

VILLAGE VOICES

Number 131

Editor, Jenna Utter, Village Clerk

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News from the Mayor's Office

I hope you had a wonderful Holiday Season and a Joyous New Year!! December was certainly an exciting time in Cooperstown as our Village received national exposure when featured on the Today Show's Merriest Main Street series! We have Karen Trosset of NBC Universal to thank for suggesting her hometown be highlighted. And from all reports, we shone brightly with an enthusiastic crowd who braved the cold for our one minute of fame!

We are so fortunate that each year the 4C's, the Cooperstown Community Christmas Committee organizes hundreds of volunteers to make our Village magical during the holiday season. Families turn out to hang garlands on our Main Street lampposts and on Santa's Cottage in Pioneer Park. It is truly the volunteers and their incredible community spirit which make the Village not just a merry but also a caring and supportive place to live. And speaking of volunteers, the Winter Carnival renaissance continues with this year's programs and the theme of "It's a Winterful Life." Be sure to participate in the wonderful, "winterful" activities February 1-4.

This issue of Village Voices includes an article on our Welcome Home Cooperstown events. Welcome Home Cooperstown is held on the first Tuesday of every month at Village Hall and is a great way to meet and welcome area newcomers and assist them in building connections in our community. Check out the programs scheduled for this year and plan to drop in.

While there are many enjoyable events in Cooperstown at this time of year, it is also a time when the Village begins the serious task of proposing a budget for our next fiscal year, June 1-May 31st. By law the Mayor is required to have a Tentative Budget approved by March 20th. This process is a cooperative one, with Trustees and Department Heads working together to draft a budget which addresses the many personnel and infrastructure needs of our Village. We have scheduled several budget workshops over the next month in order to put together a budget that reflects the needs of our community while also striving to not increase the tax levy which has remained at the same level for eleven years.

All our Village meetings are public and also streamed to the Village's YouTube channel which can be easily found by clicking the "VOC Live" tab on our website www.cooperstownny.org. Looking forward to a successful 2024!

-Ellen Tillapaugh, Mayor

Village Elections - 2024

Election Day for the village will be Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Voting will take place at the Cooperstown Fire Hall, 24 Chestnut Street, from noon until 9 p.m.

The following offices are up for re-election:

- Mayor – Two-year term
- Trustee (2) – Three-year term

The Democratic Caucus was held on January 25, 2024 and nominations were made as follows: Ellen Tillapaugh for Mayor, Cynthia Falk for Trustee, and Hanna Bergene for Trustee.

The deadline for the Village Clerk to receive Independent Nominating Petitions is February 13, 2024; 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.



Grievance Night

The tentative assessment roll has been completed for 2024. Notices have been sent to the owners of properties that have changed values.

The Assessor, Al Keck, is available weekdays, 8 AM – 2 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 8, from 6 PM – 8 PM and Saturday, February 10, from 9 AM – 1 PM** or by appointment by calling 607-547-6057.

The Board of Assessment Review will meet on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024** in the Village Meeting Room, 22 Main Street, Cooperstown, NY between the hours of **4 PM and 8 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, 22 Main Street or by calling (607) 547-2411.

Volunteer for a Village Committee!

We have nine Village committees and boards on which volunteers provide an important civic service to our community. We thank Village residents who recently accepted appointments to several boards including Glenn Falk (Water & Sewer Board) and Jay Bosley (Historic Preservation and Architectural Review Board). A few vacancies remain, including an Alternate on the Zoning Board of Appeals and an Alternate on the Historic Preservation and Architectural Review Board. If you are interested in participating on either of those Boards, please call the Village Office at 607-547-2411.



Attend Welcome Home Cooperstown!

In May of last year, the Village held its first ***Welcome Home Cooperstown*** gathering at Village Hall and continued these wonderful events from 5:30 to 7 on every first Tuesday of the month through to December when our *Meet & Greet and Stroll the Street*, was featured on WKTV. The gatherings are designed to welcome newcomers to our Village and assist them in building connections to established residents and institutions. We hope they will choose to make our community their permanent home. Everyone is welcome, including longtime residents who would like to meet and welcome others.

The idea for WHC grew from a discussion between Dr. Anush Patel and Mayor Tillapaugh and became a reality when the Friends of the Library Board guided by Lynn Mebust and Karen Katz organized a committee with representation from many local community groups. In early January of this year,

the committee met and has already laid out a 2024 calendar, **attached below**.

Each month will have a theme, speaker, music, Library craft for children, community tables (by businesses and organizations) and refreshments! Please check out our Facebook, *Welcome Home Cooperstown* page, designed and managed by Erin Rawitch, for up to date details.

Programs for the next few months include:

February 6th – Library Lovers' Month, with a book reading and Mayoral proclamation, music by Luke Gheen, bookmark & My Favorite Book craft and refreshments by the Friends of the Village Library Board and the Library Board.

March 5th - St. Patrick's Day, with speaker Cosette Veeder-Shave from the SUNY Oneonta Museum Studies program, a craft, music by Jack Cooper, and refreshments by Christ Church.

April 2nd– Ramadan and Eid, with speaker Dr. Amjad Qabbani from Bassett Healthcare Network, music by a strings trio and to-go fasting bags prepared by Izees Abdallah of Bassett Healthcare Network.

We hope everyone will attend and join these opportunities to build our community connections!!

Blocked Sewer Line? **Avoid unnecessary costs, call** **the Village First!**

Property owners are responsible for maintaining waste lines to their junctions with the Village's sewer mains. The Village is responsible for operation and maintenance of the sewer mains. In the event a blockage occurs and an owner is uncertain about the location of the blockage, please notify the Village at 607-547-2411 for both daytime and after-hours emergencies. Village staff will investigate promptly. If the blockage is in the main, the Village will bear the cost of clearing it. If the blockage is in the owner's sewer lateral leading to the village main, the owner will be responsible for the cost. We bring this to your attention because recently a resident experienced a blockage, hired a plumber, and discovered that the blockage was in the Village main, not the owner's waste line. The Village cleared the line at no

cost to the property owner, but was not authorized to reimburse the property owner for the cost of the plumber's services.

Snow Emergencies

A snow emergency, or other emergency, is declared by the Mayor or the DWP superintendent. An emergency will be announced via media outlets including TV, radio, and the Village website. Parking is prohibited on all Village streets during a declared emergency. Cars that remain on the street during an emergency may be towed.

Parking is available in the Doubleday Field Parking Lot whenever an emergency prevents parking on the streets. Please continue to support local businesses during the winter, even if that requires a little extra walking.

Removing Snow and Ice from the Public Sidewalk

This winter season, please remember that according to local law:

- ♦ Owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from public sidewalks adjoining their properties within 24 hours after a snowfall.
- ♦ The use of sodium chloride (rock salt) is not permitted on public sidewalks. Look for deicers labeled as safe for concrete.
- ♦ In the business district it is not necessary to remove snow and ice from the pavers, but the pavers can be carefully cleared and deiced 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.

If the public sidewalk adjacent to your property is not cleared, the Village will clear it and charge you a fee of \$100 per instance. You will be notified of the need to clear the sidewalk via a paper notice placed at your entrance door before the sidewalk is cleared by Village employees. The Village does not make phone calls or send emails to property owners who have neglected this duty.

We ask that you remain diligent in clearing snow and ice from the sidewalk and make alternative arrangements if you are out of town. We would prefer not to have to issue notices, shovel sidewalks, or fine property owners—we do this to promote pedestrian safety.

Support Our Firefighters – Clear A Hydrant

The Village of Cooperstown offers an opportunity for its residents, businesses, organizations, and others to get involved in helping to keep the Village safer. There are 127 fire hydrants in and around the Village. A map with numbered hydrants is available on the Village website at <http://cooperstownny.org/volunteers/>

Clearing a hydrant means shoveling the snow 3 feet around the hydrant on all sides. This will ensure that in the event of a fire, firefighters can quickly access water to extinguish it. For the safety of drivers and pedestrians, snow should be piled on the tree lawn and not deposited in the street or on the sidewalk. More serious hydrant issues should be reported to the Village at 547-2411.

If everyone pitches in, we can ensure that access to fire hydrants is more continuous, especially following a large snow storm. The ultimate goal is to help ensure a safer Village for all who live, work, and visit here.



Boat Dock and Rack Rental 2024

We will begin to accept names for the boat dock & canoe/kayak rack waiting list on March 4th. To be put on the waiting list, you must come to the Village office on or after Monday, March 4th, during regular business hours which are 8:00 a.m. until 4 p.m. 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.

Because exterior slips (1-W dock) are best able to accommodate larger boats, and they tend to be the most desirable slips due to their accessibility, we have adjusted our slip fee schedule to reflect this. **Boats longer than 24' cannot be accommodated on Village docks.**

On 1-W with exterior slips, rates are \$800.00 for Cooperstown Village residents (those who actually reside in the Village of Cooperstown as their primary, legal residence) and \$1,750.00 for non-residents. For interior slips on 1-E, 2-E and 2-W rates remain at the prior rates of \$600 for Village residents and \$1350 for non-residents. If you are currently on 1-W, and do not wish to pay

the increased rate and have a boat no longer than 20', you may request to move to an interior slip.

Boat Permits are valid from May 1st through November 1st.

Reminder: The slip applicant must be the registered boat owner and in order to receive in Village rates, your primary, legal residence must be located within the Village.

Overnight Parking

Between November 1 and April 1 overnight parking is prohibited on all Village streets to ensure snow and ice can be promptly removed. Free overnight parking is available in the Fowler Way Parking Lot and the Doubleday Field Parking Lot in designated areas. Look for signs indicating where overnight parking is allowed in these lots and don't make snow removal harder for our road crew by parking overnight on the street.



Spring Clean-Up

To facilitate spring clean-up, the Village of Cooperstown will be picking up green yard waste Monday – Friday beginning at 7 a.m. during the month of April, weather permitting. After April, pickup will be the last Thursday of each month.

Compostable Waste and Brush Curbside Pickup Procedures:

- 1) The Village will pick up compostable yard waste and brush separately. There will be two pickups per street, one for soft green waste and a second for brush. These may occur over a period of several days depending on demand.
- 2) Place any soft green waste such as grass clippings, leaves, and other soft garden waste in compostable bags or in reusable hard plastic containers.

Place containers between the sidewalk and the curb.

- ❖ Do not use plastic bags.
- ❖ Do not include non-compostable materials like plastic flower pots.

- ❖ Do not assume that we can lift containers that you cannot lift. Containers that are too heavy will be left at the curb.

- 3) Place brush in a pile between the curb and sidewalk.

- ❖ Do not put brush in containers.

- ❖ Keep brush separated from green waste.
- ❖ Root balls, stumps, and large tree limbs will not be picked up. We can only take material that will go through our shredder.

- 4) We do not pick up any kind of construction debris or processed lumber.

- 5) For the initial clean up in the spring and the final clean up in the fall, leaves and green waste do not have to be bagged. Leave them in a pile between the curb and sidewalk. We will pick them up with our leaf vacuum.

- ❖ Make sure there are no stones or bricks in the leaf pile.
- ❖ Keep brush in its own pile that will be picked up separately.
- ❖ These pickups will continue over several days until all eligible items have been picked up.

- 6) Residents may also bring green waste at any time to the Village Street Garage on Linden Avenue and deposit it themselves in the appropriate area. Commercial dumping is prohibited.

If you have any questions please call Mitch Hotaling, DPW Superintendent, 547-2411.

Badger Park Ice Skating Rink

As locals know, sunny warm days spell doom for the ice rink in Badger Park. Even a day or two of freezing temperatures are not enough to allow the ice to harden. It is frustrating for both Village staff and for the many people who are eager to skate. Fortunately, cold weather is in the forecast and everyone is working to have the rink in great shape for Winter Carnival Weekend.

This year's Winter Carnival will feature an ice skate sharpening event at Badger Park on Saturday, February 3 from 2-4pm. This free event is offered by the Sharratt family in memory of Dwaine and Juli Sharratt.

In support of this community rink, used by Village residents and non-residents alike, the Village has a

new Parks Superintendent Matt Smith and has funded a seasonal winter employee, who is tasked with working on the rink when weather conditions allow.

We appreciate all the assistance received from the Friends of the Parks for the Village's six parks, but particularly appreciate their support in the winter months at the rink. Check out their Facebook page *Cooperstown Friends of the Parks* for updates on when the rink is open and activities that are planned.

When skating is available, the rink is often divided so that half is set up for hockey and half for open skating. The hours are as follows, weather permitting:

M/W/F 3pm-7pm mixed-use; T/Th 3pm-6pm mixed use, 6:30pm-9pm Hockey; Weekends and Holidays 10am-12noon Family skate; 12:30pm-6:30pm mixed use.

The warming hut will be open to allow skaters to borrow skates for daily use this season. Please be sure to remind your kids to put their skates back neatly. Skates should not leave the park for any reason.



Repairing Your Historic Home

If you live in the Village of Cooperstown and your house was built before 1949, you might qualify for a state income tax credit for work on your home. New York State offers income tax credits for homeowners in qualifying census tracts (of which ours is one) who do more than \$5,000 of approved work on their historic house. At least 5% must be spent on the exterior of the home, and all work must be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office before it begins. The tax credit is equal to 20% of approved qualifying expenses up to \$50,000. For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643 or Otsego 2000 at 607-547-8881.

Paid Parking

The 2024 Paid Parking season will run from the Saturday before Memorial Day through Columbus Day. The paid parking area includes portions of Main, Chestnut, Pioneer, and Fair Streets. The rate remains \$2.50 per hour, payable in 30-minute increments, with a \$15 all-day option at the Doubleday Field parking lot. On the streets, parking will continue to be limited to a 2-hour purchase, with

the ability to buy additional time by re-upping at a Pay and Display Machine. Doubleday Field provides an all-day option.

Downtown parking permits provide an alternative to using Pay and Display machines for parking in the paid parking area. Anyone—local or tourist—can buy a permit. Permit holders can park for up to 2 hours daily in 2-hour areas without purchasing a ticket from a Pay and Display machine. The same permit can be used to park in the Doubleday Field Lot after 4 pm and all day in the permit-only Fowler Way Parking Lot (located behind the Chamber of Commerce) if an all-day option is needed. Please remember that the purchase and display of a parking permit does not guarantee a parking space.

Parking permits can be purchased in person from the Village Clerk's office at 22 Main Street or by mail or email. Applications can be accessed on the village website www.cooperstownny.org (under permits) or at the Clerk's office. A completed application must be accompanied by the appropriate fee, payable by cash or check. Credit cards can be accepted at the Village office. Permits remain a great deal at a cost of \$25 for the first permit, and \$15 for additional permits at the same address.

Trees

The Village of Cooperstown values the positive benefits of trees on air quality, water quality, energy bills, and aesthetics. The Village has been named a Tree City by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The Village Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to the provisions in the zoning law that regulate the removal of trees from private property. A public hearing has been set for February 26th, 2024 at 7pm. Copies of the proposed changes can be accessed at the Village offices as well as the Village website.

Currently, on any property, not more than 30% of trees with a trunk diameter of six inches or more may be cut or drastically altered within a ten-year period. The proposed revisions would allow for removal of invasive, small, and diseased trees. The removal of a mature, healthy, noninvasive would be permitted, but would require replacement on the same property. As an alternative, with approval of the Planning Board, payment could be made to the Village Trust and Agency fund for public tree support. For projects involving Site Development Plan Review, the Planning Board would review tree removal plans and could waive the replacement requirement. The Zoning Board of Appeals would hear all appeals for variances.

If you have questions about landscaping projects that involve the removal or trimming of trees on your property, contact the Zoning Enforcement Officer before work begins at zoning@cooperstownny.org

Tax Credits for Carriage House Repairs

Owners of barns, including carriage houses, may qualify for the New York State Historic Barn Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which is a state income tax credit equal to 25% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The building must have been constructed prior to 1946, and it must have been used at one time for a purpose related to agriculture, such as housing horses and storing hay. Your qualified rehabilitation, which cannot change the historic appearance of the building, must have cost \$5,000 or more. The credit may be applied to certain work that has already been completed. So, if you need a new roof or recently put one on, painted, made foundations repairs, or completed other projects on your carriage house or other agricultural building, you can benefit from this program. Please contact Otsego 2000 at 607-547-8881 or director@otsego2000.org or the NYS Division for Historic Preservation staff at 518-237-8643 with questions. Note that the building cannot have been used as a residence within one year prior to applying for the credit or converted into a residence as a result of the work.

Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee

The Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee (WSC) was established by the Village of Cooperstown under New York State Law and is a cooperative effort between the Towns of Middlefield, Otsego, Springfield, and the Village of Cooperstown. The WSC is dedicated to protecting the health of Otsego Lake, public health, its tributaries, and the watershed.

Meetings are held monthly or bi-monthly at the Cooperstown Village Hall and are open to the public. Notices of the meetings are on the Village calendar. Al Keck serves as the Inspector for septic systems in the Lake's watershed. Charged with the responsibility of protecting the water quality of the Lake, the WSC has supervised thousands of septic inspections over the years and routinely inspects the **374 septic systems in the watershed. In its regulatory role, the WSC assists** in issuing permits for hundreds of new and upgraded systems.

The recent Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and other threats to the Lake have enhanced the WSC's responsibilities for the watershed as outlined in the law.

Last year, all three towns and the Village jointly funded the position of a Scientific Advisor, Dr. Kiyoko Yokota, a professor from SUNY Oneonta, as a consultant for the WSC. The Village and its Mayor serve as the WSC's primary administrative and political contact when dealing with New York State (NYS).

The WSC is looking forward to working with organizations and town governments in our community who have interest in developing a comprehensive watershed plan, also known as a 9-Element Plan. A NYS Department of State grant was applied for and received approval, with the Village of Cooperstown as the administrator. It will be a robust team effort.

The WSC has collaborated with partners over the past year to begin the work involved in developing a comprehensive watershed plan. This advance work was accomplished by a dedicated group, including colleagues at the Biological Field Station; SUNY Oneonta; the Towns of Otsego, Middlefield and Springfield; Otsego County Conservation Association, Otsego County Soil and Water District and the Otsego Lake Association. This work will serve as a foundation for the full comprehensive plan that is developed for our watershed and includes developing water quality measures, advancing testing, and installing radar stations and gauges.

The comprehensive watershed plan will provide a structure for the study of and plan for preventing and/or dealing with many threats to the watershed and our Lake.

The health of the Lake and watershed is affected by roadway management, land use, sediment, nutrients and much more. The region's recreation, drinking water, and economy are all dependent on its health. Our experience is not unlike other lakes in our region and we will learn from them as well. This must be a collaborative effort of governments, civic and environmental groups, businesses, and citizens. The WSC is working to bring the people and plans together to continue this work.

Village Holiday Schedule

The Village Offices will be closed:

❖ February 19 (in observance of President's Day)





ARE YOU NEW TO COOPERSTOWN?

You're invited to a monthly "Meet & Greet"

WELCOME HOME COOPERSTOWN

2024 "Meet & Greet" Dates

Cooperstown Library / Village Hall
22 Main Street, Cooperstown

5:30-7pm (Drop in Anytime)

February 6th

March 5th

April 2nd

May 7th

June 4th

July 2nd

August 6th

September 3rd

October 1st

November 5th

December 3rd