Mayor’s Message for November 2019

As usual, October has been a busy month in the Village of Rhinebeck. Lots of rain, colorful fall foliage, thousands of visitors, many in colorful knit caps and sweaters, drawn by the Sheep and Wool Festival, as well as the first ever Early Voting for New York State. Our local polling place is the Town Hall, you can find the early voting schedule at http://www.dutchesselections.com/. Those who want to vote on election day, Tuesday November 5th, can, of course, do so.

The Village of Rhinebeck has just awarded the largest capital project in its history. This much needed construction project will replace our aging water distribution pipes. After reviewing sealed bids, the Village Board chose Grant Street Construction which bid a total price of $4,642,000, This covers the full project cost for construction along Montgomery, Livingston, Chestnut and Platt Streets. We are getting funding from the NY State Water Infrastructure Improvement Act, as well as a loan through the State Revolving Funds Financing Application. We expect work to begin on Village streets in early November. Montgomery Street work is scheduled for the spring. Huge thanks to Trustee Neunecker and Treasurer Karen McLaughlin for taking this important and complicated project over the finish line!

Meanwhile, the Village has been working diligently to make sure our water quality is excellent. We have implemented a flushing program to remove any stagnant water from the pipes, increased monitoring and treatment at the Water Plant, as well as continuing to analyze water quality. The Dutchess County Board of Health has cleared this approach. This after one sample taken last spring at a residence on Spring Brook Avenue showed the water had an excess of Haloacetic acid(HAAS). A reading at another location, the Baptist Home, did not have elevated levels. Continued sampling also showed no excess HAAS. Because of these multiple sample results the DBCH (Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health) agreed to invalidate the one reading that exceeded the limit, but we continue to be vigilant. Our consultant, Tighe and Bond, continues to monitor and investigate to make certain our water continues to be of the highest quality.

Becoming a Climate Smart Community is not only good for the environment, it saves taxpayer dollars. This program hosted by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, is a roadmap we can follow to become more sustainable as a community. We are starting from a good place, as we have already replaced street lights with LED’s, installed EV chargers, as well as solar energy for Village Hall. As we certify at higher levels in the program, we will be eligible for more grants which will allow us to lower our costs even more as we move towards making Rhinebeck a Climate Smart Community.

Another action we have taken as a Board was to advance consideration of all possible policies, available science, and economic means to effectively address the issue of human-produced climate change. The Village Board approved a resolution that urges Congress to enact without delay the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, H.R. 763.

The Village of Rhinebeck was featured on NBC Channel 4 on October 25th! “It Takes A Village”, explained how the Village has become the first ever “Autism Supportive Community” in our region, in collaboration with the Anderson Center for Autism. This program is a community partnership designed to assist businesses and organizations in understanding, serving and supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families. With the financial support of a grant from the Thomas Thompson Trust, many local residents and businesses have become involved and we are now a model for other
communities. For more information on this initiative and a list of the participating businesses, go to:
https://www.andersoncenterforautism.org/autism-supportive-community

The Rhinebeck Village Police Department has hired Officer Jonathan Wilson. Officer Wilson’s background includes serving as a Lieutenant with the Fairview Fire District, and as a part-time office for the Village of Red Hook Police Department. He has certifications in firefighting, instructor training, public relations, law enforcement, field level management, mental health training and emergency medical service. We are happy to welcome him. He is replacing Officer Matt Mauro who resigned to take a new full time position.

And, finally, the Village highway Department has acquired a new (to us) backhoe, after finding a deal on a “gently used” model. It will be a welcome addition to our stable of work machines.

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

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