

## Village of Montebello

Lance N. Millman, Mayor

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

Melanie Golden, Trustee Evan Kuperman, Trustee

#### **August 2020 Edition**

originally posted to Village website August 10, 2020



Dear Montebello Residents:

It has been a trying and exhausting week for all our residents who have had no electric, internet and communications for their homes as well as having streets blocked off from down trees and wires. The storm has run havoc on both our community as well as our county and state.

We have been in constant contact with our local government officials and Orange and Rockland as well as participating in conference calls each day. By far it has been an uphill battle for us and all around us.

Orange and Rockland has insisted that they are trying their best, however, it may seem differently from those in our community. Multiple officials have called for an investigation as to why things take so long and why they were not better prepared. We have concluded that the information on their website was insufficient and sketchy at best. There are multiple steps before a repair of an outage can occur including: having someone standing at a down tree and wire site and warning cars the area is closed, calling in an evaluation team, calling in a tree cleaning team, calling in a wire cleanup team, and calling Cable or Verizon that they are needed on the site all before a repair starts.

I have complained on the daily conference calls that Montebello always seems to be last in getting things repaired and that history keeps repeating itself. Orange and Rockland told us that they didn't know about certain outages and we proved to them they did know, and they simply failed to act. We had excellent support from the Town of Ramapo Supervisor Michael Specht and Police Chief Brad Wiedel. Police Chief Wiedel also personally called in situations for our village.

Our Deputy Mayor relentlessly pursued Orange and Rockland staying on top of them day and night correcting and updating them. Our Trustees and Village professionals toured the Village gathering and reporting as much information as possible. Our Village Hall Staff has been fielding calls and complaints passing the information on to the proper authorities.

Unfortunately, although most of our 1300 households that were without power have been restored, we still have approximately 20 or so homes remaining with no power. We are still working hard to assure everyone that no one home will be forgotten.

With appreciation, we have worked together with the Town of Ramapo to make sure that cooling centers are open to all our residents and that water and charging stations are available. Our Village is not as equipped as the Town for these situations and a decision was made to continue using the town.

Please also be aware that Orange and Rockland's website <a href="www.oru.com">www.oru.com</a> facilitates the filing of claims for individuals and businesses for those who have lost power for more than 48 hours to recover some costs for spoiled food and medications. I recommend that you go online and file as soon as you can.

Multiple crises serve to emphasize how important it is for the village to have access to all their residents including email access. The Village needs to also have an accurate list of homes who only use well water for this will identify residents who do not have water during a power failure crisis. To date we only have 60 emails on file for our 1700 homes. We have constantly tried in the past to obtain this information with little outcome. Rest assured this will be only used to update you with important information that you need to know on a timely basis.

Please access our site at <a href="www.villageofmontebello.org">www.villageofmontebello.org</a> for Village information and updates and sign up to give us your information.

Please know that as difficult as matters may seem, behind the scenes myself, your Trustees and Village Hall staff have worked relentlessly to help remedy the crisis.

Sincerely, Lance Millman, Mayor

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 the Mayor

To say the least, it has been a difficult time for all but I am proud of what we have all done to stay safe and healthy and to support those who had to work through this unusual time in our country's history. Montebello residents did what they had to, helped when they had to. We currently are all doing our best to adapt to these times. We must all continue to act smart and wear our masks and to keep our social distancing. We need to continue to support our local businesses. With our ability to order take out, we have helped many restaurants in our area to survive when there was little hope.

I have been constantly updated by our County Executive, Ed Day, through conference calls with his team including other Supervisors and Mayors. We have been kept up to date on what is being done and how things are to be handled.

Our Village Hall has been open throughout this crisis. We were available through telephone and the internet. We have just installed safety protection plexiglass for our staff and for public safety. Our offices are now open to the public who must wear face masks to enter for everyone's safety.

With the help of the County and managed by our Town, we have been allocated white cotton cloth face masks which we distributed through Village Hall. We still have some available, if you need them contact our Staff.

By now everyone has read about the financial constraints the state has told us will be coming. New York State has spoken about a 25% reduction in funding for our schools, as well as the possibility of other funding decreases. I am very pleased to report that because we have been extremely prudent over the years and have built up reserves in case of emergencies, any reductions in village funding can be absorbed by this reserve. We anticipate in 2020, probably taking a financial hit of \$100-200,000 in our budget. We do not foresee an increase to the village taxes. I cannot say what the town and school taxes will be, but we can probably expect at the Town and County level some type of tax increase to make up their shortfall.

Our parks and playgrounds were originally closed due to Covid-19, but I am happy to say our parks and playgrounds are now re-opened. Please do not get fooled by this though, we still must wear our masks anytime we go out and we must always continue with social distancing. We are also very lucky that Rockland County has been recovering at a pace that meets New York State mandates and that our restaurants are able to continue to serve outdoors and serve inside with limited seating.

We must continue to be proactive, wear our masks and do the right thing for each other. There are those who do not believe wearing the mask is necessary. I say that is ok for them but do not jeopardize the rights of others to stay healthy with their decision. If you are in the supermarkets or restaurants or even the common area space in your office or apartment buildings just do the right thing and wear your mask.

Through these turbulent times, we have been able to find a little sunshine at the village financial level. Our in-house Village Accountant along with our Village Planners have found that the cost to repave our roads has gone down and that any funds borrowed by the village are at an all-time extraordinary low rate. Because of this, our cash as we go policy did not make sense, especially since our bonded indebtedness for other purposes is maturing thus eliminating that ongoing debt. We currently have borrowed through a BAN \$525,000 at a rate of 1.0962% for 5 years to repave twelve roads. We normally only do three to five roads but this financial savings with low interest rate could not be overlooked. As of this newsletter, these twelve roads have been completed.

In addition, the Village Board has presented and passed a Resolution asking the residents of our Village to come out on September 15, 2020 for a special referendum to vote on a resolution for \$1,495,000 of bonding to do an additional 14 roads and to pay off the \$525,00 BAN we just borrowed. Our accountants and planners have worked the numbers and have presented them to our Village Board. We continued to stay the course of being financially prudent and have found that by bonding these roads with a 15-year payout the village will be saving money over the next 5-10 years. The result is that we can get a jump on keeping our roads in pristine shape for a lower cost than what it would have cost us over our current 10-year budgeting plan.

I know the question all residents will ask – isn't this going to cost us more money and cause our village taxes to go up? The answer is "No" – it will make the most sense financially if we do go forward with this bonding plan and I can report that we do not foresee increased village taxes for the next two years. We will continue to act as prudently as possible to keep our village financially safe, now and into the future.

I ask everyone, registered qualified voters of our Village, that you come out either through an absentee ballot or in person to exercise your right to vote on this Bonding Referendum September 15, 2020 at Village Hall Senior Center.

Please continue to walk and bike throughout our neighborhoods and say or wave hello to each other. We all need the moral support. If you know of someone who needs any assistance, let us know and we will do our best to get them help and let the right authorities know of their situation.

I would like to end by saying stay safe, stay healthy, keep supporting those workers who have risked their lives for us during these troubling times and keep supporting our businesses.

Sincerely, Lance Millman, Mayor

#### August 2020 Edition



#### Recycling in Rockland—By Stacy Caridi, Deputy Mayor

Sorting your paper, cardboard and other recyclables is quick and easy. Just focus on tossing all mixed paper (cardboard, office paper, file folders, newspaper, mail/greeting cards or egg cartons) into the blue bin and plastic, glass, aluminum, milk/juice/food containers and metal into the green container. Please EMPTY and RINSE all containers. Keep it loose! Don't bag up your recyclables. Flatten and break down cardboard boxes, large quantities can be bundled and tied. Place any shredded paper in paper bags.

The items listed below DO NOT belong in your recycling bins or garbage:

- No plastic bags- INSTEAD: Recycle your bags at a participating grocery or retail stores
- No Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs or Electronic Waste items INSTEAD: Bring these items to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility in Pomona.
- No Sharps (needles, syringes or lancets) waste INSTEAD: Find safe & secure disposal information at www.rocklandgov.com.
- No Pharmaceuticals DO NOT FLUSH down the toilet or dispose in the garbage. INSTEAD: Bring to your local police department or the Rockland County Sheriff's office.
- No Tires INSTEAD: Go to Village Hall, purchase a sticker (\$5 per tire) to dispose curbside through the Carting company.
- No Small Freon Appliances (air conditioners, small refrigerators, water coolers or dehumidifiers) INSTEAD: For refrigerators (working or non-working) contact O&R (1-866-552-3755) and they will help recycle your old unit and pay you \$25. All other appliances (with removal of doors) can be placed curbside on your 2<sup>nd</sup> garbage pick-up day.

The 2020 Household Hazardous Waste newsletter (orange) was mailed to all homeowners. Additional copies are available at Village Hall. Their newsletter outlines the drop-off dates at the Training Center in Pomona along with a list of Acceptable and Unacceptable items.



#### Reaching the Community—By Melanie Golden, Trustee

I hope that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. It is hard to imagine that just months ago, we didn't know that COVID-19 even existed. We have all lived through many changes in our lives and played an important role in trying to limit the impact of this virus. A crisis like this, as well as the recent power outage, makes many things clear—one of which is the importance of being able to reach out to our community in times of emergency.

In our past newsletters, we have asked our residents to provide the Village with email contact information so that we can communicate with you in emergency situations. Very few of our residents have provided their contact information to us. So I ask each and every one of you to please take a moment now and log onto your computer, tablet, or mobile phone and sign up to receive emergency notifications regarding the Village at <a href="https://www.villageofmontebello.org">www.villageofmontebello.org</a>. To provide your email address simply **scroll down to the bottom of the home page and sign up under "Village News Subscription."** This will allow the Village to reach out to you in the event of an emergency, whether we are dealing with a snowstorm, a hurricane, major disruptions in utility services or a public health crisis. Your email will not be used for any other reason; it will be kept secure and will not be sold to anyone. So please sign up today! Thanks and stay well!

#### From the Village Clerk's Office:

- The carting company will be picking up the brown "lawn & leaf" bags each Tuesday through the 2nd week of December. Leaves, yard debris, and small sticks can be placed in these bags and left curbside. Branches less than 4 inches in diameter and less than 4 feet in length can be tied and bundled and also placed curbside. No backdoor pick-up of yard waste! Residents can pick up 10 free bags (limit 1 per household) from Village Hall. Additional bags can be purchased at the local hardware or home improvement stores.
- If you wish to remove any tree 4" or more in width and taller than 4 feet, a Tree Removal Permit application <u>is required</u>. This application can be found on the Village of Montebello website under forms. Along with the application, a copy of your property survey (showing location of trees to be removed), photos of the trees, and an estimate from a Village licensed Tree Removal Contractor is needed. There is a \$10 fee (per application) for removal of any dead/endangering trees.



#### Home Security Safety Tips—By Steven Beldock, Trustee

It is very important to pay extra attention to matters concerning security of your home. Here are some suggestions to help lessen the likelihood that you are a victim:

- Never open your door for strangers. Sign up with the Village to be added to the *Do Not Knock* list. Ask for identification from all persons who you are unsure of. Local electric and water company employees are required to wear id around their necks.
- Security chains are easily broken. Consult with a locksmith and get deadbolts on all exterior doors.
- Make sure all sliding doors are secured to prevent them from being pried off of their tracks. Put a wooden broom
  handle (or similar item) in the track of your sliding door to help prevent someone from sliding it open in your
  absence.
- Make sure the entrances to your home are lit. Put them on automatic timers.
- Never leave doors open, especially garage doors, if you are just running out or in your backyard.
- Never hide spare keys outside. Leave them with a neighbor or friend in close proximity to where you live.
- If someone has an emergency and asks to use your phone, call 911 for them. Do Not Open Your Door! You may believe you are doing the right thing and going to help someone and end up being a victim yourself.
- If you believe someone is in your home after returning, do not go inside. Go to a neighbor's home and <u>Call the</u> Police.
- When going on vacation have a trusted friend or relative pick up your mail for you. Have your newspaper delivery stopped and your mail put on vacation hold if there is no one that can pick up your mail.
- When going away on you should have automatic timers on inside your home so people just passing by believe people are home.

Stay safe!



#### Surviving the Quarantine—By Evan T. Kuperman, Trustee

When I wrote in our previous newsletter how lucky we are to be so close to so many parks and hiking trails, I never expected it would be the only chance for many people to leave their house and enjoy being outdoors. Amid the pandemic and being quarantined at home, my family and I have hiked Kakiat Park and through out Harriman State Park. We have incorporated some outside family time with homeschooling lessons. Many of us have been busy homeschooling children or have high school or college kids home taking classes

online. This is a new age for learning with online lessons, working from home, having meetings via Zoom, or staying in touch with family and friends via other social media platforms. We are all trying our best to survive and keep our sanity.

It is nice to see is all the activity taking place outdoors. I've seen more people walking, running, playing as families now more than more than ever before. Everyone is taking to their neighborhoods attempting some social interaction while also maintaining proper social distancing. Please make sure to be diligent and drive slower throughout the Village due to these increases in outdoor activity.

Above all else, *Be Kind*! This is more important than ever as hospitals are overwhelmed with patients, many people are struggling whether due to job loss, depression, putting food on the table, teaching their children at home, or just the frustration of being stuck at home. We are all in this together!

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

My article intended for our February newsletter utilized my traditional approach, but I was concerned enough about Covid 19 to foreshadow at several places what might come. Of course, that newsletter, and virtually all aspects of our daily lives, got shunted aside and subsumed by the pandemic. Hence, you never got to read it and, in my opinion, relatively speaking, whatever I and others had to say at that time became insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

More important in this newsletter is the Mayor's very comprehensive message focusing upon the pandemic. I urge that you read it, and I shall attempt to avoid covering the same ground. Indeed, the Mayor and our staff were the most involved on a daily basis reviewing the Governor's many Executive Orders and guidelines, how that translated at the County level to our County Executive, Ed Day, and his staff, and in participating in many daily briefings in conjunction with all mayors and supervisors.

And all this whilst the Mayor, Trustees and Village professionals, including myself, were denied entry to the Village Hall, and Village Board meetings have been by ZOOM. (As noted by the Mayor, with plexiglass shields now in place, frequent cleansing, masks and social distancing, the Village Hall opened for business as of August 3<sup>rd</sup>.) Thankfully, it appears that our diligence has been working as I am aware of no cases of infection involving your staff or Village officials. Very sadly, my heartfelt condolences to his family, Steven Frumkin, who served us ably and well as member of the ZBA, and then as Trustee through January 2000 until he moved to take an out of area college position, succumbed recently to Covid while hospitalized in Miami. Since I view all and Montebellians, near and far, to be part of our enlarged family, and I certainly hope that no other past or present Montebellian suffers or has suffered the same fate, but, of course, if they have, my heartfelt condolences to their families as well.

Nature, most often wonderful in small and majestic ways, must always be respected. Recent examples come to all of us, such as: the havoc wrought by the Isaias storm; the consequences of rising temperatures and seas worldwide; the impacts of pollution and the related destruction of natural habitats- not even mentioning the pandemic in this listing. Are you noticing our tree canopy and foliage more than you had, or the abundant wildlife sharing our Village? At my house we put up a hummingbird feeder and they showed in great numbers and are fascinating to watch. Your Village reveres and respects nature as exemplified by our fair but firm Tree Law, our environmental planning in all things we do, and carefully following the covid rules- please do the same.

As also noted by the Mayor, on September 15, 2020, between 6 am to 9 pm, or by absentee ballot, you will have an opportunity to vote on a referendum deciding whether the Village should issue 15 year bonds in the amount of \$1,495,000, to fund the repaving of 14 more roads in addition to the 12 done this year, and to absorb the \$525,000 BAN issued this year for the first roads done. Consideration of this approach was recommended by our Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel and the Village Engineer, in light of historically low interest rates, the lower price of oil which lowers the cost of asphalt, the impending need over the next few years to do all roads in the Pines, and because all present borrowings will be paid off by next year. Irrespective the Village's pay as you go policy, the combination of the above facts or circumstances have made the alternative worthy of presentation to the voters.

At the Village Board meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup> we will hold, or will have held, a Public Hearing on Local Law No. 3 of 2020, amending Chapter 195-60 Subsection C of the Village Code, reducing the members of the Historic Preservation and Parks Commission (HPPC) to 9; 7 regular members and 2 ad-hocs vs the present 9 and 2. At times, it has been difficult or impossible for the HPPC to act with 5 affirmative votes necessary to a majority or quorum which will be easier to achieve with a smaller board (note: board was 9 because it resulted from combining the Parks and Historic Preservation Commission).

Au revoir which much gratitude to two very able members of our Planning Board: Michael Iatropoulos and Donald Wanamaker who just left same. Congratulations to Stan Shipley and Howard Hochberg who have moved up from their ad hoc positions to the vacated positions, and congratulations to Angus MacKenzie and David Levine in being appointed to the ad hoc positions.

Please, stay well, you and yours. See you on our roads as we do our daily 5 miles. (Like days bygone, everyone waves, and has a kind word, and the community seems smaller and closer – a silver lining, perhaps?)

Sincerely, Warren E. Berbit Village Attorney



#### Justice Court News - by Judge Arnold Etelson

In the past few editions I have mentioned that the court calendar remained relatively quiet and it remains so. I continue to warn marijuana violators appearing in court of the deleterious effects of the imbibing of marijuana based upon research that has manifested adverse effects in the brain upwards to the age of 25 and perhaps beyond. Our state legislature last year reduced the penalties for minor charges of marijuana. Most defendants now choose to pay the fine and surcharge rather that perform community

service which I no longer order because I feel that community service has no rational connection with the prohibited use of marijuana. Rather, as I mentioned in the last edition, I have given the option of submitting their written essay to the court upon engaging in research on the subject. I have been very pleasantly surprised upon receiving several well researched and well written reports confirming the adverse effects mentioned above. I am, however, apprehensive about the proposed further reduction or legalization of the non-medical use of marijuana this year.

Another serious issue that all the criminal court judges in the state, superior and local court judges, are facing is the hamstrung effect of legislation that took effect on January 1. You probably are all aware of the discretion that has been removed from the judge's power to set bail in many serious violent felonies resulting in the release of defendants and thereby being prevented from protecting the public from repeat offenses by the same person. I am quite sure that the legislation will be amended but am concerned that as of the writing of this edition in early March, two months after the law went into effect, no changes have been made. Legislation requires compromise, but hopefully politics will be kept to at a minimum in making a rational change in the law so that by the time you read this bulletin in April the judge's authority regarding bail will be substantially restored. In the meantime, I will do my best in "reading the riot act" to defendants to behave and return to court when directed or face more serious penalties in the event of their conviction. Meanwhile, enjoy the upcoming fall.



#### 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 2020 from Suffern High School! Mayor Millman and the Board of Trustees congratulate the following seniors for achieving Academic Excellence: James Cunningham, Brian Echavarria, Scott Fleischmann, Harrison Gay, Harley Gold, Hannah Jay, Jack Linko, Sophie Park, Samantha Rabrich, Patrick Reda and Owen Schwartz. Certificates of Academic Excellence signed by Mayor Millman were mailed to each of the students. Good luck to all in College!



#### Groundbreaking Ceremony for "The Sentinel of Rockland"

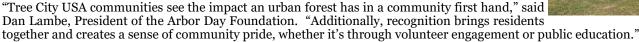
On Friday, November 15th a groundbreaking ceremony for "The Sentinel of Rockland" was attended by Mayor, Lance Millman and Deputy Mayor, Stacy Caridi.

The Sentinel will offer 200 private units, licensed by the New York State Department of Health as an Assisted Living Program. Upon completion, it will offer many job opportunities to Rockland residents and will be an affordable home option for Rockland seniors who wish to stay in the county.

#### Arbor Day Foundation Names Montebello Tree City USA

Montebello, NY was named a 2019 Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation in honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management.

Montebello achieved Tree City USA recognition by meeting the program's four requirements: a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.



Trees provide multiple benefits to a community when properly planted and maintained. They help to improve the visual appeal of a neighborhood, increase property values, reduce home cooling costs, remove air pollutants and provide wildlife habitat, among many other benefits.

More information on the program is available at www.arborday.org/TreeCityUSA





#### Building Department News—Larry Picarello, Building Inspector

With many of us outside, doing yard work and property improvements, it's important to know which outdoor activities are regulated by permit. The following activities <u>do</u> require a permit:

- Fence Installation
- Above and inground pools
- Importation of fill or topsoil beyond any small amounts needed for patching, etc.
- Sheds, Cabanas or other accessory structures of 144 square feet or larger
- Hot tubs or spa tubs
- Cutting of any trees (measured as 4 inches or larger at a point of 4 feet from the ground)
- Regrading or modifying any existing topographic profiles
- Outdoor kitchens
- Back-up/Emergency generators
- · Decks and patios
- Replacement/repair of roof permit is needed if plywood sheathing or framing is changed

Fall also mean garage sales. Please remember that the Village requires a temporary sign permit for any garage or yard sales. The Village will hold a refundable deposit of \$100 to ensure that the signs come down one week after the event. The application is available on the Village website or can be picked up at Village Hall. Signs <u>may not</u> be mounted on trees, utility poles, street signposts, or in any location that could block a sight line.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call the Building Department at 845-368-2491.

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#### From the Desk of the Fire Inspector—Adam Gordon, Village Fire Inspector

Greetings to all residents. In light of recent events and the troubling times we now find ourselves in, I hope you and your families are safe and healthy.

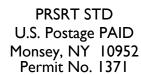
I want to take a few moments to talk about False Alarm reduction measures. False alarms are a huge problem and strain on the volunteer fire service. You can do your part in helping prevent these by having your home burglar and fire alarm system inspected annually. You should also make any of the necessary repairs or upgrades suggested by your alarm technician.

Any time you have a contractor working in your house or if you are doing any sort of work or cleaning yourself which may cause dust, dirt, steam or smoke (from soldering) these can accidentally activate your smoke detectors. Although these causes are accidental and unintended, it will trigger a response from the local fire department. Please call your alarm monitoring company in advance and ask them to take the alarm out of service while the work is underway. Just remember should any emergency arise while the alarm is out of service you will need to dial 911.

#### Montebello Village Codes— Mike Mandikas, Code Enforcement Officer

In November 2019, the Village welcomed Michael Mandikas as our new Code Enforcement Officer. Mike comes to the Village with a vast background in both Building Inspection and Code Enforcement.

Please remember it's imperative to continue to focus on property maintenance. Grass must be maintained to be less than 10 inches in height. Allowing grass and weeds to become overgrown can result in rodents infesting your property and eventually making their way into your home. In addition, all garbage needs to be secured in bins with tight sealing lids (in order to keep out wildlife). With the cooler weather, a lot of work will continue on homes throughout our Village. Please ensure that you contact our Building Inspector to find out if a Building Permit is required for any work that you are planning on doing.





### Village Hall Closings:

updates, and garbage collection questions. Check out www.VillageofMontebello.org for the latest news,



- Monday, October 12th—Columbus Day
- Monday, September 7th—Labor Day

Village Hall will be closed on the following days:

Friday, December 25th and Monday, December 28th—Christmas

Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th—Thanksgiving

at Village Hall Senior Center Tuesday, September 15th \*\*\*Bonding Referendum Special Election \*