



DRYDEN TOWN NEWSLETTER

March 19, 2010

A note from the Supervisor's Office

By Mary Ann Sumner, Town Supervisor

Everything but the parking lot and sidewalk is mud. It must be March. The good news is that the bluebirds are back checking out the bluebird boxes around the Town Hall and honeybees are out looking for flowers.

I find myself taking a different route to work everyday to get a look at different neighborhoods from the perspective of our zoning update discussions. The concepts behind the zoning proposals are creative and complex. The proposals will help guide developers toward the kind of growth our Comprehensive Plan envisioned. There will be a meeting Monday, March 22 at 7:00 PM at the Varna Community Center for an introduction to the proposals followed by an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one with members of the Town Board, Planning Board and Planning Department staff. Take a look at the proposal on our website (<http://dryden.ny.us/environmental-planning>) before Monday. Then, come. Listen. Ask questions. Make suggestions.

It surprises me sometimes how much local government does for the community and how little I knew about it before I started attending Town Board meetings. In addition to the Planning Board's zoning update task, the Conservation Board is working to define Critical Environmental Areas to help in State Environmental Quality Reviews. The Recreation Commission is planning for maintenance and development of parks and recreation facilities. The Youth Commission is lining up summer camp plans and employment opportunities for kids. These are volunteer boards – people like you, as NPR so often says. Each volunteer board works with a Town Board member and a staff member. And this is all in addition to the staff's daily routine: issuing building permits, dog licenses, marriage licenses, processing passport applications, performing safety inspections, collecting court fines, cleaning storm drains and much, much more.

The next zoning update public meeting



In 2007 the Planning Board began working on proposals to change zoning regulations developed in 1988 and amended many times since then. The work has centered on descriptions of zoning districts to enhance land use patterns that are working well “to preserve the rural and small town character of the Town of Dryden.”

Dozens of people have participated in the discussions over the past three years and now we want more comments.

Please join us on **Monday, March 22, 2010, at 7:00 PM** at the **Varna Community Center** for a presentation and additional discussion of new zoning district proposals.

Highlights

New Zoning Districts: Rural Residential, Rural Agricultural, Conservation, Hamlet, Commercial and Light Industrial/Office.

New Subdivision Concepts

New Design Guidelines

New Density Patterns



The Town Hall at 93 E Main.

Ask a Code Officer...

Have you ever wondered how high a fence can be before you need a permit? Or what the rules are on swimming pools—even some of the inflatable ones? Or how to subdivide your property?

What are the burning questions you have that our Code Enforcement Officers can answer for you? Submit your questions to the Zoning Department at Zoning@dryden.ny.us. Not only will you get an answer, your question may be included in a future newsletter.

Some application forms are also available [online](#).

What is Local Government?

By Henry Slater, Director of Building,
Zoning & Environmental

Recently I had an opportunity to participate in a discussion the subject of which was local government. At least one participant was a former elected Town official while others were a mix of appointed volunteer local board members and their constituency.

At some point the discussion drifted to constituency impressions of local government and constituency participation.

While opinions varied on many subjects, the opinions on constituency participation and local government value were quite similar.

All believed it is a challenge to find candidates for elected office and appointed volunteer boards and committees.

One participant offered this comment; "once when I was campaigning for local office I had a constituent inform me please don't waste my time with a speech about what you are going to do as we all know local government has no impact".

Others in the discussion indicated similar experience and all agreed constituent apathy has been and continues to be a growing concern.

What follows is not an attempt to convince anyone to run for office, volunteer for appointment or even to vote. NO NO! It is much more contrived than that! All kidding aside, my goal here is to provide you with an opportunity to come to your own conclusion whether or not local government provides any impact on our daily lives.

How do I do that? I believe it is a very easy task! Simply provide you with a list of the daily impacts and influences local government has on our daily lives.

Let's begin by exploring what services the Town provides.

Highway maintenance is the most obvious. Everyone depends on highways every day. Granted not every public road or street is maintained by the Town of Dryden, however; every time you see an orange truck it is provided by the Town of Dryden.

Land use administration is by far the next large impact. While not everyone agrees with zoning or subdivision regulations; it does provide an opportunity for uniform development consistent with environmental conditions.

Recreation is another area which provides an opportunity for all community residents from the very young to our senior citizens to participate in numerous activities and sports.

There also are a number of additional services which are provided or sponsored by local government. The most notable sponsored service is that of fire and rescue.

There are a total of (6) fire and rescue stations, (4) completely within the Town and (2) others from adjacent communities prepared to rescue you or extinguish a fire 24 hours a day everyday every year.

With the exception of Dryden Ambulance Service, all other fire and rescue service is provided by volunteers. Obviously it is our tax dollars which support equipment and facilities to a large extent. How are the remaining funds raised? Fundraisers sponsored by individual fire and rescue companies.

Additional services are brought to us by the Town Department of Public Works, (DPW). The DPW maintains municipal water and sewer services, parks and Town Buildings. I do acknowledge some of these services in addition to General Town tax, are paid for via Special Use district fees. The Special Use, benefit districts, are billed only to those who use the service.

There are several areas of service which require appointed volunteers, strictly residents of the Town.

For the most part, most adopted policy is administered by volunteer boards. The Boards consist of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Board, Recreation Commission and Special Commissions. All of these are comprised of appointed volunteer residents of the Town.

Each person volunteering to serve on a board or commission is appointed by the Town Board who are elected by us. Here's the best part of this local government process! You can be directly involved with any part of every function of local government to any degree you desire.

See **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** page 3

OPPORTUNITY FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

Who says homeownership has to be an impossible dream?

Tompkins County, in cooperation with **Better Housing for Tompkins County, Inc.** and local lending institutions, is proposing to continue the Tompkins County Homeownership Program which assists first time homebuyers. The program uses grant funding awarded by the New York State Office of Community Renewal as "gap financing" to make up the difference between a home's sale price and an affordable mortgage. Funds will also be used to reduce closing and down payment costs.

If you have a household income under the income limits listed below and would like to purchase a home in Tompkins County, the County and local banks may be able to help!

If you are interested in participating, please complete and return the PRE-APPLICATION FORM by April 16, 2010.

More information and application are available online at www.tompkins-co.org/planning.

Local Government (Continued from Page 2)

You may campaign for public office and it will not cost millions to fund it, typically mostly your time. You may volunteer for appointed land use administrative boards or for the recreation commission or other special commissions which are created on occasion. Generally special commissions are created to address a special concern which may solve a problem or create a benefit. All of these volunteers are strictly Town or Village residents. The ideal is local people understand local needs.

An even easier means of participation is available which is simply attend Town Board meetings, Planning Board meetings or Conservation Board meetings, Zoning Board of Appeals sessions or Recreation Commission meetings. Your participation and comments are always welcome and provide important facts or consideration. Local needs are best addressed by local residents who better understand local assets and concerns.

You also have an opportunity to meet face to face with all local officials or employees at just about any time you desire including after normal business hours when necessary. Your opinion facts and concerns are our concern. Together we can move forward in a positive direction.

I do not believe there are many opportunities for more easy direct participation or involvement than there is at local government. Certainly it is far easier at the local level than at the State or Federal level.

After all, within the Town of Dryden there are about 14,000 people. At worst, your voice is no worse than 1/14,000. At the national level your voice is not better than 1/300,000,000! The ratio seems to favor the hometown level.

Next time someone says there is no impact by local government, please give them the facts. You also might suggest; “when one is not part of the solution, one remains part of the problem”.

For a complete overview of what is happening at the Town of Dryden: visit our website at www.dryden.ny.us and explore the various services and opportunities.



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Town Board, 2nd & 3rd Wed. @ 7 pm

Planning Board, 3rd Thursday @ 7 pm

Conservation Board, Last Tuesday @ 7:30 pm

Zoning Board of Appeals, First Tuesday @ 7:30 pm

Recreation Commission, 3rd Wednesday @ 7 pm

Youth Commission, 2nd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm

Technology Committee, Last Wednesday @ 8:30 am

Loans & Grants Committee, Last Wednesday @ 9:45 am

Finance Committee, Last Wednesday @ 11 am

We also strive to keep a complete list of meetings on the Town Website at: <http://www.dryden.ny.us/calendar/>

Community Centers

It appears we will be hearing from the Bethel Grove Community Center again in the near future.

Dryden Community Café

1 West Main St, Dryden Village
www.drydencafe.org

Ellis Hollow Community Center

111 Genung Road
www.ehcc.clarityconnect.com

Varna Community Center

943 Dryden Road
<http://www.lightlink.com/vca/>

Etna Community Center

Main Street, Etna
Lower Creek Road

The Town History Corner

By Harry L.D. Weldon, Town Historian

The Village of Dryden (and Town) here in the Finger Lakes Region has a very valuable piece of property—value not in the sense of financial asset, but rather value in a rich heritage handed to it from an earlier generation. There it sits, saying to all: “come visit me, play on my grass, and enjoy the solitude of an oasis;” in the very middle of in sundry aspects of the daily life of a multitude of residents.

Every community has such a major place. The pioneers that settled here in the late 1700's had a square of land laid out for education and recreation. Invariably every little town had a small plot at the center of it devoted to a common square or park in addition to a plot dedicated to a school.

I had the opportunity to walk over to Montgomery Park one day and sit at the picnic table under the pavilion with no one else about. The park was void that day of any other person. Then, I walked over to the History House and did some studying of its history. Here is what recorded history has to say about “our park!”

“The Montgomery Park complex historically includes the bounds of the park and the Montgomery house (38 West Main St.) and the lot on which sits the History House (36 West Main St.) moved from its former location (at 34 West Main St.) some 50 feet to the east.

On this site was once located one of Dryden's early distilleries. At about the time the brick store (now the DCC Café) was built in about 1840, two other dwellings were built. Both were raised on the same day, one provided liquor for the workmen, and the other providing supper. One of these buildings was the Montgomery family house and the other residence across the street at 43 West Main St. Originally the house had only two stories, a third was added in circa 1870-80.

Dr. John W, Montgomery was a local physician as early as 1828 in the village. He was a man known of being of social and literary standing. He twice represented Dryden in the legislature in Albany; an active member of the local reading and debating society. He was a charter member of the Methodist Episcopal Society, organized in 1832.

Dr. John's son John J. succeeded to his father's practice and sometime between 1857 and 1866 had a small office added to the east of the Montgomery home, which was later moved to Lewis St.

Dr. Mary Montgomery, granddaughter of John W. (a third generation physician) donated what was to become Montgomery Park to the village after her father's (John J.) death.

For a period of time, during the latter years of John J.'s life, the park area was used for a Summer Youth Playground program. Improvements made during this time included the construction of a utility building and the layout of sandlot ball diamond. The local Boy Scout Troop 24 held meetings there during the 1970's and early 1980's. For a period of time the Dryden Jaycees used the building for its bi-weekly meetings and club room.

After the village became the legal owner of the park area, a tennis court was added and landscaping was done to include a small parking lot. This court was flooded during the winter to provide an ice skating rink until around 1990. At about this time a basketball net was added in one side of the court.

Reconstruction of the former bandstand occurred in about 1975, by volunteers. Around 1995 the utility building was obtained by a private buyer and moved to Weber St. and was succeeded by a picnic pavilion, a new ball diamond and limited playground swings and slides.

For a number of years after the last update the ball field was used for Kiwanis Little League games. For the last 25 years the Annual Dairy Day festivities have been held in the park. During school days you can find parents with their young enjoying the playground equipment. Some folks just like to go there and “soak in” the solitude of its quiet location.

Occasionally, after school there might be a “pick-up game” of tag football or softball and now and then can be found people in a challenging game of frizz bee. Over the years the park has experienced games of capture-the-flag or hide-and-seek (many times to the chagrin of the neighbors) where the adjoining trees and bushes were used for hide-a-ways. People of all ages have fun on the premises. Such, such value is beyond measure.

Oh, and least we not forget the summer revitalizations of Montgomery Park with its weekly band concerts—certainly not like the old days when uniformed band members played stirring marches with lots of coronets, drums, clarinets and such. Today grass roots banjos and guitars or even an occasional “light rock evening” are good too.”

No real record journal has been found to indicate the actual dates and uses or by whom the park has been used since its inclusion into the community as a place of social and recreational activity.