



Village of Montebello

Lance N. Millman, Mayor

Stacy Caridi, Deputy Mayor
Bruce Egenhauser, Trustee

Melanie Golden, Trustee
Michael Humphrey, Trustee

March 2024 Edition

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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Greetings from Mayor Lance N. Millman



By now we have had a few snowfalls in our village and are happy to say that the Highway Department has done a nice job clearing our roads. Hopefully you had the opportunity to enjoy the snow and were able to play outside. Sleigh riding at middle school and high schools were always fun for our family over the years.

I am very happy to report that our village had over thirty new households move into our village from September to December 2023. Everything we hear from the new households is that they love Montebello and want us to maintain the village just as it is. They love the large open properties and homes, and that the Village constantly protects our trees and surroundings with our current village zoning and planning laws.

Knowing this, what upsets me are those few households who want us to keep Montebello the way it is on the outside of their homes but ignore our laws on the inside. I am unhappy to say that over five homes bought by new residents have been gutted on the inside to the studs without filing the necessary paperwork with the Building and Zoning Clerks or getting approval for the work they want to do. Perhaps an oversight but perhaps intentionally ignoring of our village laws and personal safety. Either way, our residents have been diligent in notifying us when they see something that appears to be wrong. We have and will continue to be extremely active in getting our Code Enforcer out to those homes. I truly don't understand why a homeowner would rather get a violation and fine and end up in court versus getting the right paperwork done and having a smooth transaction in getting work done in their home all while keeping their families safe.

We care about our village and our homes as well as your homes. Let's work together to be vigilant in keeping the entire village safe from these unauthorized and uninspected homes. We do not want to see any injuries or issues if you sell your property. These violations monopolize our Village resources and clog our Village Court. So, please, do the right thing and stop the unpermitted building. We are a great village, and we will continue to be a great village if we all maintain the highest standards which everyone appreciates.

We, again, are proud to state that our new village budget stayed within our 2% cap mandated by the state. Our Board continues to look closely at all expenses, grants, and other cost saving solutions to benefit our village. We are financially healthy and sound and in a good financial position.

We lost our landscaper and snow plowing provider this year due to that company moving on to large commercial properties but have been extremely lucky to enter into a new snow plowing agreement with the Town of Ramapo. They are doing a wonderful job on our Village owned properties. We are currently in the process of reviewing and accepting bids for a new landscaping company and are confident that we will find the right company at the right price for our village.

We continue to move forward with streetlight upgrades and buying Orange and Rockland owned streetlights in the Village. Long-term this will benefit the village and save money for the resident's taxes.

Continued on page 2



Mayor's article continued..

We continue to be proactive regarding the flow of traffic within the Village. For example, we are constantly involved with the traffic aspect of the Suffern project for the old Novartis property. There will be over two hundred large trucks coming out of Old Mill Road and onto Hemion Road and Route 59 and then onto Airmont Road. I have taken the initiative and have called for and had a group meeting with the County Executive's Office, Town of Ramapo, Village of Airmont, as well as the Village of Suffern along with New York State Department of Transportation who are all trying to tackle this very concerning issue. We are working on options and solutions that will benefit our area for years to come. One thing is for sure, no truck leaving Old Mill Road will be permitted to turn left onto Hemion Road (which is owned by the County) and then onto Montebello Road. Only right turns will be allowed for trucks, and this has been agreed upon with the County and the new owners, Brookfield Properties. I am sure many have noticed the expansion of Manhattan Beer complex along the Thruway. They will be utilizing more of the railroad; thus, they will have less trucks coming out of that facility.

We have once again signed the Shared Service Agreement with Rockland County, which includes all other Towns and Villages to help reduce costs and better utilize shared services.

I am happy to report that once again our new online tax payment system has worked efficiently and is simple and easy to use. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this new system to pay their Village taxes.

This year, we are pausing our chemical treatments of the ponds at Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park as it did not work as well in combatting the algae. We are opting instead to add new solar-powered bubblers and fountains and expect that this will be a more effective and cleaner solution.

We are moving forward with a new Local Law in 2024 which would allow duplex housing in a very specific part of the Village near the Spook Rock Golf course. A new zoning law will be created for this area. The new zoning will effect the property called the Stonehedge Heights project.

The Village is also planning to bring back the MONTEBELLO JAZZ FEST which was started many years ago by Gary Goldberg on his mansion property. The Montebello Jazz Fest will have named professional artists performing on Village Hall grounds. We anticipate this occurring this September. We will keep you up to date on this very exciting event.

Please stay safe and enjoy our beautiful village and continue to welcome all to our wonderful community!

Honoring a Village Resident - By Deputy Mayor Stacy Caridi



Congratulations to Montebellian BARBARA ETELSON for being honored on Sunday, February 11, 2024 by Congregation Shir Shalom through Israel Bonds. Barbara is married for 48 years to Judge Arnold P. Etelson, our first Village Justice in Montebello. They have three married daughters and 10 grandchildren, which are the focus of her life. She is the vice president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Public Affairs Division.

Barbara is an avid bicycle rider and has raised money for causes that are near and dear to her. Please help us Congratulate Barbara on her accomplishment.



Note:

Stacy Caridi would also like to invite everyone to help in the Great American Cleanup on May 11, 2024 from 9am – 12 noon. Volunteers will meet at the Senior Center on the corner of Route 202 and Mayer Drive. If you are interested in joining this KEEP ROCKLAND BEAUTIFUL campaign, please contact Stacy at deputymayor@villageofmontebello.com.

PAY YOUR
VILLAGE OF
MONTEBELLO
TAXES
ONLINE

It's tax season! Need a copy of your past paid Village taxes? Copies of your 2022, 2023 and 2024 receipts can be found online. Visit the Village website and click on the "Pay Your Village of Montebello Taxes Online" box. In the search engine you can change the tax year and search by your name or street name to find your address.



Did You Know? - By Trustee Melanie Golden

The Village is planning to install four fast electric vehicle chargers—two at Village Hall at One Montebello Road (in addition to the two standard stations that are already there) and two at the Dr. Jeffrey Oppenheim Community Center at 350 Haverstraw Road to support those already there.

Please be aware that you may avail yourself of the following:

- ◆ Our Dr. Jeffrey Oppenheim Community Center is a great place to hold private events like graduation parties, birthdays, fundraisers, etc. The cost is \$50 per hour for Village residents. Reach out to Village Hall for more information.
- ◆ Montebello is considering holding a Montebello Jazz Festival in September —date and time to be announced. Stay tuned.
- ◆ We have a Tots Park and gazebo at Village Hall for you to enjoy as well as our 9-11 garden.
- ◆ Our Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park on Senator Levy Drive has hiking trails, benches, and gazebos for you to enjoy the outdoors along with several “ponds:”.
- ◆ You can follow the newly marked Washington-Rochambeau Trail, which traces the Revolutionary War Route in Montebello by following the new signs in our Village.



Explore the Beauty Surrounding Montebello - By Trustee Bruce Egenhauser

With the arrival of Spring, I'm reminded of how fortunate I am to be living and serving in this beautiful Village nestled against Harriman State Park, the second largest state park in New York, with more than 200 miles of hiking trails and acres and acres of natural beauty.

If life stresses you out, consider getting away from it all in the warmer weather, even for a few hours, by getting closer to nature. Here are some of my favorite places to visit that are just a 10-minute drive from the Village:

- Almost Perpendicular Trail and Claudius Smith Rock (see above picture): a popular hike that isn't too crowded where hikers can gain some elevation for big, jaw-dropping views.
- West Mountain Shelter: One of nine shelters in the park, this old stone lean-to is perched on a cliff overlooking the Hudson River.
- Lake Tiorati: A clear blue lake with a sandy beachfront that is surrounded by trails. The boat launch needs a key but kayaking on this pristine lake is worth it.

If you want to stay a little closer to home, there is Kathy Gorman Ponds Park off of Senator Levy Drive here in the Village that boasts several ponds, trails and some amazing birds and wildlife.



Dear Residents of Montebello,

It is with great enthusiasm and a deep sense of honor that I step into my new role as Trustee for our beloved Village. Having dedicated over two decades of my life to serving as a volunteer firefighter in Rockland County, including as the current President of the Monsey Fire Department, I am humbled to bring my passion for community service and my commitment to safety to the forefront of the village. My dedication to our community is further strengthened by the support of my loving wife, Rebecca, and our three amazing children.

Having lived in Rockland County my entire life, I have developed a profound appreciation for the unique character and spirit of our area. As your Trustee, I am dedicated to fostering unity and collaboration among our diverse population, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

My tenure as a firefighter has instilled in me the values of teamwork, compassion, and resilience, qualities that I will draw upon as I work alongside the Mayor and fellow trustees and community members to address the issues facing our village. Whether it's enhancing public safety, supporting local businesses, or preserving our natural landscapes, I am committed to keeping Montebello a wonderful place to live and raise families.

I am excited to embark on this journey with you all and am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Trustee. Together, let us continue to make Montebello a thriving and inclusive community for generations to come.

Warm regards,

Michael Humphrey, Village of Montebello Trustee



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

There is so much global negativity that I'm relieved to shorten my gaze to within our borders. I begin with an enthusiastic statement made by a relative newcomer upon being asked if he was building for resale vs moving into an elaborate home still in its planning stage? His answer: "We love Montebello. Thank you for making such a beautiful place where we choose to live!" And you know, I've heard this before from newcomers, old timers, and in betweeners, alike. I've even heard a plea to, "keep it the way it is".

So newcomers seem to want us to preserve what drew them to us; in a nutshell: nature's beauty preserved by virtue of firm but fair and consistent adherence to our codes such that what we have is not lost! I'll depart from positivity only to express surprise that some, thankfully only a few, seem to prefer the Wild West wherein rules apply, if at all, to everyone else but certainly not to them. What a shame and a waste! Sooner or later, our oversight will succeed for everyone's sake, including those who may prefer darkened windows and midnight construction.

Noteworthy projects in and near Montebello continue in the construction phase. Directly across from Village Hall you will have noticed the approximately 36,500 sq. ft. higher end office building, Montebello Gateway. Also quite noteworthy is the Assisted Living Facility, by Braemar, in Montebello Crossing across from Good Samaritan Hospital. The entire structure appears more village-like than institutional. It is weather tight, and lights are on inside. Also continuing to be worthy of mention are Manhattan Beer and Rockland Logistics IV, the latter being on the former Novartis site on Hemion Road. As to the former, work is proceeding on a connecting building linking and integrating function between it and the two pre-existing buildings and providing improved Railroad access to all.

Back to Rockland Logistics, with our Mayor's careful attention, and that of his team, meaning me as your Village Attorney, your Village Planner, Village Engineer, and Colliers Engineering & Design, who we have retained for ongoing traffic studies, we are expending significant effort to more globally involve all significant players as we view traffic mitigation a more regional problem. Thus, our efforts encompass, besides the Villages of Montebello and Suffern, the latter being the home to the three (3) new buildings (but access is via our Village), also include the County, the Town, other nearby Villages, and the State, including DOT and Thruway Authority. We wish the project well but believe that we must stay the course in the hope of avoiding likely gridlock given truck traffic from that project and other pending projects, adding to traffic already at a high level. We must continue the effort to mitigate traffic which we suspect will also spillover to clog our secondary roads.

Finally, meriting mention is the Stonehedge Heights project on approximately 17 acres on the west side of Spook Rock Road (the former Minetto Farm). Back again after multiple attempts, we seem to be close to a version capable of acceptance (even after expected new input from the Rockland County Planning Department, our Planning Board, etc.). In the new configuration five lots would be created: one preserving the original farmhouse and caretaker's cottage; 3 with large single-family homes; and a lot in condominium style ownership with 9 duplex homes and a pool complex. The site was previously approved with the farmhouse, cottage, and 11 large single-family homes. The latest design balances the total living square footage as previously approved, but in a different configuration. The Village Board intends to declare lead agency status with a Public Hearing on the associated Local Law expected to begin at the March meeting (unless the review is delayed by the SEQRA [environmental review] circulation process).

Let's hope the world calms down - at least we Montibellians can watch out for each other while sharing mutual love for our Village.

Sincerely,

Warren E. Berbit
Village Attorney



From the Desk of the Village Justice, Judge Kenneth Gobetz

Village courts play a crucial role in the justice system of New York, serving as the local tribunals that handle a range of legal matters within the boundaries of villages. Justice courts are part of the broader justice system and are often considered as a component of the town and village government structure. Village courts have jurisdiction over various civil and criminal cases, including traffic violations, small claims disputes, and misdemeanor criminal offenses. They contribute to the efficient administration of justice by addressing matters that are closer to the community, allowing for quicker resolution of local issues.

The justices who preside over village courts in New York serve part-time and bring a diverse range of experiences to the bench. Village courts are designed to provide accessible and community-oriented justice to foster a sense of local accountability and responsiveness. These courts often serve as the first point of contact for individuals entering the legal system and contribute to a decentralized approach to justice.

In addition to their role in adjudicating cases, village courts may also engage in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes, such as mediation, to attempt to resolve conflicts amicably. Among the goals of ADR are (a) saving costs on handling disputes, (b) resolving disputes faster and (c) providing an outlet for disputants to discuss frustrations. Overall, village courts in New York contribute to the state's legal landscape by providing accessible, community-centered forums for resolving disputes and addressing legal matters at the local level.



From the Desk of the Village Engineer, Martin K. Spence

VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO CONTINUTES TO OPERATE THE MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS4) WITH A NEW PERMIT FROM THE NYSDEC

The Village of Montebello has submitted a Notice of Intent to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for coverage under the new General Permit for Stormwater Discharge from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and received confirmation of the permit issuance. The MS4 program is a Federal regulation, administered by the State and requires the municipality (Village) to operate and maintain the storm sewer system within the Village to minimize pollutants entering the water course. This is an extension and part of the Clean Water Act. Periodically, the Village must renew the Permit to operate the MS4. The Permit covers a wide scope of construction as well as daily activities including stabilization of exposed soil at construction sites, chemicals that are applied to lawns, repairs to infrastructure as well as education of identifying potential pollution sources and mitigation.

This permit allows the village to oversee and operate the stormwater system within the Village. The Village has been operating their own MS4 for many years and is always updating local regulations based on NYSDEC recommendations and requirements. This permit covers public education/participation, illicit discharge into watercourses, stormwater discharge from construction sites and post construction stormwater systems. The Village works closely with the Town of Ramapo Highway Department and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County to ensure all regulations are met. The NYSDEC has listed many pollutants of concern and items that should not be introduced into watercourses. Village residents can check the Village website for additional information regarding stormwater and programs available for local residents.



Community Garden News

Interested in planting a garden for vegetables and flowers but don't know where to begin? Or maybe you do know how, but the thought of building a garden bed and installing a fence sends you back into hibernation. There is a solution: Get a garden plot at the Montebello Community Garden located behind Village Hall, now in its 13th year!

Any Montebello resident can, for an annual fee of \$25, "rent" a 4' X 16' garden plot (or two) which includes full use of the shed containing all the tools needed for gardening, and two hoses. Just bring in what you need to amend the soil and your seeds and plants. The garden is completely organic and artificial fertilizer, pesticides and weed killers are strictly prohibited so you can enjoy fresh, healthy produce all summer long.

Many residents prefer to garden here because everything they need is already here. Others love the sense of community afforded by working the earth with neighbors and friends. It's definitely a favorite of young families teaching their children to grow and harvest their own food. Subject to availability, plots are also available to local clubs who wish to provide fresh produce to food pantries and other charities.



From the Desk of the Building Inspector, Adam Gordon

The arrival of spring often brings thoughts of home-improvements, indoors and out. But not everyone is thinking about obtaining the proper building permit. Getting the necessary building permit is vital because it ensures safety, compliance with local and state building and zoning regulations, and helps homeowners avoid any legal or financial troubles down the road. It also helps you avoid having your property posted in violation, the Scarlet "A" of municipalities!

Any home improvement that is structural in nature requires a building permit, and applying is easy. Just fill out the Building Permit Application available on the village website and submit it to the Building Department with your plans, copies of your contractor and/or subcontractor Rockland County licenses and certificates of insurance, and the appropriate permit fee.

Once the permit is issued, the work is regularly inspected, and once the work is complete, a Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) is issued. Simply put, a building permit and ultimate issuance of a CofO ensures that the Village and homeowners are protected. If you are planning on some home improvements but unsure whether you even need a permit, call the Building Department at Village Hall for more information.



From the Desk of the Assistant Building Inspector, Marcos Padilla

Attention all landlords and property owners in the Village. As of January 1, 2024, a rental registry is required for all rental properties in the Village. This new requirement aims to improve the safety and maintenance of rental properties and to ensure that they meet basic standards & safety.

All owners of rental properties must register their properties with the Village. You must provide pertinent contact information for your rental property including: property address and contact details. Failure to comply with this new requirement may result in fines and/or other penalties.

This new inhouse Village rental registry will improve response times for emergencies, improve communication between the Village and the homeowner/landlord and improve relations between the Village and tenant.

Please note this new requirement applies to all rental properties in the Village, including single-family homes, apartments, and condominiums. Short-term rentals, defined as stays of less than 29 days, are prohibited under the Village code. This includes rentals booked through popular platforms like VRBO, Airbnb, HomeAway, ETC. This restriction aims to maintain the residential character of our neighborhoods. Property owners are required to adhere to the code and are encouraged to explore longer-term rental options. Please note that violations may result in fines and other penalties. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to our building department.

If you own a rental property, please contact the Village office to obtain the necessary registration forms to comply with this new requirement. Let's work together to maintain a safe and thriving rental community in our Village!



Just a reminder...all outdoor lighting shall be shielded in a manner to direct lighting away from adjacent properties and the public street. Exterior lighting shall be limited to the minimum requirements by code for safety and shall comply with the site development plan specifications. See Section 195.58 (10) of the Code of the Village of Montebello.

If you have any questions, please contact our Building Department.

Lost Montebello

Lisa Levin, Chairperson, Montebello Historic Preservation and Parks Commission

Although Montebello still boasts many historic properties, notable properties have been lost due to neglect, fire, or teardown. The extant historic houses of Montebello remain a testament to its multi-faceted past; however, what has been lost should not be forgotten.

Pine Tree Farms: Built in 1907 on 54 acres at the corner of Airmont and Montebello Roads by prominent New York City attorney Robert Chetwood Beatty, Pine Tree Farms was an impressive stucco and stone mansion with views of the Ramapo Mountains. The stone pillar entrance can still be seen on Montebello Road, just past Village Hall. Later owned by industrialist Henry Schwartz, who expanded the property to 240 acres, the estate is now the location of the Montebello Pines neighborhood.

The Aaron Burr Cottage: Believed to have pre-dated the American Revolution, a simple cottage once stood on the property of Pine Tree Farms. Theodosia Provost, widow of the original owner, Major James Marcus Provost (who was granted a 5,000-acre patent in 1775 by the King of England, which included land in southern Rockland County), married Aaron Burr in 1782. Burr maintained a law practice in Haverstraw, and the couple was believed to have stayed in the house while Burr was in residence there. The cottage was eventually purchased in 1918 by Perley Morse, owner of the adjoining property (now Village Hall), who restored it to reflect the Provost/Burr era. Sadly, the cottage was destroyed by a fire in 1985.

Rockrest: Located on Lafayette Avenue just east of Tagaste Monastery, there once stood a grand estate built by State Assemblyman and businessman Otis H. Cutler. Begun in 1904, the mansion "was an imposing 35 rooms, three-story English Tudor style mansion. The palatial grounds included a swimming pool, tennis courts and formal gardens. Across the road...was 'Boulder Farm' (aptly deriving its name from Indian Rock) where they ran an active and very productive farm. There was a huge dairy barn, greenhouses and other assorted outbuildings...Several acres were developed into an apple orchard with the property cleared all the way back to the railroad tracks." In 1933, Cutler's son Robert converted the dairy barn into a playhouse, which would become the famed professional summer stock "Suffern County Theater." (Craig Long, Village Historian) The theater closed by the late 1940s and the estate was abandoned, eventually destroyed by fire in the late 1950s. Today, all that remains are the stone wall and entrance pillars. An assisted living facility is currently being built on the rear of the property.

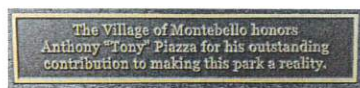
Sadly, these properties are gone; however, many historic properties remain. If you are interested in exploring Montebello's extant historic properties, please visit the Village website to download the Village of Montebello Historic Resource Survey. If you have a historic home and would like more information about Historic Designation for your property, please contact me or stop by Village Hall to pick up a "Request for Evaluation" application.



Reflecting on the passing of a cherished member of the Village family

It is with the Village's sincere condolences to Kathleen and the entire family of Anthony "Tony" Piazza who passed away recently.

Tony was instrumental in making the Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park a reality to help provide a beautiful park for everyone to enjoy. He was a continuous member of the Parks Commission (and later HPPC) since 2006. His long-term lasting contributions will be remembered for years to come. In commemoration of his accomplishments for the Village, a bench has been installed in the very park he was an integral part of creating.



All are welcome to celebrate Arbor Day at our annual celebration on Friday, April 26, 2024, at 1:00 pm. At this celebration, Mayor Millman will be dedicating this year's Arbor Day Tree and encouraging you to plant a tree as well.

REMINDER: VILLAGE ELECTIONS!

Village Trustee - 3 year unexpired term

Village Trustee - 1 year unexpired term



**Village Elections will take place on
Tuesday, March 19th - 7 AM to 9 PM
At Village Hall, One Montebello Road**

(Voting will be in the Senior Center at the back of the building)

Only Registered Voters may Vote

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