Mayor Message for January 2020

Happy New Year to you all! I hope your holidays were warm and bright and wish everyone the best for this new decade.

As we move into a new era, one of the biggest long term challenges we face continues to be the climate crisis. The village government’s Climate Smart Community program is moving into high gear, and we invite all residents to two upcoming events at the Starr Library. The first, Help Save the Earth by Reducing Food Waste, will be held at the Starr Library on Tuesday January 7th 6:30 to 7:30 pm. The second, also at the Starr Library, called Help the Village Get Ready for the Changing Climate, will be held January 9th 7 to 8 pm. Please RSVP to either or both at: website events page.

To learn more about the Climate Smart Community program, check out our new website at https://www.climatesmartrhinebeck.org/

Excellent progress is being made on the Water Distribution Project. The installation of the main water pipe on Livingston Street is complete. Construction was started on Chestnut Street on December 30th. The service connections between individual homes and the new main on Livingston street should be completed within a week. The new pipe will be cleaned and inspected prior to connection. If you have any questions, you can email: infocoordinator.vorwatermain@gmail.com, or call the Village office 876-7015 ext 110. Please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

We received some excellent questions about the ongoing construction at our information meetings:

Q: What if the service line to my home is not made of copper?

   A: Copper lines are required from the main line to your house. If your existing connection is not copper it will still be connected and you will have six months to install a new copper line. The connection to the main line will take only an hour, and you will not have to be home.

Q: What is being done to protect sidewalks with flagstone/bluestone and will the streets be repaved?

   A: Flagstone will be put back, anything broken will be replaced. The streets will be temporarily patched with a winter cold patch until the spring when blacktop will be applied.

Q: Can I access my home during construction?

   A: Yes! Contractors will make certain that homeowners can get in and out of their properties. Trenches will be filled with cold patch or plates so they can be driven on. Garbage collection will not be interrupted. Mulberry Street residents will not be impacted.
Q: Will there be an impact on the quality of water or pressure?

A: There will be no change in the quality of the water. The Board of Health will sign off before anyone is connected to the new pipes. We do not anticipate pressure changes, although as we are digging up old lines, that is a possibility and will be dealt with immediately.

Q: If I work at home will the noise or construction impact my work? What about walking to work?

A: The loudest equipment is the machine doing the road cuts, which is done pretty quickly. The remainder of the equipment is newer and quieter. A contractor will be there to assist you if you need to walk by.

Q: Will trees be affected by the installation of the new main?

A: The trees will not be affected by the main, but possibly by the service lines to the home. The village and the resident will be contacted if this happens.

Q: Why is this being done in the winter?

A: This type of work is not impacted by weather. Now is the best time to limit interruptions to traffic and events. The crew is a tough crew and will work in inclement weather if it is not a hazard. They work M-F 7am to 4pm.

On the subject of our water, a worse case scenario would be crude oil or petroleum spills in the Hudson River which could contaminate drinking water. If that were to happen, there would also be a threat to the intake valves and our water treatment plant itself. That would mean shutting the intakes, and cleaning and decontaminating the plants and delivery systems. During such an event, all private homes, schools, colleges, hospitals, government buildings, jails, nursing homes, businesses and industry would be without water.

As Chair to the Hudson 7 Council, I was recently asked to make a presentation on this subject to the NY/NJ Regional Response Team (RRT). Our seven communities use nearly 13 million gallons per day of river water, on average. And our storage capacity varies, with Poughkeepsie only able to store enough water for 22 hours, while Port Ewen has up to five days. **The prevention of a spill must be our first priority.** There is no PLAN B to supply water to the public we serve. We must be assured of a rapid response in the event of a spill to prevent a compromise of any of our five intakes. I will be meeting with the United States Coast Guard on Jan 8th to discuss spill prevention and response in the Hudson near our communities.
We did not get the grants we sought for the West Chestnut Street sidewalk and the Urban and Community Forestry grant for tree maintenance. But, we will be reapplying for the next round of grants.

Finally, I want to recognize the following employees for their many years of service to the Village of Rhinebeck. Police Officer In Charge Sgt. Peter Dunn 18 years, Deputy Clerk Krissy Denu 10 years, Police Officer Steven Hanaburgh 34 years and Highway Foreman Mike Wolff 27 years. Congratulations to all! And, thank you on behalf of all our residents!

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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