, the new homes and expanding homes are L-A-R-G-E!! Here in Montebello and in a nearby affluent area in New Jersey.

Of course, I was already aware of the trend by virtue of applications for variances as well as applications before the Historic Preservation and Parks Commission for Certificates of Appropriateness in our Historic and Scenic Roadways Overlay District. So, visually prompted, I recalled my son’s words, wondering if these are the new “black and white days” driven by changing tastes, shifting lifestyles, bigger families, new demographics, and architectural trends?

Perhaps a future generation will conduct another Historic Architectural survey as did we, and will note this trend superimposed upon all that came before and then noting some other new trends going forward? They say, “change is good”, but, please, let’s carefully modulate this urge remaining respectful of what drew us to this place; the rolling hills and fields, rock walls, the tree canopy and the night sky; a more rural breath of fresh air so close to New York City and more densely packed areas of our town!

As this is being written, the Village Board is in the midst of a continuing public hearing on the 2025 Revision to the 2017 Comprehensive Plan wherein and whereby we examine the overall philosophy driving our Local Laws every five to seven years. This guides evolutionary changes in our Village Board’s Legislative discretion.

Also to be noted, we are working on obtaining Department of Transportation (DOT) frontage approval for work in the Route 59 Development District serving Lots 2 and 3, forward of Lot 1 which is the recently opened Braemar Assisted Living Facility (The Braemar at Montebello). This project also includes integrating with improvements to the shopping center at Hemion Road and Route 59.

As you drive the Thruway south and east, take a gander at the distribution warehouse being built on the former Novartis property! The sheer enormity is staggering leaving no doubt why our Mayor, with my assistance and that of our team, has been relentless in pushing for some better ways to address all the 18-wheeler traffic sure to emerge (adding to already increased and increasing traffic). By dint of our efforts the Town, and other nearby Villages, and the County by Ed Day and his team, have gotten behind a more global approach. Maybe, just maybe, a thru road from Hemion to Airmont Road will result. Perhaps not the ultimate solution, but certainly helpful – truly, we also need to develop long-term direct access for that site and vicinity to and from the Thruway, and the political will to ensure such a result.

While on the subject of traffic, we have all noticed that it is building up, with more people on our streets and children flying about on bicycles and motorized scooters. Please, please, please be watchful and careful.

The Second Annual New Montebello Jazz Fest is in the works for September 7th. Hopefully, you will have already enjoyed the event by the time you read this. Nothing better than being out on the Village Hall lawn with friends and family listening to great music (and, at no charge).

Lastly, I note articles in this newsletter covering, amongst other things, recreational facilities within Montebello (e.g. three parks, a golf course, public pool). Also, on the role of the Historic Preservation and Parks Commission in preserving and keeping Montebello beautiful. Folks, enjoying these wonderful assets also comes with the responsibility to maintain them in a pristine condition. Too often we’ve noted a trail of garbage and debris left behind and what a jolt to the senses by noting such disarray marring the face of perfection. Don’t repeat the indifference of others, nor be indifferent yourselves. Please pick up, remove and dispose of what someone has unfortunately left behind, and please don’t ever be that “someone”. Thanks a bunch.

Sincerely,
Warren E. Berbit
Village Attorney