

Village of montebello review

Jeff Oppenheim, Mayor, Lance Millman, Deputy Mayor, Marc Citrin, Stacy Caridi, Steven A. Sorrillo, Trustees



Greetings from the Mayor



The Village of Montebello is making changes today that will determine the nature and appearance of our Village for years to come. We are acting to preserve the nature and quality of life of our residential neighborhood. Here, I will focus on five initiatives to provide you with a glimpse into our future.

First, we are taking actions to preserve open space and to make parkland more evident in the Village landscape. The park in Montebello Pines, once dedicated to the Village, will include walking paths, benches and a beautiful viewshed. We are currently completing an application to the NYS DEC to commence vitally needed dredging of the ponds. This project will remove 10,000 cubic yards of material from the ponds: enough to fill a one-acre lot to a height of 9 feet! Hundreds of thousands of dollars of developers' money has already been obtained by the Village and set aside for building the park once the dredging is completed. We hope to begin this project in the next year.

Other parks have or will be dedicated to the Village and preserved in a natural state. Coe Farm Park along Route 202 is being maintained to present a vista of the magnificent red barn that once was a part of the original farm. In the future, we hope to receive dedication of the open meadow across from the Fant estate as well as acres of forested land along Carroll Drive. At Village Hall a new ramp will provide handicapped access to the playground and a new 9/11 Memorial Garden has also been added. A dedication ceremony for the 9/11 Memorial Garden will be held on September 11th at 5:00PM and everyone is invited to attend.

Second, the vitality of our community will expand through the use of our new Community Center. The recently authorized purchase of the Reform Temple of Suffern (by more than a 4:1 majority) provides us with the opportunity for a wide variety of new activities. Civic, community, athletic, recreational, avocational, Senior Citizen, and governmental functions will all be supported at this center, thereby addressing the needs of a growing Village. The opportunity may also arise to create trails into the Harriman State Park accessible to the handicapped and to the elderly. We hope to open the doors to our new center by the end of this year.

Third, Montebello will be a local municipal leader in promoting green technologies to help reduce greenhouse gases while saving money. We have been awarded a \$32,000 grant from NYSERDA to build a solar electric system to help power Village Hall. We recently capped building permit fees for residential solar electric systems to promote the installation of photovoltaic systems in our Village. We also signed a petition drafted by the U.S. Conference Of Mayors to promote such initiatives. We are repairing Village Hall to create energy efficiency and we are also replacing outdoor streetlights across Montebello with new energy efficient bulbs.

Fourth, Montebello is preserving control of the manner in which the Village is developed. At a time when it seems as if many municipalities have abdicated or lost local zoning control, we are working on methods to strengthen ours. For example, the Village Board recently adopted an Open Space Plan to strategize priorities in preserving undeveloped space (available for review on our webpage). Currently, an Economic Development Commission is working on plans for a program that will guide our control of commercial properties. In 2008, we will initiate a 5-year review of our

Comprehensive Plan, seeking ways to enhance our ability to control development.

Fifth, Montebello is demonstrating the importance of active communication and input from the community. For example, our traffic calming program allows Villagers to request the installation of speed humps on their street. Our first installation, on Mayer Drive, was built at the request of the residents of that street. We also held the first-ever special election in Montebello to allow the citizens to decide whether to purchase a Community Center. More than 460 registered voters turned out to express their opinions. Affording everyone the opportunity to participate in the decision making process is a critical focus of our efforts.

Similarly, when we recently learned of the FAA's plan to reroute hundreds of flights inbound to Newark over our neighborhood we quickly proposed an alternative plan to the FAA, and reached out to the community. Montebello's proposal was lauded by various elected officials, demonstrating our leadership in the region. Utilizing phone calls, our webpage and emails, we made every effort to alert the community to the FAA's public meeting held on July 30th to provide everyone with an opportunity to comment on the record. Again, we are striving to enhance communication in an effort to yield superior results.

The cost and work associated with maintaining our Village is justified so long as we can control the development and the quality of our residential community life. I believe that this requires proactive planning, investment, communication and action. The Village is proceeding along this course; and the fruits of our labor should be evident in the years to come. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts, ideas, and complaints.

Mayor Jeffrey Oppenheim

**From the Desk of
Harry P. Lewis...**

Building Inspector

Telephone: (845) 368-2491

Subject: Construction work being done without the required Building Permit.

First, let me make you aware that a Building Permit is required for any construction, reconstruction, moving, demolition, structural alterations or any change in the use of a building or a structure. Any changes in the bulk of a building, a structure, or a non building use, but not including ordinary repairs which are not structural by nature and certain types of plumbing work also requires a building permit, in those cases it is at the discretion of the Building Inspector.

The Building Department is now in the process of examining approximately fifty (50 +) property files that have commenced construction, and did not file for a building permit. Violation notices will be sent out to the property owners with a certain amount of days given to correct the violation by filing for a building permit. Failure to do so will result in an appearance ticket being issued to appear in the Town of Ramapo Justice Court.

Most of the illegal construction being done without the required permits are;

- Accessory buildings one hundred forty four (144) square feet or more that are not considered a shed; a shed is a building less than one hundred forty four (144) square feet that does not require a building permit.
- Property fences
- Stone walls
- Signs
- Above ground swimming pools
- Conversion of a garage to a finished room.
- Hot tub/ Spas
- Enclosed deck
- Replacement of windows

- Enlargement of existing deck
- Replacement of an existing deck
- Demolition of existing buildings and structures
- Fire damage repairs
- Conversion of an unfinished basement to a finished basement considered to be habitable space, recreation room or storage room. This is also considered to be the most common violation as all of the work is being done within the dwelling and can not be observed from the exterior of the building but there are different ways that the Building Department can find out when a basement has been converted to habitable space, without the required building permit.

With this being said, I urge all of the property owners who have received Violation Notices in the past to come into the Building Department to correct the violations to prevent you from having to go to court, and pay a fine.

**MONTEBELLO DAY,
SEPTEMBER 30TH,
AT VILLAGE HALL
FROM NOON TO 4 PM**

**1ST EVER "COOKIE BAKE CONTEST"
TO BE HELD ON MONTEBELLO DAY,
MUST BE BAKED AT HOME,
ALL ARE WELCOME
TO PARTICIPATE**



**You are cordially invited
to the dedication of
Montebello's 9/11
Memorial Garden On
September 11, 2007
5:00PM at Village Hall.**

Created by Peter Zelem as an Eagle Scout Project

Guest Speaker: Gordon Wren, Jr., Director of Fire and Emergency Services in Rockland County

From the Village Attorney's Desk

It struck me while absorbing the goings on at the Torne Valley FAA meeting that, once again, here was our little Village, via its leaders, taking a position at the forefront. By that I don't mean getting on the apple-pie-and-motherhood bandwagon when it has become safe and PC to do so, but taking early initiative.

The setting and circumstances caused me to remember that it was Montebello which had the foresight to formally intervene in the Torne Valley power plant proceedings. Indeed, we lent our shoes to the Town and this was a major factor in helping to stop the plants.

The more I thought about it the more I convinced myself that that quality - creative initiative - is emblematic of Montebello and its citizens. Thus, it is no surprise that it has been consistently reflected in the actions of the present and all past administrations (including our Mayors, Trustees, boards and commissions, staff and professionals).

Early manifestations of the Village's creative initiative occurred in the Village formation era, and shortly thereafter. We chose our boundaries to include land with the potential for affordable housing, and then were able to find a developer willing to construct same in return for being able to establish a shopping center on the corner portion of the parcel. This became, of course, Indian Rock. Another early example was adopting a land use approval moratorium while our Zoning Commission studied the Town's zoning laws, having built in an appeals procedure in the interests of justice. It is my impression that our local law became a model for other new villages - I know for sure of its current use upstate.

There are many similar examples. A few that I can think of in our early - middle years include wide spread use of conservation easements to create green belt buffers, adopting a tree law (and refining same) to prevent the wholesale denuding of our greenery, and placing the wheels in motion to ultimately acquire and develop The Ponds Park. We also were creative in establishing a Parks Commission which has given us the tot lot, the Adirondack-style pavilion, various events, attractive signage and general beautification, with the aforementioned Park yet to come. Certainly, also significant is the Village Board - Parks Commission - Eagle Scout (thank you, Peter!) cooperation yielding the 911 Memorial Garden (to be dedicated this September 11th at 5 pm). Along the same lines was the foresight to acquire the Village Hall, then the surrounding land, and, jumping to the current administration, the renovation project presently underway to improve efficiency and preserve the structure in phases while the staff continues to function.

Turning back to our middle to later years, initiatives worthy of mention include the two-year effort leading to the Comprehensive Plan, and taking over the building department function. Bridging the gap between the prior and current administration was creating the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with more recent emphasis leading to designation of three historic properties to date: the Montebello Park mansion and environs; the Johnson farm home; and, the Fant Estate. These designations should yield significant benefits for current and future generations. Indeed, villages with an HPC are few in number.

Turning to the modern era, examples of initiatives abound. Not only is the present administration pushing hard to be certain that the HPC and the Parks

Commission achieve and maintain significant roles, but the Ponds Park actually approaches concrete steps towards coming into being, and the initiative is well underway to acquire the former Reform Temple of Suffern property (but only after submitting the issue to public referendum, it passing by 82% in favor). As to the latter, I suspect that this will prove to be a very important and useful acquisition over time. Looking around, the speed humps recently constructed on Mayer Drive, and the associated neighborhood petitioning procedure, are unique in the County, if not the State. We have obtained a grant to construct a solar energy facility at the Village Hall which will supply about one-third of its electrical power needs, and I believe this is unique in the County. We have also obtained a FEMA grant for storm restoration work on Bayard Lane, and the Mayor and our grant writer are pro-actively seeking significant grants in various other areas.

Lastly, regarding keeping the public informed, our Village Board meetings are now televised on Cablevision channel 78 on Sundays, and our website has been reformatted and evolves on an almost daily basis.

Simply put, we are a Village whose citizens tend to be creative thinkers who take initiative. Assuming I am correct, it is no surprise that our local government, made up of our citizens, has exhibited the same trait from its inception.

Enjoy the lazy days of summer. Be sure to take the time to lie on your back in the grass, hands folded under head, and gaze at the sky while doing what Montebellians do best: pondering, and dreaming of new initiatives!

Respectfully,
Warren E. Berbit

Election Results

On July 10, 2007 the Village held a special election to determine whether to authorize a bond of up to \$1.2 million dollars for the purchase of the former site of the Reform Temple of Suffern to be used as a Community Center. The results were: 375 (82%) in favor, 83 (18%) opposed.



Parks Commission News

Our 3rd year of the Family Camp-Out was another success and the results were as follows:

- 167 total attendees
- 74 overnight
- 54 virtual
- 39 walk-ups

Although a threat of rain may have kept a few from coming out, the rain stayed South East of us never hitting our area. The weather was actually perfect for Camping. The night started with "Order of the Arrows" putting on an amazing show for the kids who seem to look forward to it every year and we will continue to make them part of our program each year. It was then followed by the ceremonial lighting of the Campfire. "Smores for everyone!" Although this part of the event is always challenging for us and was

actually removed from program this year, we decided to add it back the last minute since donations of Chocolate and crackers were made by participants. It's always a hit with the kids, although some of the adults got on line for them! Afterwards we were entertained by the music of Jeff Burke and Richard Di Santo by the Campfire and that concluded the events for the night. Although the current Family Camp Out Event continues to be a success year after year, we are considering adding some additional activities to the event next year. Stay tuned!

Based on the responses we received from our recent Survey, the Montebello Summer Concert Series will resume in 2008

at the Village Hall Grounds. We will look for suggestions from the community on the type of music to be played and we will do this through our Village website and emails. We hope you come out and enjoy a night(s) of outdoor music.

As most of you know we reported the success of the Montebello Cleanup Day on April 21st on the last newsletter and many noticed the streets were cleaner as you walk and drove on many of our roads, however only a few months have passed and we are back to the same levels of litter

prior to April 21st. We are asking that everyone support and participate in our continued effort to keep our

community clean by policing the streets for litter and reporting dumping to the local authorities. It was also discovered during the cleanup day that grass clippings, leaves and other landscape material are being dumped on parkland and Village easements, report those these findings to Village Hall. This is our community and keeping it clean is everyone's responsibility.

We would just like to remind you emblems that attach to the storm drains that read "NO DUMPING-DRAINS TO STREAM" are available at Rockland County Division of Environmental Resource, Mary Hegarty at 845 364-2669 at the Rockland County office or Amy Rapoport at 845 357-5929.

The Parks Commission meetings are held the first Thursday of every month, all are welcome to attend. Share your ideas and thoughts with us. **Please keep our Village Clean.**

Submitted by Bob Congionti, Parks Commissioner

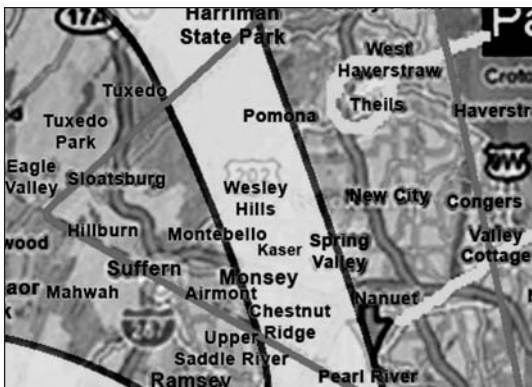
FAA flight plans and Montebello

The FAA's proposed changes to regional flight traffic will have a real impact on Rockland. Montebello offered the FAA an option that would improve upon their plan by shifting the flight corridor over parkland, thereby lessening the noise experienced in the most densely populated residential communities.

The FAA has spent several years and millions of dollars reconfiguring the route of planes to the major airports in our

region. New navigation technology will allow planes to fly planes along much narrower corridors than those currently in use. This will result in a greater capacity to handle more aircraft at area airports, reducing delays. The FAA proposes that when flights are landing at Newark from the north, they will pass over Rockland.

The flights over Rockland would enter the county at approximately 10,000 feet and exit the county at 5,500 feet. This will increase the level of noise experienced on the ground. The FAA claims that this noise increase won't be significant and won't affect property values. They claim that a public hearing was not even required in Rockland.



When the head of the FAA's redesign project, Steve Kelley, appeared at the Ramapo Town Hall forum, he presented the plan as a fait accompli. Montebello's proposal takes advantage of the sparsely populated area along the I-287 thruway route south from Harriman. Since the FAA's stated goal is to mitigate the noise experienced on the ground, this suggestion would actually improve their plan.

On July 30, the FAA held another forum at the St. Lawrence Center at the request of Congressman Engel. At that forum, the public and the elected officials strongly opposed the FAA plan and most people supported our proposal. The FAA remained reluctant to consider adjusting their plan in any way. In addition to placing our comments on the record, we have written to Congressman Engel and Senators Clinton and Schumer imploring them to demand that the FAA seriously consider alternatives. If this request fails, then legal action to block implementation of the entire plan may be the last resort available.

Speed Humps unveiled in Montebello

The Village's first speed humps were installed on Mayer Drive in August. Three humps were placed at the request of the residents of this road in order to calm traffic. Montebello allows citizens to request the installation of speed humps. Information is available on our website. Residents are encouraged to visit Mayer Drive to see these humps in order to decide whether they would like them on their block.



**Welcome to
Shelly Flanagan-Ramos,
new Deputy Village Clerk**

Montebello Day is Back

By Lance N. Millman, Deputy Mayor



This year our Village will be running Montebello Day with the support of the Parks Commission and the Montebello Civic Association.

Montebello Day will be on Sunday, **September 30, 2007** between **Noon and 4:00 pm**.

Our main theme this year will be about keeping our Village clean and green. We will have multiple booths regarding this theme including the following:

- Solar Electric Systems
- Hybrid Automobiles
- Healthy Lungs
- Cornell Cooperative
- Storm water Management
- Rockland Astronomy Club

We are very excited to have our Village Historian, Craig Long to present his wonderful slide show and history of Montebello, which was shown at our 20th Anniversary Party.

Of course, we will have our normal rock wall climbing, Spiderman obstacle course and jumping booths. Representatives from D.A.R.E, the Tallman Fire department and local ambulance services.

This year we are having our first ever **"COOKIE BAKE CONTEST"**. We are inviting all **adult/children** or **adult's** to enter our contest which will be judged by three Village residents and ribbons given for the top three winners. **WE WELCOME ALL RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE AND ASK**

THAT YOU EMAIL OR NOTIFY THE VILLAGE CLERK'S OFFICE IF YOU WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN OUR BAKE OFF. Our winners will be listed in our Village records as the very first winners of our bake off and our residents will get to enjoy the spoils as dessert after the contest.

We are trying to have multiple bands this year. **WE ARE LOOKING FOR BANDS THAT HAVE AT LEAST ONE MONTEBELLO RESIDENT** and wish to donate their time to play during Montebello Day. Please leave a message for Lance Millman by contacting the Village Clerk's office at Village Hall.

We have been contacting local food establishments in our area and I am pleased to announce that we have a few restaurants that will donate 100's of meals to our event. The two main restaurants are **ZZEST** and **LA VERA CUCINA**. Other participating restaurants are Overseas Chinese & Japanese Restaurant and Nicky's Pizza. Any other establishment that wishes to participate can contact the Village clerk's office at Village Hall.

Our time capsule is still in need of ideas, letters, pictures, etc. and we will be accepting items at Montebello Day for our time capsule. We will be contacting our local schools within Montebello to ask their students to participate in our time capsule.

We are always in need of volunteers at Montebello Day, please come join us and help make a wonderful day even greater! Please contact our Village Clerk's office at Village Hall if you can help out.

Montebello Day has always been a great day and we hope to continue our celebration tradition with every body's help and support.

Bucolic Montebello Beset by Challenges

by Steven Sorriolo, Trustee



At times it seems as if bucolic Montebello is beset on all sides by challenges to our quality of life. One of these challenges may be a proposal to replace the Tappan Zee Bridge that could have an impact upon Montebello. Another challenge is the plan by the FAA to reroute aircraft over our region. Both of the plans require the

active involvement of your Village Board as well as every member of the public.

A number of agencies are working on plans to replace the Tappan Zee bridge and a final proposal has not yet reached the Governor's desk. Recently the Montebello Board of Trustees attended a workshop with the Regional Planning Association (RPA) to review their proposal. We learned that their plan includes transportation options that call for a rail system extending from Westchester County (under the new bridge) and across Rockland County to the Village of Suffern. At some points in Rockland this rail system would travel below ground, at some points at ground level, and in certain other areas would be elevated.

The RPA also proposes a rail station in Montebello at the junction of Airmont Road and the New York State Thruway at the 14B exit. This station, and several miles of tracks leading to and away from it, would be elevated approximately twenty feet above ground. This is not an acceptable plan to the Village of Montebello.

A train station would be an eyesore and the noise and air pollution that would come with it would diminish the quality of life we have come to enjoy. In addition, traffic congestion would only become worse. The R.P.A. has also proposed to change the configuration of the 14B exit. This change would have the exit ramp begin some distance further back down the Thruway and be elevated over Airmont Road and over the station by an additional twenty feet.

When I asked about the aesthetics of their proposal I was told to think "Los Angeles". The R.P.A. representatives seemed surprised that we in Montebello, as well as our neighbors in Airmont, were adamantly against their proposal. We made our opinions loud and clear. We will strongly fight against the R.P.A.'s proposal. The good news is that such a project would cost more money than anyone could imagine and there is little in the way of available funds. Therefore, it is unlikely that this proposal will ever be enacted. Nevertheless, the price of our quality of life is "eternal vigilance".

On a similar note, we learned that another agency is pressing down on us from above. The Federal Aviation Administration has a plan in process to reroute incoming flights to Newark Airport over certain parts of Rockland including Montebello. These flights would fly at an altitude of as little as five thousand feet, low enough to interfere with normal conversation loud enough to drive us all inside (and maybe a little crazy). The quality of our air may also be impacted. Due to the proximity of the thruway, our air quality is not now what it should be and this proposal would only make things worse.

Some of this sounds like doom and gloom, but maybe that is just what we need to overcome our apathy. It is up to us, all of us, to do something about these problems. We shouldn't just wring our hands and accept what is forced upon us. For many of us our homes are our single biggest investment and need to be protected. Your Mayor and Trustees are involved. We attend these meetings and we voice our opinions. However, this is not enough. You must get involved. Contact your elected officials in Albany and Washington. Tell them how you feel and what you want them to do. Additionally if you feel there are things that we could do better, please feel free to contact us.

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Online Photo Album of Montebello

Attention all photographers: We are creating an online photo album of our Village by posting your photographs of Montebello on our webpage. We are most interested in pictures that show off the natural beauty of the Village. If you have digital photos that you would like to share please email them to: mayor@villageofmontebello.com



September 2007	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
							1
	2	3	4 <i>Planning Board Workshop 7:00 P.M.</i>	5	6 <i>Parks Commission 7:30 P.M.</i>	7	8
	9	10 <i>Economic Development Committee 7:30 P.M.</i>	11 <i>Planning Board 7:15 P.M.</i>	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19 <i>Board of Trustees 8:00 P.M.</i>	20 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals 7:45 P.M.</i>	21	22
	23	24	25 <i>CDRC 9:30 A.M.</i>	26 <i>Historic Preservation Comm. 7:00 P.M.</i>	27	28	29
30 MONTEBELLO DAY <i>Noon - 4:00 P.M.</i>							

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	October 2007
	1	2 <i>Planning Board Workshop 7:00 P.M.</i>	3	4 <i>Parks Commission 7:30 P.M.</i>	5	6	
7	8 <i>Economic Development Committee 7:30 P.M.</i>	9 <i>Planning Board 7:15 P.M.</i>	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17 <i>Board of Trustees 8:00 P.M.</i>	18 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals 7:45 P.M.</i>	19	20	
21	22	23	24 <i>Historic Preservation Comm. 7:00 P.M.</i>	25	26	27	
28	29	30 <i>CDRC 9:30 A.M.</i>	31				

November 2007	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <i>Parks Commission 7:30 P.M.</i>	2	3
	4	5	6 <i>Planning Board Workshop 7:00 P.M.</i>	7	8	9	10
	11	12 <i>Economic Development Committee 7:30 P.M.</i>	13 <i>Planning Board 7:15 P.M.</i>	14	15 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals 7:45 P.M.</i>	16	17
	18	19	20	21 <i>Board of Trustees 8:00 P.M.</i>	22	23	24
25	26	27 <i>CDRC 9:30 A.M.</i>	28 <i>Historic Preservation Comm. 7:00 P.M.</i>	29	30		

Planning Board Update

The following projects are before the Board:

Rio Vista @ Montebello has received Final approval, but the Architectural Review is still in process.

Monsey Jewish Center has been approved and is now seeking sign plan approval.

Weinberger Subdivision has received preliminary approval and is now in the process of obtaining a Wetlands Permit.

Fant Subdivision received preliminary approval and is now in the process of obtaining a Wetlands Permit and final approval.

Empire Executive IX, Revised Site Plan: The proposal is to build two small office buildings at the end of Executive Boulevard instead of one large building as was originally proposed under the Town of Ramapo.

Info USA – Site Plan: the proposal is to build an office building on one of the three remaining vacant lots on Rella Boulevard.

Emerald Pines – Preliminary Subdivision is for a four lot subdivision on Viola Road.

Condon - Preliminary Subdivision for a four lot subdivision off of Route 202.

Planning Board meetings are held at Village Hall on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:15 p.m.

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