

Village Views

Ask What You Can Do

by Jeff Kaplan, Mayor, Village of Ellenville

My earliest memory of government and politics was the 1960 election of John F. Kennedy. I recall watching his inauguration speech in which he asked all Americans to "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." While these words remain as important today as they were when uttered by President Kennedy, I fear that they have lost their meaning.

At a recent Village of Ellenville Board meeting, a resident of Ellenville complained that he had noticed some litter thrown by his house more than three weeks ago and questioned why the Village hadn't cleaned it up yet. It struck me with some irony that this individual would take the time to come to a Village meeting to raise this complaint rather than simply picking up the garbage himself.

Essentially the question comes down to this: how do we control municipal taxes while at the same time provide a level of services necessary to keep our Community attractive, and conducive to increased residential and commercial investments? An essential part of any answer is the willingness of our citizens to contribute their time and effort to improve the quality of life in our Community.

There are many ways to contribute to this effort, whether it be serving on one of our many Village/Town boards, committees, or clubs: (*Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Local Development Corporation, Historical Preservation Committee, Hunt Memorial Committee, Noonday Club, School Board of Education, Chamber of Commerce, Bicentennial Committee, 4th of July Committee, Run Like the Wind Committee, Shawangunk Garden Club*, etc.); adopting the road or street with your neighbors where you live or work and doing periodic cleanups; working on projects such as planting and maintaining central areas in our community; or, if you are in a position to do so, making a financial contribution to a Community project.

We see growing signs of a revitalized Community we can all be proud to say we live in. By continuing to work together and recognizing that our individual responsibility for the appearance of our Community does not end at the doors to our homes or our property lines, we will continue to turn around this Community. 

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Code Enforcement Funding, New Sidewalks for Ellenville

State Senator Bonacic recently announced that the Village of Ellenville will be able to construct new sidewalks along Warren Street as a result of a \$100,000 Multi-Modal grant secured as part of the State budget process. The lack of usable sidewalks in that area has made walking less safe in that area.

In addition, \$25,000 was secured to assist the code enforcement efforts. Senator Bonacic applauded Ellenville Mayor Jeff Kaplan's efforts to enhance the appearance of the Village and secured the State funding to assist in the effort.

"Absentee landlords in particular have allowed their properties to deteriorate. That has lowered the standard of housing for tenants and has caused some buildings to become eyesores. I hope, by this funding, the absentee landlords will hear clearly that the Village has the resources to force the cleanup of these properties. The people of Ellenville should not have to look at eyesores, and I applaud the Mayor's efforts to clean them up," Senator Bonacic said.

Mayor Kaplan said, "On behalf of the Village of Ellenville, we greatly appreciate the efforts and assistance of Senator Bonacic in our attempts to rebuild Ellenville." 

Village Historic Preservation Committee Appointed

The Village of Ellenville Historic Preservation Law, Chapter 127 of the Village's local laws, adopted unanimously at the June 14th meeting of the Village Board, was filed with New York's Secretary of State as required, and can now be activated. As reported in the July 2004 edition of *Wawarsing.Net*, the full text of Chapter 127 can be read at <http://wawarsing.org/elv/HistPresFinal.htm>.

The Village Board took its next step at the August 9th meeting by appointing Peter F. Backman to a one-year term, John Unverzagt (Town Historian) and Danyel Rubin to two-year terms, and Marion Dumond and Mary Sheeley to three-year terms. Marion Dumond was named Chair.

Committee members have been contacted and an organizational meeting will be held by early September, to be followed by regularly-scheduled meetings, which will be publicized by the Village. Early meetings will be devoted to establishing procedures, educational contacts with similar committees in Ulster County, and developing recommendations for landmark status.

Committee development will be reported to the Village Board on a regular basis. 



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