

Mayor's Message for November 2018

November is here, and things are really “picking up” here in the Village as our new leaf vacuum truck is making the rounds. Please always remember to keep brush piles and leaf piles separate when you put them out!



The Village Highway crews have lots of leaves to pick up, courtesy of the beautiful trees that are a vital part of our landscape. For 8 years, we have been recognized as a “Tree City” by the State of New York. A lot of the credit goes to our dedicated Tree Committee and the many volunteers who give their time to beautify the village. November 3rd was fall tree planting day. Thank you to all those who came out and helped plant new trees.

A Village landmark, the Doughboy Monument in the Municipal Lot, has a new flagpole, organized by the Veterans Committee. The flagpole will be commemorated on Veterans Day, November 11th at 10 am. The ceremony will honor all military personnel who are currently serving, all who have served, as well as all Prisoners of War. Please join us on Nov. 11th!



On October 30th, the Village Board hosted an “Autism Supportive Community” event at Village Hall. Village officials, business leaders, families and community members turned out to learn more about our partnership with the Anderson Center for Autism. Many people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families find themselves isolated from their communities, and unable to participate in things we take for granted, such as dining out, running errands, enjoying community events or recreational activities. Our partnership with the Anderson Center will allow us to better address these issues as a community. It was great to see the turnout at this event.

For several months, a committee made of Village Planning and Zoning Board members, Northern Dutchess Hospital planners and management, and village officials, has been meeting to discuss the creation of a Hospital District in Rhinebeck. This would separate the needs of the hospital from those of the residential district where it is located, the way a “Fairgrounds District” was created. The committee is moving forward with a draft of

the proposal, which will then be presented to the Village Board. A public hearing will give everyone a chance to learn more about this proposed plan.

Our Environmental Committee, and its sub-committee on Food Waste Reduction, has now finished a grant application, for \$60,000, to the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation. We are partnering with the Town of Rhinebeck, the Town and Village of Red Hook, and the Village of Tivoli in creating a program which will address issues of local food waste. Working together, our communities can develop educational programs, move forward on plans for an organic composting facility, and community outreach.

Trustee Neunecker has been hard at work on solving a longstanding environmental issue at our Water Treatment Plant, and his work is seeing results. A lagoon near the plant is used for flushing sediment tanks, and alum sludge, a by-product of the water treatment process, has been building up in the lagoon. It was last cleaned 18 years ago, the lagoon is now close to its capacity and as some of the water drains into the river, this has become an urgent situation. For the past three years, we have been searching for an affordable way to extract the alum from the lagoon. Previous bids exceeded our budget. But, now we have a bid for \$183,700 to complete the project. During the winter and spring, the sludge will be pumped into two large filtration bags at the site, the water will be drained off and the waste to be removed to a certified disposal site.

The plant now has a new Chief Wastewater Operator. Brian Baccomo has stepped into the role after working at the plant for 2 ½ years, and recently obtaining his Level 2 Certification. This is an important position, and we are all thankful that Brian is onboard. We welcomed David Secor to the Wastewater Operator Position. And, Allan Bateman has joined the Water Department as an Operator Trainee. We welcome both David and Allen to the Village staff.

The City of Kingston Environmental Education and Sustainability Coordinator held a Waterfront Resilience Summit with a panel to talk about the impact of sea level rise and how municipalities are working on projects that we feel are most important for our community's waterfront resiliency. I joined Kingston Mayor Steve Noble, Village of Red Hook Mayor Ed Blundell, Village of New Paltz Mayor Tim Rogers and Town of New Paltz Supervisor Neil Bettez on the panel. And, I was honored to be a presenter at the Hudson River Watershed Alliance event held at the Henry Wallace Center in Hyde Park. My presentation was called "The Hudson, A Source of Change". I talked about the alliance of the Hudson 7, and the work we are doing to protect the Hudson River and the communities which depend on it. I believe that we in local government must step up

our partnerships with others in search of solutions, as well as funding, in order to take action to protect ourselves from the worst impacts of climate change. I will keep you posted on our ongoing work on this vital issue.

Don't forget to vote on November 6th. The polls will open between 6 am and 9 pm.

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

Gary Bassett
Mayor Village of Rhinebeck