

VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022

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Village of Aurora, 456 Main St. Aurora, NY 13026

www.auroranewyork.us

315 364-7293 (Office/Code Officer) 315 364-5239 (DPW)

villageclerk@auroranewyork.us

VILLAGE HOURS

THE VILLAGE OFFICE IS OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

(The Clerk, Treasurer and Code Enforcement Officer are available by office phone/email)

VILLAGE ELECTIONS

Congratulations to our newly elected officials! Mayor Jim Orman and Trustees John Miller and Frank Zimdahl join Matt Bianconi and Janet Murphy. Best of luck to you all!

SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM

The Village is accepting applications for a Summer Program Director and for lifeguards. The lifeguard application is on the village website (Summer Youth Program page). Anyone interested in the Summer Program Director position, please send a resume' and cover letter to Village Clerk, 456 Main St Aurora, NY 13026. Candidates must have current certification in waterfront lifeguarding and CPR/First Aid.

AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Set Your Easter Table

This month's market at Patrick Tavern is Tuesday, April 12, 4:30-5:30 pm. There will be lots of food, beverages, and gifts to make preparation easy. Check out Cookie's page, simplycookie.square.space for ready-to-heat meals.

The farmers and artisans are still checking in, so visit "Patrick Tavern Market" on Facebook for the latest news (it's a public page), or get on the mailing list by writing to lschwab@wells.edu.

DPW

Thank you to everyone for cooperating with Adam by letting him read your meter or sending us a picture. Accurate readings prevent billing confusion when the office has to do an estimate.

PAYMENTS FOR THE QUARTERLY APRIL BILLING NOT RECEIVED BY APRIL 30 WILL BE ADDED TO THE VILLAGE TAX BILL.

Leaf and Brush Pick-Up

Please bag your leaves/brush for pick-up until the DPW has the leaf truck available, April 25-29.

Street Cleaning

The street sweeper is cleaning Wells Road, Dublin Hill, Cherry Ave, and Court St sometime in June. Please look to the website and the bulletin boards for specific dates.

NYSDEC BURN BAN

March 16-May 14

And there is never ANY burning beyond small, personal use fire pits allowed within the Village.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Fellow Villagers,

This is my last message as mayor. I cannot thank you enough for the opportunity you've given me to serve the village in that capacity for the last twelve years, a good portion of a lifetime. I've often heard people express that sentiment of thanks before, and I confess that, to me, it always seemed simply the thing you were supposed to say, and nothing more. Given all the controversies, unsolvable problems, personal upheavals, how could this be what a public servant takes away from the job? But it is. Just ask any one of the 26 people who serve on boards in Aurora: the opportunity to learn the job (not an easy task!) and be part of Aurora governing itself - our place and our community - for ourselves, is a very powerful idea. And for the experience of that, I'm very grateful. I've also learned that it's great to make big changes and innovations, but the real work is in adapting to change, keeping things running and, at the same time, looking to the future.

After twelve years I thought that you might like a recap of some of the Village Board's accomplishments since 2010 and the State of the Village as a new administration takes over. Perhaps the most important changes have been the most invisible ones, having to do with new efficiencies in the office and the updating of personnel and operating policies mandated by the state. The Village Board has passed important local legislation concerning water and sewer regulations, village sidewalks, fireworks, and professional reimbursement, as well as amending the zoning law six times. Board training has been a priority, making sure that our boards understand the laws they are upholding and that all land use applications are treated fairly and wisely. At the request of residents a parking study was undertaken jointly by the Village and the Inns of Aurora and our understanding of the results has led to various solutions and parking expansions. We continue to adjust to the changes in the Village brought about by the success of the Inns, whose expansion has brought visitors from all over, economic stability, and a partner for several village projects, but the need to balance commercial success with residential priorities and village life has become evident. We continue to struggle with issues of housing and housing costs, as well as the preservation of a robust sense of community. The Comprehensive Plan for the Village was updated this year and a major revision of the village Zoning Law is underway. Over the last 10 years the state has pushed new mandates and expenses to the local level but we've kept up with them because of what we learned in the state audit that occurred 2012-2014 and through the competence and diligence of Treasurer Debbie Brooks and Clerk Ann Balloni. Consistently we continue to have the lowest tax rate in the county and monitor our finances through a new yearly internal audit instituted by the Village Board. We sought and received a \$100,000 State and Municipal Facilities Grant through Assemblyman Gary Finch, allowing us to purchase two new trucks, and plowing equipment. Municipal water and sewer funds must be self-sufficient; balancing a budget based on water usage, given the changes we've seen in the number of residents in the village and at the college over the last 15 to 20 years, has been difficult. We have been vigilant about these funds and have regulated rates to ensure not only the soundness of funds but the equity of rates among users. The State Comptroller's Office has never considered the village under any level of fiscal stress.

Our drinking water supply has been a concern for decades; the Village came close to building a municipal plant in the 1990's. In late 2014 Wells College called the question by declaring that they wanted out of the water business. In 2015 we began to work with New York Rural Water Association to see if we might have ground water in sufficient quantity, but we were unsuccessful. Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority proposed a Southern Cayuga Water District and we have been working with them for several years hoping that this might be the answer. We also commissioned a feasibility study for a new plant in 2018, registered our project with the

state, and applied for state funding in 2021, as soon as programs were available post-pandemic. The Village has also requested American Rescue Plan money from the County. We will know soon whether we have been successful. Wells College has in the meantime received two grants through the Village, one for algae filters and a recent one for equipment replacement at the plant. In other words, we have been going forward on many fronts, but the solution is not yet clear.

These years have also been a time concerned with community building and attempting to meet the needs of a wider variety of residents, especially during the summer. The formation, or reactivation, of the Aurora Historical Society has not only provided a welcome excuse to get together but has heightened awareness of the Village's history and its relevance for the future. The Village Historian, Linda Schwab, has been instrumental in putting together shows that involve us as well as visitors to the village. Linda, with the support of the Village Board, was also the force behind the creation of the winter farmers' market at Patrick Tavern. It began as a response to Covid and has grown into – we hope – a permanent event. The summer market was begun by Wells College and the Village, and Wells has done a wonderful job of keeping it going with the help of summer interns. The Village upgraded the tables at the Village Park, which has become a much-used place to have lunch as well as a venue for events run by the village and the Aurora Library through our collaboration on grants. The children's park also regularly receives replacements and repairs, most notably the citizens' group donation of a great playground set in 2014. We've also taken advantages of our pocket parks by the lake by providing kayak racks for residents without lake frontage. We reached out to the Town of Ledyard for assistance in keeping our swim program running and they have contributed to its funding, allowing us to expand swim lessons. Wells College has graciously allowed us to use their pool as needed. The most notable change to public land has been the changes to the Post office building, the creation of a small plaza with seating that gets very active in the summer, and the restoration of the sidewalk and curbing. One of the most important future aims identified by the Comprehensive Plan is the building of a village hall; the first steps have been taken toward that goal by acquiring land adjacent to the fire hall from the Inns of Aurora at a very reasonable price; whatever is ultimately built there will have community activities at its heart. We also began two new commemorations in Aurora, the group reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th at 11:00 and Aurora's Memorial Day ceremony that takes place on May 30th, the traditional Memorial Day. There isn't one of us who hasn't missed Aurorafest and the sense of community that came with that event. We need to get back to that, and we came notably close with that wonderful St. Patrick's Day parade this year.

On your behalf we have also reached out on issues that affect the Village and worked hard on making sure Aurora is still visible no matter how small we might be. The concerns that George Farenthold had about truck traffic through the village are still an issue and we have worked hard on the problems posed for us by the rerouting of Route 81. We also are engaged in issues concerning the quality of the lake, educating ourselves and consistently supporting the Cayuga Lake Watershed as well as the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization. The Village Board also vehemently spoke out concerning fracking, supporting the eventual state-wide ban.

If you've made it this far, thanks for your concern about the Village. As you can see, your elected officials take on wide-reaching responsibilities for preserving the common good in Aurora. I'd like to thank those who have worked with me: George Farenthold, Lili MacCormick, Grace Bates, Kit Van Orman, Al Ominsky, Janet Murphy, Matt Bianconi, Jim Orman, Thea Miller, and Marie Taylor. I'm sure you join me in wishing Jim Orman and his Board well as they begin their terms. They will be joining a competent and dedicated team. The Village employees are – literally – the best to be found anywhere, and the residents who serve on our various boards are dedicated to carrying out our laws justly and fairly. And they'll be doing it in one of the most beautiful settings you could find anywhere. Next year will be the fiftieth year that Bruce and I have lived in our house on Main Street. That says something.

Bonnie

VILLAGE OFFICIALS AND STAFF

Community Preservation Panel – Meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Jim Burkett – Chairperson
Jeff Blum
Chris MacCormick
Claire Morehouse
Julia Rossmann
Erin Weber (alternate)

Zoning Board of Appeals – Meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. (as needed)

Karen Hindenlang – Chairperson
Alexis Boyce
Laura Holland
Jeri Vargo
Vacancy

Board of Trustees – Meets the third Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

Jim Orman – Mayor
Matt Bianconi
John Miller
Janet Murphy
Frank Zimdahl

Planning Board – Meets the fourth Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Pat Bianconi – Chairperson
Pat Foser
Michele Murphy
Pam Sheradin
Vacancy

Village Historian – Dr. Linda Schwab

DPW

Kurt Wilmot
Adam Van Horn
Mike White

Office

Ann Balloni (Clerk/Tax Collector)
Deborah Brooks (Deputy Clerk/Treasurer)
Dan Green (Code Enforcement Officer)
Christine Tanner (Custodian)