

Mayor's Message for October 2018

Fall is a favorite season for many of us in Rhinebeck. The beautiful foliage, the fall harvests of apples and pumpkins, crisp fall days all remind us, once again of the beauty of the place we call home. Later in the month, Halloween decorations will start appearing, as will many little ghosts and goblins yelling "Trick or Treat!!". Please hand over some candy and watch out for them on village streets.

The Village of Rhinebeck has entered into a partnership with the Anderson Center for Autism. We will become the first Autism Supportive Community in the region. The Thomas Thompson Trust granted the funding for this project. We are looking forward to working with the Anderson Center In educating the public about Autism and in doing the important work of supporting families.

Living in Rhinebeck means being part of a supportive and vibrant community. Our neighborhoods and our neighbors all contribute to our sense of place. Like many municipalities, we have been grappling with the question of how to regulate Short Term Rentals (STR's). Nationally there has been an uptick in such rentals, bringing concerns about preserving the neighborhoods where we all live. As we seek to develop a new set of laws, our goal is to protecting housing stock meant for Rhinebeck residents, and preserving a sense of safety and community in our residential neighborhoods.

An STR Committee, composed of 7 people and headed by Trustee Neunecker, worked long and hard, with input from many, in drafting a proposed set of regulations. They made their recommendation to the Board, and we advanced a somewhat stricter version of the law. Trustee Neunecker is currently working with legal advisers to draw up the proposed rules. Once they have been made public, everyone will be able to weigh in at a public hearing.

The current definition of a STR is an owner-occupied single or two-family dwelling that is your primary residence and in which you live for 240 days a year. If the owner is on the premises for the duration of the rental, it is currently allowed under Village law. At issue right now, are rentals that are for a time period of less than 30 days, during which the owner is not on site. Rentals within approved lodging facilities, or bed and breakfast establishments, are not considered short-term home rentals.

Here are some of the most important highlights of the proposed policy:

Operators of STR's will be required to get a special permit, which may require site plan review as overseen by the Village of Rhinebeck Zoning and Planning Department. The

maximum number of permits for non-hosted rentals, which may not exceed 16 days per year, would be less than 1% of the total village housing, approximately 15 with radius restrictions. If there are more applications than allowed, there will be a lottery. Owners cannot offer any short-term rental of any nature in a multiple dwelling.

The home can be at least one but not more than three bedrooms. It cannot be rented to more than 4 adults or six total occupants. During the rental, if the owner leaves Dutchess County, there must be a local agent who is registered with the zoning officer. Restaurants or other commercial services are not allowed. An existing driveway may not be expanded to accommodate parking for renters. With these new proposed rules, people who live elsewhere can no longer buy houses just for the purpose of turning them into short term rental properties.

We are moving forward on two new grants which have been awarded to the Village. One will allow us to replace the current stair wheelchair lift in Village Hall with a new platform wheelchair lift. Once installed, the new lift will allow our residents who are wheelchair reliant or handicapped the ability to easily access and participate in Village affairs that take place on the second floor of Village Hall. This grant for \$50,000 comes from the Dutchess County Innovation Grant Awards.

The second grant is for a Water and Wastewater Feasibility Study where we were awarded the full amount of the study for \$87,750. This grant is for an evaluation Village's water and sewer systems by the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority (DCWWA). The evaluation will include an engineering analysis of the existing infrastructure and identification of short and long-term capital improvement needs as well as analysis of the current fiscal condition of the systems. We will also be examining the history of revenues and expenses and the amount and term of any outstanding debt. This is an important step to ensure we are delivering the best services to our customers.

None of us here in the Hudson Valley are unaware of the impact that invasive pests have on our farmers, and our homes, and gardens. Unfortunately, a new type of invasive bug has reportedly been sighted in this area. It's called the Spotted Lantern Fly, and these destructive insects are very harmful to grapes, apples, hops and maple trees. For more information please go to these sites. <https://search.yahoo.com/search?p=spotted+lantern+fly+images&fr=iphone&.tsrc=apple&pcarrier=AT&T&pmcc=310&pmnc=410> , <https://spottedlanternfly.com/>

If you see one of these flies, please report the sighting to the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation.

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