



# Village of Montebello

**Lance N. Millman**, Mayor

**Stacy Caridi**, Deputy Mayor  
**Steven H. Beldock**, Trustee

**Melanie Golden**, Trustee  
**Evan Kuperman**, Trustee

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](http://www.villageofmontebello.org)

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

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## Winter 2019 Edition

### *Greetings from the Mayor*



I am happy to report that our Village continues to be financially stable. Our Village Board has continued to control expenses and minimize any potential increase in taxes.

With the continued aid of our Village Accountant and Village Clerk-Treasurer, I was able to put together a Mayor's budget that will not only be within the required 2% maximum cap imposed by the state, but will aid in keeping close track on our fixed and variable expenses.

We continue to keep any increases in taxes as low as possible and maintain our roads and our village. We are working on a three-year capital expenditure budget that will help us project what expense we may need in the near future. This includes such items as road repaving, Village Hall and Community Center repairs, for example.

In addition, with the support of Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffe and Senator David Carlucci, we have been able to obtain grants that have helped us repave Village parking lots, repair Village roofs, obtain emergency generators for the Village Hall and the village community center at no cost to our taxpayers.

With the help of County Executive Edwin Day and the County Legislator, we have been able to purchase 10 acres of vacant wetlands on Marian Drive. The land was previously bought by third parties who mistakenly believed they could build after filling in the wetlands. We have declared such as parklands that can never be built upon.

We are considering a program to obtain future wetlands that would allow us to control what can be built on these pieces of property that are needed to keep our water clean, our wells protected, and not to worry about landfills and overbuilding in restricted protected wetland areas. If you know of such properties in the Village, please feel free to contact me at Village Hall or email me at [mayor@villageofmontebello.com](mailto:mayor@villageofmontebello.com). We will evaluate the properties and see what options we may have.

We are currently in the process of merging two of our commissions together, The Historic Preservation Commission and the Parks Commission. By combining these two commissions we will have a stronger group of dedicated individuals who will help identify landmark or historic districts and work together to protect our valuable assets and properties. In addition, they will review and present suggestions that will help maintain our beautiful parkland and to present ideas to benefit our residents living in our community.

I would like to once again commend all the residents who have spent endless hours volunteering to work on our boards and commissions and to thank those who work in Village Hall along with our professionals, including our Village Attorney, Assistant Village Attorneys, Building Inspector and Fire Inspector who work so hard to make sure our laws are maintained for the benefit of all who live here.

As always, please drive safely through our Village and let us know of any issues, whether positive or negative, that you think will better our community.

Stay warm and enjoy the winter and I look forward to seeing you all walk and ride through the village in the upcoming Spring Season.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Lance N. Millman



### ***Around Village Hall*** ***By Stacy Caridi, Deputy Mayor***

With the change of seasons, comes change in other areas as well.

The Village would like to congratulate Christopher Kear, our long time Fire Inspector. Chris has recently accepted the position of Director of the Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services at the Fire Training Center. Chris has served the Village well since 2012 and we wish him much success in his new role and continued success in his future.

In the Village Hall, we have a new Fire Inspector taking up the charge from Christopher Kear. The Village is happy to announce the appointment of Adam Gordon.

Adam comes highly experienced as he is also the Fire Inspector in another village. Adam is also a volunteer fireman with Brewer Fire Engine Co. No. 1 where he has served as Lieutenant, Captain, as well as Chief of the department and is currently Second Assistant Chief.

The Village has also hired a new Justice Court Clerk. Raquel Diaz came highly recommended with almost 10 years of prior court experience. She works in another municipality as a court clerk and we are happy to have her services.

At this time, we would like to welcome Adam and Raquel into the Montebello family.



### ***Village Goals*** ***By Melanie Golden, Trustee***

Our Village Board has been busy implementing our new Comprehensive Plan and there is still much work to be done. Our Village Attorney's article highlights many of the local laws the Village has already implemented in order to achieve its stated goals. The Village focused on two goals this past year:

**Goal 1:** Maintain and enhance the existing natural and residential character of the Village of Montebello, exemplified by winding roads framed by mature trees, homes set apart, rock walls and hedges, and beautiful views of the mountains surrounding the Village.

**Goal 2:** Preserve the critical environmental assets of the Village for the benefit of current and future citizens of Montebello.

Some recent Village actions to meet these goals include enacting a Historic and Scenic Road District; adopting a "Greenprint" that identifies community open space, parks and recreational areas, as well as important environmental resources; and creating environmental protection overlay districts to safeguard wetlands, our underlying aquifer, and local waterways, as well as to help prevent future flooding.

This year, the Board will be implementing other recommended actions. One stated goal that I would like to spearhead relates to the following goal:

Create a greener community by becoming a Climate Smart Community to help mitigate climate change through carbon neutrality and employing more sustainable practices in connections with land use and development.

The Climate Smart Community ("CSC") Certification Program is an initiative led by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that provides local governments with a framework to guide climate action and achieve recognition for their leadership. The goals of the program will help Montebello:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Save taxpayer dollars;
- Increase energy security and reliability;
- Build resiliency to the impacts of climate change;
- Advance community goals for public health and safety; and
- Support a green innovation economy.

Our Village has already taken the Climate Smart Community Pledge. Now comes the hard work! The CSC Certification program recognizes more than 100 actions to choose from as we design a customized strategy to work towards certification. I am looking for community members who would like to work together to make Montebello the first certified CSC in Rockland County. Please reach out to me at [trusteegolden@villageofmontebello.com](mailto:trusteegolden@villageofmontebello.com) If you would like to join this important project.

### ***Common Courtesy***

***By Steven H. Beldock, Trustee***



Just a few words about common courtesy. Most of us were brought up with the notion that we should do our best to be courteous towards those with whom we interact. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, some of us seem to have lost our way. One example of this is how we behave as drivers. In New York City, it is common practice for a driver who is driving straight at an intersection to accelerate fast enough so an individual attempting to turn left from the opposing direction at the same intersection is unable to turn until after the first driver passes through the intersection. Obviously, the opposite of common courtesy.

When I first moved up to Rockland County in 1996, people behaved in a courteous fashion, exactly the opposite of my experiences in New York City. In the same circumstance, the first driver would let the left turning driver, in the opposing direction, complete their turn before driving through the intersection. Things seemed to have changed through the years.

There are a number of locations in Rockland County where two-lane roads become one-lane roads. One of those locations is eastbound Airmont Road just beyond Montebello Road, where the road becomes a single-lane from two lanes. A second location is eastbound New Hempstead Road just east of Little Tor Road in New City. In both these locations, at any time of the day, when there is a little bit of traffic, you can see people accelerating like crazy just to get in front of the next car. In fact, I would not be the least bit surprised to find out that there have been multiple accidents at both locations.

A bit of common courtesy would go a long way, both at intersections and at these locations where two lanes become one. Instead of trying to beat out the next car, exercise common courtesy, smile, and let someone else go first.

There is a saying “pay it forward”. Maybe if each one of us exercise a little more common courtesy, the person to whom we have been courteous would “pay it forward” the next time they encounter one of these situations. Beating out the other driver is not necessarily a great reward. Exercising common courtesy will be much more satisfying in the end.

### ***Hiking Around Montebello***

***By Evan T. Kuperman, Trustee***



One of the absolutely amazing things about living in Montebello is our close proximity to trails for walking and hiking. In the center of Montebello Pines, we have the Kathryn Gorman Ponds Park with many trails and ponds. Fishing is allowed by state permit and we have a beautiful gazebo that overlooks one of the larger ponds with benches throughout. On the outskirts of our village we have Kakiat Park covering 376 acres including multiple trails. One trail in particular runs along the Mahwah River and is great for an afternoon stroll. For a longer hike you can loop the Mountain Trail and Kakiat Trail for around a two-mile hike. Kakiat is also an access point for the Suffern-Bear Mountain Trail.

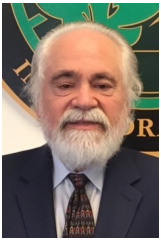
Outside of the village, we have other wonderful parks where you can find many village residents out on the weekend such as the Ramapo Reservation, which is Bergen County’s largest park with over 4,000+ acres. We are also lucky to live near Harriman State Park, which is more than 47,500 acres and the second largest state park in NY with over 32 ponds and lakes and over 200 miles of hiking trails. Between the beauty of all the trees in our village and all these amazing features, and with the close proximity to NYC, it is no wonder why Montebello is a very desirable place to live.

As the weather warms up, we will see more people walking throughout our village. With the tight curves and narrow roads, I see more people walking in the middle of the pavement throughout neighborhoods. In the evening it is important to increase your visibility with a flashlight or reflector in hand. Please drive carefully and watch out for fellow Villagers.

### ***Road Closure & Detour***



Memorial Drive in the Village of Suffern has been made into a one-way street due to major road construction that will be taking place. During this road construction, traffic will be detoured from Memorial Drive. Timeline for the construction is determined to be lengthy. We ask all residents residing or traveling the road during this time to be especially cautious.



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

Dear Montebellian,

Writing in the dead of winter with the wind howling, and snow flakes horizontally tapping on the window panes, is not really conducive to a positive message. On the other hand, I have always felt thankful at such times for the warmth and shelter afforded by hearth and home.

Perhaps such thoughts are a metaphor for your Village, and those who serve it. I would like to believe that we are here for the larger good to provide shelter when needed, and an environmentally enhanced life style to all of our residents, and for the generations to come.

Of course, occasionally residents disagree with each other or with their elected or appointed officials, who, in turn, can disagree with each other. So what? Well-intended people ironing out differences leads to better decision making – what do they say, ‘viva la difference!’

Okay, more to the business at hand, here is a summary of our 2018 legislative effort, mostly having been discussed in detail before:

- Local Law No. 1 of 2018 – Permitting and regulating beekeeping.
- Local Law No. 2 of 2018 – Combined Neighborhood Shopping (NS) and Professional Office (PO) into the NS zoning District, as well as adding Animal Hospitals and Veterinary Clinics as a Special Permit Use.
- Local Law No. 3 of 2018 – Adding exceptions for improvements to accommodate physically disabled persons.
- Local Law No. 4 of 2018 – Implementation of Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODS) and aquifer and wellhead protection standards.
- Local Law No. 5 of 2018 – Created Historic and Scenic Roads Overlay District, with review procedures and standards.
- Local Law No. 6 of 2018 – Created special permit standards and definitions for Public Gathering Places.
- Local Law No. 7 of 2018 – Amendment to allow Assisted Living Residences (ALR) by special permit in LO-C district.

The 2019 legislative agenda will begin with a Public Hearing to combine the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Parks Commission, to create the Historic Preservation and Parks Commission (HPPC). We expect this to take place in February or March. This is prompted in part because Local Law No. 5, mentioned above, placed Appropriateness Public Hearings re: activity in the Historic and Scenic Road Overlay District in the hands of the HPC, and one such hearing is already well underway. We believe that the dual skills and experience possessed by each Commission will enhance the deliberative process for this and all other purposes.

The legislative agenda will also witness the adoption of other Local Laws to address the next phase of changes needed to effectuate the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

As I forewarned, the new year did witness the departure of our able and respected Assistant Village Attorney, Ira M. Emanuel. With one minor hiatus, Ira served our Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, and generally in land use matters, since our inception as a Village. Ira became so well-known and in demand in land use matters, that we mutually agreed that it was best to free him from our municipal yolk. Nothing will change that we will forever be grateful for all that he has done for the Village, and we wish him every success.

I am pleased to be able to reaffirm that to fill the void we retained the services of two excellent municipal attorneys with good land use experience. Alyse Terhune took over Ira’s primary role in September to allow phasing in time. Elizabeth Cassidy, equally experienced and able, became Deputy Assistant Village Attorney to serve when Alyse is unable to do so. Alyse and Elizabeth have seamlessly begun their service.

The days are already getting noticeably longer, so Spring can’t be far away. Please stay safe, warm, and I hope to see you on my running route soon enough.

Sincerely,

Warren E. Berbit, Village Attorney



### ***Justice Court News*** ***By Judge Arnold Etelson***



Our Village Justice Court continues to be relatively quiet, but even so we do deal with a number of Driving while Intoxicated (DWI) cases derived from events occurring on our roads.

Some time ago I was presiding over a felony case and challenged the District Attorney's application to reduce the charge to a misdemeanor. The procedure raises an interesting concept of the doctrine of separation of powers whereby the office of the District Attorney, as the prosecutor, being an arm of the Executive branch of our government, takes the position that they have the authority to "chart the course" of a criminal case. Their position is well founded in the Constitution, both federal and state, and the relevant laws and court decisions supporting that view. I denied the application, however, based upon the relevant facts, because of my belief that the prosecutorial discretion is not unfettered because of our system of justice provided by the checks and balances on the separation of powers. My commentary on the case will appear in the New York State Magistrate's Journal.

We recently were confronted with a justice court issue brought by the retirement of our court clerk, followed by a replacement of a new court clerk who unfortunately followed soon after with a resignation due to family issues. This left us without a court clerk for a few months. Any judge will tell you that a competent court clerk is the life blood of the court system. We now have a new court clerk, Raquel Diaz, who comes to us highly recommended by her service elsewhere.

I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank our Village Clerk-Treasurer, Joan Will, for her help in dealing with the above issue. Without my request, Joan stepped forward and took care of the essentials to run the day to day operation of the court including her presence in court sessions, not a part of her Village Clerk's position. Her expertise derived from many prior years experience as a Justice Court clerk provided the knowledge and skill necessary to make things run smoothly until Raquel was appointed. I applaud her dedication to our Village.

### ***MONTEBELLO PARKS COMMISSION***

***By Amy Rapoport, Parks Chairperson***



Fall has come and gone, along with our favorite task, raking leaves. Many of us were caught off guard with the early snow which covered the leaves remaining on the ground since many trees were late dropping them. A better option to raking is mulching. Mulching leaves is what's best for the health of your lawn. As mulched leaves decompose they enhance the soil with valuable nutrients. Mulching is easier and more lawn friendly.

I'd like to thank Bob Congionti for his many years of service to the Village as a member of the Parks Commission. Bob has been a loyal member for many years and also served as Chairperson. His leadership during the "Keep Rockland Beautiful" campaign was important in bringing people together for the greater good. Much appreciation Bob for all you did!

From the Audubon Society, please note if you feed the birds—[www.audubon.org/news/to-feed-or-not-feed](http://www.audubon.org/news/to-feed-or-not-feed).

The Commission has been monitoring the ponds in Katherine Gorman Ponds Park and preparing for this years' treatments to stunt the algae growth. Our permits will soon be filed with the DEC to be assured that we are on target with the first application in early spring. We hope you've been to the park and hiked around the ponds and enjoy the views from the pavilion.

We have starting working with an Eagle Scout who chose to work on trail signs and pathways for the park as his Eagle Scout project. The trails will be labeled by name and color, with the length of each trail noted as well. The trail names have been selected with the assistance of the Village Historian. The new trail names are Kane's Open, Winaki, and Utopia, in addition to the Daniel Beard Trail which is already established. We look forward to continuing our work with the Scout and completing this project in the Spring.

### ***From the Village Clerk***

***By Joan Will***

A special thank you to the entire Village Hall staff for their dedication and commitment to the Montebello residents and a special thank you to Louise Renud for the new look of our newsletter.

**SPOTLIGHT ON: “Blind Players Club”****By Lisa Levin, Chairperson Historic Preservation Commission**

Originally the A.P. Frederick farm, the property at 103 Montebello Road, also known as the “Blind Players Club,” was acquired by Thomas Fortune and Ida Barry Ryan in 1905. Although there is evidence to suggest that the existing house might have been built incorporating the earlier c. 1850s Frederick farmhouse, the house as it currently exists was completed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following the death of Ida Barry Ryan, the property was purchased by Charles Pace in 1920 and extensive improvements were made on the house prior to Pace selling the property to the Blind Players Club that year. The “Team Play Lodge,” as it was known, consisted of ten acres complete with orchards and gardens, and was purchased with proceeds from the group’s dramatic

performances (The New Outlook for the Blind, Vol. 17-18, 1923).

The Blind Players Club, originally formed in 1914 in Brooklyn, NY and incorporated in Suffern, NY in July of 1921, was a group of blind women from Brooklyn who staged dramatic performances with the purpose of raising funds to benefit visually impaired women. The group taught young visually-impaired individuals self-confidence and strove to “correct the unintelligent attitude of a large proportion of the public toward the blind...the message the Club has been able, through dramatic work, to carry to more than twenty-five thousand people during the last few years.” (The New Outlook for the Blind, Vol. 17-18, 1923). The property at 103 Montebello Road was purchased in 1920 first as a vacation destination to provide members with musical and dramatic instruction, social services and “handicraft opportunities” (Brooklyn Historical Society). Eventually, the location became a year-round residence. Later, the club included a summer camp for blind children, known as “Camp Montebello.” In the early 1960s, an indoor swimming pool was added on the adjacent property at 101 Montebello Road. Under the direction of Julia Geoghegan, a member of the Blind Players Club, Camp Montebello provided summer recreational, educational and dramatic opportunities for inner-city blind children for over 30 years.

Unfortunately, following a fire in 2014, the house has remained vacant and boarded-up, left to deteriorate. The Camp Montebello pool building at 101 Montebello Road, although still standing, has also suffered from years of vacancy.



The deterioration and potential loss of important historic properties like the Blind Players Club and Camp Montebello emphasize the critical need for property owners to designate their historic houses, whether on a local, state, or national level. Once these properties are gone, the history associated with our area is all but forgotten. A community’s history helps define its personality and its historic resources provide its unique character. Historic preservation provides a link to the roots of the community and, ultimately, adds to the quality of life making for a more livable place. The area that constitutes the Village of Montebello has a rich history and is home to over 300 historic (defined as at least fifty years old) and architecturally significant homes. One of the ongoing goals of the Montebello Historic Preservation Commission is to help assure that these historically significant properties are preserved for generations to come by encouraging owners to designate them and give them the status that they deserve. In addition to helping to protect its future, designating a home as historic can also yield potential village tax benefits and appreciation in home value. If you’d like more information about Historic Designation for your property, please call Montebello Village Hall at 845-368-2211 or stop by to pick up a “Request for Evaluation” application.

**Orange and Rockland Service Issues**

Got a streetlight out? No Power? Trees interfering with wires? These issues and more can be reported to Orange and Rockland through links on the Village website or directly on the Orange and Rockland website. Anyone who needs to report a street light outage needs to provide the 10 digit number on the yellow metal tag located on the utility pole. If no tag is available then you can provide the names of the cross streets and intersections or give the location of the pole in relation to a house number or landmark. You can reach Orange and Rockland through their website [www.oru.com](http://www.oru.com)

**Got Potholes?**

Along with the drastic changes in weather comes potholes. These craters in the road can cause damage to your vehicle.

A majority of the roads within the Village are maintained by the Town of Ramapo Highway Department. If you see a pothole and wish to report it to the town you can do so by calling (845) 357-0903, faxing (845) 357-8197, or emailing them at [townoframapohighway@ramapo-ny.gov](mailto:townoframapohighway@ramapo-ny.gov)

**Building Department News****By Larry Picarello, Building Inspector**

Getting ready to sell or refinance your home? A bit of preparation will help ease the process. I would encourage any resident to come in and review your Building Department records on your home. It's important to see that all improvements, modifications, and additions are covered by the appropriate Certificates of Occupancy. The records are kept in very good order, on site at Village Hall, and are available during regular office hours.

Lending institutions and title companies have become more cautious and generally insist on a "violation search" before signing off. Typically, the Building Department will receive a request for a violation search. The office will then send a letter to the homeowner to try and schedule an inspection.

A checklist of basic safety items will be provided and when you are ready, we will conduct an exterior and interior inspection. If you would like a copy of the Violation Search Checklist, please contact our office at Village Hall.

The most common problem that surfaces is basements finished without the required building permit and being used without the appropriate Certificate of Occupancy. This can be a "deal breaker" and may delay a sale or refinance. In some instances, a buyer could lose their commitment or be forced to pay a higher percentage if rates change. The best way to avoid this is to come and have a look at your files.

Please feel free to contact me at (845) 368-2491 or by email at [buildinginspector@villageofmontebello.com](mailto:buildinginspector@villageofmontebello.com)

**MONTEBELLO COMMUNITY GARDEN****By The Garden Gnome (aka Regina Rivera)**

Spring is around the corner, and it's time to kick off the 2019 growing season. There will be an informational meeting for all registered gardeners in mid-March. Garden ground rules will be chief among discussion topics, with emphasis on proper plot preparation because eliminating weeds and getting the soil ready are vital first steps in growing a successful garden. Date and time are still to be determined, so check the Village website.

I'd like to remind everyone that there is a new greenhouse next to the garden built by resident and Eagle Scout Josh Hinkley of Boy Scout Troop 21 of Suffern. It is made entirely out of PVC pipes and used plastic bottles, and perfectly exemplifies "reduce, reuse and recycle." It is also in keeping with the Village's green initiatives. Mayor Lance N. Millman presented Josh with a Certificate of Achievement at his Eagle Scout Court of Honor in December. Late winter is the perfect time to start sprouting your seeds, and all community garden members are encouraged to make use of the greenhouse. The Village would also like to commend the members of Boy Scout Troop 25 who were kind enough to help with the fall clean-up of about a dozen garden plots. We thank them for their time and hard work, and stress the importance of garden maintenance before, during, and after the season.

Current garden members will receive an email with renewal information shortly, and those interested in starting a new garden can stop in at Village Hall any time to fill out an application. Feel free to call us with any questions and for information on all things "community garden." Let's hope for less rain, more sunshine and no groundhogs. Here's to a successful and bountiful 2019 growing season!

**Winter Weather: Garbage & Recycling Reminder**

Carlo Minuto Carting, the contractor for the Village of Montebello would like to remind their customers about access to trash and recycling containers in inclement weather. Please make sure a clear path, free of snow and ice, is available to the service team members so they can access containers at your location. Keep in mind the path should be large enough to push or pull the containers to their trucks. This is especially necessary if you have backdoor pickup. The service team will make every effort possible to serve you, but will have no choice but to skip any customer that does not have a clear path. If your snow removal is done by a private vendor, please make sure they do not block access to any containers or large dumpsters. Your cooperation during winter conditions is greatly appreciated. If you should have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Carlo Minto Carting at (845) 353-5678.



Village of Montebello  
One Montebello Road  
Montebello, NY 10901

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# REMINDER: VILLAGE ELECTIONS!



Village Mayor  
Village Trustee  
Village Trustee

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

**On the ballot will be the filling of 4-year terms for  
Mayor and two Trustees**