Mayor’ Message for March 2020

Making our Village more beautiful, more sustainable as well as protecting our residents and property from the extremes of climate change all go hand in hand.

We have an upcoming spring planting project which illustrates this. The group of students from Marist College who have been studying the Landsman Kill, are proposing the planting of a “riparian buffer” along one bank. Planting native shrubs and trees along a stream and creating a “buffer” would help prevent erosion and flooding, protect the stream from pollution, and provide a wildlife corridor. And, it will add to the natural beauty of Rhinebeck. The proposed planting project would start along the north bank of the Landsman Kill behind the Village of Rhinebeck Highway Department. It could serve as a demonstration to show the beneficial effects of planting green barriers along stream beds.

The Rhinebeck Tree Commission and the Climate Smart Community Task Force are working with the Marist students. They are seeking a grant from the “Trees for Tribs”, NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program. As Landsman Kill is a tributary to the Hudson River, the shrubs and trees could be provided cost free by the state. If approved, this project will involve the Marist College students working in coordination with the Village and the Rhinebeck High School Environmental Club. We are hoping the planting could begin in April or May.

For more information: (https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/43668.html)

And, we now have a comprehensive list of every tree on every street in the Village of Rhinebeck. Trustee Lewit and the Tree Commission worked with the Davey Resource Group to complete the “TreeKeeper” software program. The program lists the location of each street tree, what type it is, and what condition it is in. It also identifies possible spots for new trees to be planted. Please check out this wonderful tool that will help us manage our urban forest. Click on the link and click on “read only.”

https://rhinebeckny.treekeepersoftware.com/

We are also preparing a Transfer Feasibility Study of our water and wastewater facilities. Trustees Neuneker and Rossi have been working with Dutchess County on finding a consultant to evaluate the potential transfer of ownership of the Village’s Water and Sewer Systems to the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority. The evaluation will include an engineering analysis of the existing infrastructure, what improvements are needed, analysis of the current fiscal condition including revenues and expenses, current debt, and potential legal impact of the ownership transfer. Delaware Engineering was selected to do the analysis due to the company’s expertise in water and waste water. Once everything is compiled, it will be possible to determine
whether such a transfer could. Once we have all the facts, we can determine if a transfer could improve service and save residents money.

Trustee Neuneker is also working on a water purchase agreement with Grasmere, a development being proposed south of the Village along Route 9 in the Town of Rhinebeck. The company would be purchasing water from the Village by upgrading an existing water line on Knollwood and extending it to the Grasmere site. In the proposed agreement Grasmere will cover the cost of installing all the new hydrants along the line, as well as upgrading any galvanized copper piping tie-ins.

The Village Board had a productive presentation from Eric Riback, the Chair of the PANDA23 Board of Directors. He reported that there is currently a great opportunity for PANDA growth. PANDA faces challenges, however, such as budget restrictions and out-dated equipment. In the future, the network will likely need to move to a different studio and update the equipment. The board is comprised of representatives from the area, although the Village of Rhinebeck is not represented at this time. If anyone is interested in joining the PANDA Board to represent the Village, please contact Village Hall.

Many of you already know that Village Clerk Pat Coon retired on February 28th, after 23 years with the Village. Pat started working at Village Hall in 1997. For the past five years has served as Village Clerk. In all, she has worked for 6 Mayors, as well as working with many Trustees over the years. Pat was responsible for record management, administrative support, and preparing minutes and agendas of Village meetings. And, Pat was a familiar and friendly face to all residents who sought information or assistance from the Village Government. Pat holds a CMC(Certified Municipal Clerk) designation and an RMC(Registered Municipal Clerk). We wish Pat well as she enters a new chapter in life. A retirement party was held for her on February 21st with a great turnout of people who knew and worked with her.

I also want to recognize the following employees for their many years of service to the Village of Rhinebeck. Police Officer Peter Palen has 17 years of service, and Motor Equipment Operator Carl Delfino 4 years of service. Congratulations!

The next election for Village officers will be held on Wednesday March 18th. Please make a note in your calendar and come to Village Hall to vote! The polls will be open from noon till 9PM. If you are not yet registered to vote, you have until March 6th to register with the Dutchess County Board of Elections. If you are already registered at your current address, you do not have to register again. 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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