

VILLAGE VOICES

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Editor, Jennifer Truax, Deputy Village Clerk

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News from the Mayor's Office – Reassessments

By now, those property owners within the village, who will see a change in their assessed values, have received their 2015 assessment notification. In conjunction with the Town of Otsego, the Village embarked on a full reassessment of all Village properties, the first since 2007. (Our Village Assessor, Al Keck, reevaluated the Town of Middlefield properties within the village as well). Though it may seem as if the change in your property's value was a one year move, in reality it is a result of market changes throughout the entire Village over the last 8 years.

Reassessments are a way to rebalance all property values in order to make sure that present values reflect present market conditions. By doing this, property taxes are more fairly distributed based on current market realities. The 2007 reval was the first in 20 years; nearly all Village property values were out of line compared to the then current market values.

Since 2007, market conditions have changed and a full reassessment is warranted and fair. How it affects your property taxes is a bit tricky. Because many values throughout the Village will change, and because the 2015-16 budget won't be finalized for a few more months, it is difficult to give an easy answer to "will my taxes go up or down?," but here's a rule of thumb – 1/3 of people's property taxes will go up, 1/3 will stay the same and 1/3 will go down. Even in 2007, when overall assessed property values tripled, that rule of thumb held true.

Any questions you may have on the details of your own assessment can be handled by Al Keck at 547-6057. Al is in the office Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM and after hours by appointment. As always, I am available to answer any and all questions about this and any other village matter.

-Jeff Katz, Mayor

Snow & NYS Vehicle & Traffic Laws

The Cooperstown Police reminds drivers to clear all snow and ice from their vehicles before driving.

The New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law require drivers to have an unobstructed view from the front, rear and sides of a vehicle. This law also prohibits depositing snow on the roadway by any means, whether from shoveling, plowing or driving a snow-covered car out of your driveway to let the wind clean it off.

Caring for your Sidewalk

The Village has a new law for sidewalk maintenance and use. Please check the resident page of the Village website at www.cooperstownny.org for the complete text. Some of the provisions include:

- Trees and shrubs must be trimmed so as not to impede pedestrian use of public sidewalks.
- Parking is prohibited on public sidewalks.
- Driving on public sidewalks is prohibited except where a portion of the sidewalk is part of an established driveway.
- Owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from public sidewalks adjoining their properties. If this duty is neglected, the expenses incurred by the Village in removing ice and snow will be charged to the property owner.
- In the business district it is not necessary to remove snow and ice from the new pavers, but the pavers can be carefully cleared if desired.
- Snow or ice you clear must not be deposited on streets or sidewalks.
- Snow or ice must not be deposited on someone else's property without express permission.
- The use of sodium chloride (rock salt) is not permitted on public sidewalks. Look for deicers labeled as safe for concrete.

A Concert & A Movie!!

New this year, the Village is funding "Movies in the Park" following several of our Tuesday evening, Lakefront Concerts.

As currently planned the films will be shown in Lakefront Park on an inflatable screen provided by the Clark Sports Center. The dates for the films are July 21, August 4th and August 11th. The film for July 21, just prior to Hall of Fame Induction Weekend, will be "42" – the Jackie Robinson story. The other films have yet to be selected – and we are interested in your input. Participation in Government students who were in attendance at the Parks Board meeting when the movie proposal was discussed, suggested "The Princess Bride" and "Guardians of the Galaxy." But more suggestions are welcome!

In late spring, you can check the schedule for the 2015 Lakefront Concerts which will also advertise these movie nights.

Village Elections - 2015

Election Day for the Village will be Wednesday, March 18, 2015. The election will be held at the Fire Hall, 26 Chestnut Street. The following offices are up for re-election: Trustees (2) – Three year terms.

At the Democratic Caucus held on January 22, 2015, the following individuals were nominated as candidates for the office indicated next to their name:

- ❖ James Dean – Village Trustee (3 Years)
- ❖ Cynthia Falk – Village Trustee (3 Years)

At the Republican Caucus held on January 27, 2015, the following individuals were nominated as candidates for the office indicated next to their name:

- ❖ John Sansevere – Village Trustee (3 Years)
- ❖ No Nomination – Village Trustee (3 Years)

The deadline for the Village Clerk to receive Independent Nominating Petitions is not until February 10, 2015; therefore, additional candidates and/or parties may be added to the ballot at that time.

Absentee ballot applications are available at the Village Office during regular office hours, Monday-Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by calling 547-2411.

Village Reassessment & Grievance Night

The re-evaluation of real property throughout the village has been completed for 2015 tentative assessment roll. Notices have been sent to the owners of properties that have changed values.

The Assessor, Al Keck, is available weekdays, 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM in his office at 22 Main Street. He will also hold special office hours for those unable to meet during regular office hours on Thursday, February 5, from 6 – 8 PM and Saturday, February 7, from 9 AM – 1 PM or by appointment by calling 607-547-6057.

The Board of Assessment Review will meet on Tuesday, February 17th, 2015 in the Village Meeting Room, 22 Main Street, Cooperstown, NY between the hours of 6 PM and 10 PM, for the purpose of hearing and determining complaints in relation to assessments on the application of any person believing himself to be aggrieved.

Complaints with respect to assessments must be filed with the Village Clerk on or before the day of the meeting on a form prescribed by the State. These forms are available at the Village Office.

Village Holiday Schedule

The Village Offices will be closed:

- ❖ February 16 (in observance of President's Day)

Fire Hydrants

Please remember that your assistance in removing snow from around the fire hydrants within your neighborhood is extremely valuable. Please completely remove all of the snow from around the hydrant, which will allow easy access should the fire department need to hook up hoses and operate the hydrant. Your efforts will save valuable time should an unfortunate situation arise which calls our firefighters into action.

Badger Park Ice Skating Rink

The weather is not always conducive for making and maintaining ice in the skating rink, located in Badger Park off Beaver Street. Our staff, however, work diligently to maintain the best possible skating conditions.

You can find updates on the rink status on the Park's page of the Village's website (www.cooperstownny.org) or on the Facebook page of Friends of the Parks (Cooperstown Friends of the Parks).

When ice conditions prevail please remember:

- The rink will not always be staffed by a skating rink attendant
- Use of the facility is at your own risk
- Helmets are required for anyone playing hockey and encouraged for all skaters, other protective gear is also recommended
- Hockey pucks are not to elevate off the ice
- Except for times specifically listed for Hockey, sticks and pucks are not permitted when there are any public skaters on the ice
- Mixed Use skating (1/3 family hockey & 2/3 figure skating) is scheduled for M, W, F from 3-7 PM; T, Th from 3-6 PM; and weekends from 3:30-6:30 PM
- Hockey is scheduled for T, Th from 6:30-9 PM; and weekends from 10 AM – 12 PM
- Figure Skating is scheduled for weekends 12:30-3:30 PM

Here's hoping for cooperative weather which will allow for a high quality ice and good skating.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Time</u>
Monday	Mixed Use	3 – 7 PM
Tuesday	Mixed Use Hockey	3 – 6 PM 6:30 – 9 PM
Wednesday	Mixed Use	3 – 7 PM
Thursday	Mixed Use Hockey	3 – 6 PM 6:30 – 9 PM
Friday	Mixed Use	3 – 7 PM
Weekends & Holidays	Hockey Figure Skate Mixed Use	10 AM – 12 PM 12:30 – 3:30 PM 3:30 – 6:30 PM

Tourist Accommodations – Amended Law

The Village of Cooperstown has recently amended its Zoning Law regarding the operation of short term (less than 30 day) rentals, or Tourist Accommodations. These changes may affect your property or the property of those around you (although they do not apply to rentals of less than 60 hours for no more than 10 people over Hall of Fame induction weekend, which remain exempt as they have been in the past). The body of the changes can be read in Local Law 14 of 2014. Copies of the local law are available from the Village Clerk or from the Village website at: www.cooperstownny.org

All Tourist Accommodations are subject to the current law. While the application process for new Tourist Accommodations remains essentially unchanged, the annual renewal process has changed. All existing Tourist Accommodation uses, even if they are legally existing nonconforming (“grandfathered”) operations must register annually. In addition to the form, property owners must submit proof of Fire Safety Inspection Certificate dated within the past 12 months from the Otsego County Codes Office, a list of emergency contacts with phone numbers, the annual registration fee, and proof of Otsego County Bed Tax payment for the previous year. The County Treasurer and the Village are committed to helping applicants obtain the latter with minimal inconvenience.

At completion of the annual registration period, a list of all registered Tourist Accommodations will be published on a master list that the Village will make available to rental agencies, law enforcement, newspapers, etc. Any Tourist Accommodation determined to be operating and not on the list will be seen as illegal and subject to enforcement action. The Annual Registration application deadline for 2015 operation is March 30, 2015. Only those registrations received by that date will be considered for legal operation in 2015.

Keep in mind, the laws governing Tourist Accommodations are designed to help preserve neighborhood character while permitting short term rental use—the law is designed to protect those operating Tourist Accommodations and their paying guests as well as neighbors. Please do not hesitate to contact the Zoning Enforcement Officer Tavis Austin at 547-2411 should you have questions regarding the Annual Registration process.

All Night Parking

An all-night parking ban is in effect. Vehicles are NOT permitted to be parked overnight on any Village street. All night parking is permitted only as indicated in Doubleday Parking lot and in the thirteen spaces on the west side (closest to Chestnut Street) of the Fowler Way Parking lot.

Downtown Parking Permits

Downtown parking permits provide an alternative to using Pay and Display machines this summer for parking in the paid parking area on Main and Pioneer streets. Anyone—locals and tourists—can buy a permit. Permits are not limited to village residents. Permit holders can park for up to two hours daily in an on-street paid parking space without purchasing a ticket from a Pay and Display machine. After the first two hours, additional time can be purchased at a machine.

The same permit can be used to park in the permit-only Fowler Way (formerly Chestnut Street) parking lot if an all-day option is needed. Permits are not valid in the Doubleday Field parking lot. Please remember that the purchase and display of a parking permit does not guarantee a parking space.

This year parking permits can be purchased in person from the Village Clerk’s office at 22 Main Street or by mail. Applications can be accessed on the village website www.cooperstownny.org or at the Clerk’s office. A completed application must be accompanied by a copy of the vehicle’s registration and appropriate fee, payable by cash or check. Permit fees for 2014 are \$25 for the first permit, \$15 for additional permits at the same registration address.

Sidewalk Cafes

Again, this summer restaurants in Cooperstown’s business district will be able to offer outdoor dining. In an effort to further enhance our downtown and make it a destination for tourists and local residents alike, in 2014 the Village enacted a local law to allow established food purveyors to apply to set up tables and chairs for dining on the public sidewalk provided enough space exists to do so without impeding foot traffic or accessibility. Those interested should contact the Village Clerk for a copy of the law outlining the requirements and an application. Questions should be directed to Zoning Enforcement Officer Tavis Austin at voczoning@stny.rr.com or by phone at 607-547-2411 between 8:30 and 10 AM.

Leaves, Leaves, Leaves...

This fall we received several complaints about not getting to leaves soon enough. Some property owners now have frozen piles of leaves at the curb. We apologize for the inconvenience. Our leaf removal equipment needed unexpected repairs this fall, and by the time it was back in operation the weather had turned. We will be gathering leaves again in the spring and perhaps sooner if we get an early thaw. Next fall look for our schedule for picking up leaves. Having your leaves ready by the scheduled dates will save time and help assure that your leaves get picked up before winter sets in.

New Water & Sewer Bill Format

The Village welcomed new accounting software in September and a new format for Water and Sewer Bills. The previous partial page print out was replaced with a full page bill prior to the last billing quarter in November. This new format will provide you with additional information including a water history from the past year, four quarters, property address, tax map number, account number, amount due, penalties and amount due if paid after the due date.

All Water and Sewer Consumers are reminded that there is a monthly 2.00% Penalty for all amounts unpaid for any billing period. Your new bill should make the penalties easier to recognize. Also please note that the penalties reflected for late payment are only accurate for one month, new penalties are added each month.

2015 Boat Dock & Rack Rental

We will begin to accept names for the boat dock & canoe/kayak rack waiting list on March 2nd. To be put on the waiting list, you must come to the Village office on or after Monday, March 2nd, during regular business hours. Spaces are assigned on a first come first assigned basis.

Last year's renters will automatically be assigned a slip/rack space and will have until March 31st to renew for the season. Slips that are not renewed will become available for those on the waiting list.

We realize that the boat docks are still in need of upgrading. The trustees continue to work to secure funding for upgrades and/or replacement.

Dog Owners/Walkers

Village Local Law #3, of 1994; states: in part that it shall be unlawful for any dog owner or person having possession, custody or control of any dog to allow such dog to defecate on any public or private property without the permission of the owner of such property unless action is taken immediately to remove any feces left by such dog on any sidewalks, park, school yard, or other public or private property and to immediately dispose of the same in a safe and sanitary manner. We sincerely appreciate your efforts in following the regulations of this law.

Reminders from the Water Department

- Meters will be read again in April.
- Remember to leave an opening for operators to access the water touch pad at your residence or business. For instance, if you have fencing around your shrubs, please leave an opening for them to access the touch pad.
- Even slight drafts during winter weather may cause your water meter to freeze and break. To avoid the expense and inconvenience, please ensure that your water meter is draft free.
- Leaving for the winter? Don't forget to drain your household water pipes and water meter to prevent the pipes from freezing while you're away.
- If you have any questions, please call the Water Department at 547-5591.

Helpful Telephone Numbers

Main Office	547-2411
Clerk- Teri Barown	ext. 102
Deputy Clerk- Jennifer Truax	ext. 101
Zoning Officer- Tavis Austin	ext. 112
Public Works Sup. - Brian Clancy	ext. 104

Treasurer's Office	547-8558
Treasurer – Ed Keator	ext. 108
Deputy Treas. – Laurie Tores	ext. 109

Village Police	547-2500
Village Library	547-8344
Village Street Dept.	547-5521
Village Water Dept.	547-5591
Village Sewer Dept.	547-8501
Doubleday Field	547-2270
Village Assessor – Al Keck	547-6057

Town of Otsego – Clerk	547-5631
Town of Otsego – Court	547-5689

Town of Middlefield	547-5093
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