



### February Calendar

- 6 & 21** Village Board Mtg.
- 14 & 28** Planning Bd. Mtg.
- 1** Cons. Advisory Comm.
- 8** Zoning Bd. Of Appeals
- 14** Recreation Advisory
- 15** Visual Environ. Bd.
- 20** **Presidents Day**
- 22** Trails Comm.

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## Zoning in Croton

Zoning regulations are the means by which municipalities plan for and control land use within their boundaries. New York City was the first municipality to adopt zoning regulations in 1916 but by the 1920's zoning regulations were common throughout the United States. The constitutionality of zoning was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1926 in *Village of Euclid, Ohio v Ambler Realty Co.*

Initially, zoning regulations were utilized to limit certain areas to certain uses. These areas were broadly defined as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and historical. Uses that were thought to be incompatible were separated by boundaries on local zoning maps. Over time, these broad categories were divided into subcategories, some of which overlap with each other as far as uses permitted in them.

The current Village of Croton-on-Hudson Zoning Code dates from its adoption in 1979 although there was an earlier code which was supplanted with the 1979 code. Since then, there have been numerous revisions to Croton's Zoning Code and also the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan in 2003 which, under New York State law, governs all zoning code changes in a municipality.

The Zoning Code is one chapter of the overall Village of Croton-on-Hudson Code - Chapter 230. Adoption of the zoning code, or amendments to it, is the function of the Board of Trustees. However, under law, where a zoning code exists, there must also be a body to hear appeals and grant relief from the strict application of the zoning regulations. This is the Zoning Board of Appeals which is separate from the governing body.

In Croton, primary zoning categories are residential, commercial and indus-

trial. In the residential group, the Village zoning code specifies dimensional requirements and permitted uses for six zoning districts: RA-40, RA-25, RA-9, RA-5, RB and RC. The numbers refer to the square feet required - i.e. RA-40 requires 40,000 square feet for a lot size. RB is for two-family residences and RC for multi-family residences.

Commercial Zoning districts in Croton cover a broad spectrum of commercial enterprises including C-1, C-2, O-1, O-2 and WC. The C-1 and C-2 are largely for small businesses which can include retail, offices and small manufacturing. The O-1 and O-2 districts are primarily for office use. WC is the area along the Hudson River waterfront exclusive of Half Moon Bay. It allows for some water-related commercial uses. LI is for Light Industrial uses. In Croton most of the land zoned LI is currently utilized by the MTA and Metro North railroad, and as such is not subject to the same review as private entities.

The Village also has a PRE zone - Parks, Recreation and Education which is intended to preserve open space and specifies appropriate uses in these areas. Two other special zones are the MDU zone and the WD zone. The latter would provide for the planned development of a very large area that might encompass multiple uses. There are currently no MDU parcels in the Village. The WD district covers the Half Moon Bay condominium development.

Additionally, the Village has an overlay zone called the Gateway Overlay

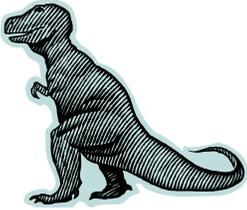
## Winter Break Programs

The Recreation Dept. is offering two one-day programs during the winter school break. The deadline for registering for them is February 17.

**Intro to Lego Robotics Jr.** is for students in grades 1-5. This is a new program in which students will build LEGO models with working motors and sensors. A computer will be used to program robots made from Legos. All students will take home a Hexbug Larva Robot which senses and avoids objects. The fee is \$50 res./\$60 nonres. The program will run on Tues., Feb. 21 from 9 am to 2 pm.



**Diggin' for Dinosaurs, Rocks and Crystal** is designed for students in grades 1 to 6. Students will be young scientists as they excavate and assemble complete skeletal replicas from simulated fossilized rock. Dig for T-Rex, Triceratops and more! Rocks, minerals and crystals will all be unearthed. Every student will take home a unique rock and mineral collection. This program will run on Wed., February 22 from 9 am to 3 pm. The fee is \$55 res./\$66 nonres.



Both programs will be in the Community Room at the Municipal Building. Students must bring their lunches.

## Fire and EMS Chiefs Installed

At a ceremony on January 2, the executive officers of Croton's Fire Council were installed for two-year terms. John Munson was sworn in as Chief. Mr. Munson replaces Phil Dinkler who will join the ranks of former chiefs who are Deputy Chiefs. William Vlad was sworn in as 1st Assistant Chief and Matthew Mansfield as 2nd Assistant Chief. The five companies that make up the Croton Fire Department are Chemical Engine Co., Washington Engine Co., Harmon Engine Co., Columbian Hook & Ladder Co. and Croton Fire Patrol.

On January 7th, Croton Emergency Medical Services (EMS) installed their officers as well. Gary Diggs was reappointed as Captain for his third one-year term. Mark Dickey and Dave Kempter were installed as 1st Lieutenant and 2nd Lieutenant, respectively. At the same event, the third annual Executive Officers' Award was presented to John Ghegan.

Congratulations and thank you to all who serve resi-

## New Park Sidewalk

The Village has recently added new sections of sidewalk at the Duck Pond Park. The new sidewalk along Bungalow Road connects to the existing sidewalk along the north side of the pond itself. The new sidewalk extends from the parking lot east past the playground, field and basketball courts.



New sidewalk at Duck Pond

New trees will be planted in the spaces between the sidewalk and the street in the spring. The Duck Pond Watershed Neighbors Committee will advise on the landscaping.

The committee is also investigating, with the Village Engineer, the possibility of opening a trail segment in the future around the south side of the Duck Pond from South Riverside Ave. to the Duck Pond parking lot.

## Tax Grievance Day

Village residents, who believe their property tax assessment is incorrect, may ask for it to be reviewed and reduced at a once-a-year meeting called Grievance Day. In Croton, the Board of Trustees acts as the Board of Assessors in performing the review on Grievance Day. The Board is required by law to meet annually to consider the applications of property owners seeking adjustments to their assessments. This year, Grievance Day is February 21 from 4 to 8 pm when the Board will meet to review applications at the Municipal Building.



To understand what a residential property assessment means in terms of market value, divide the property's assessment value by the residential assessment ratio (RAR). (The RAR is determined by the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services.) This calculation will yield the market value. This year's RAR is .0369. If a property is assessed at \$15,000, this RAR will yield a market value of \$406,504. Doing this calculation may help you in deciding whether to file a grievance to try to lower the assessment. Applications must be completed and filed with the Village Assessor, Joe Sperber, prior to 4 pm on the day of the hearing. The applications and further information are available in the Village Engineer's office. You may also call 271-4783 for more information.



## **Eaglefest Reminder!**

The 8th annual Eaglefest is happening on Sat., Feb. 4th from 9am to 4pm. (Snow date is Feb. 5th.) Organized by Teatown Lakes Reservation, the event heralds and celebrates the return of the Bald Eagle to the Hudson Hills and Highlands. The headquarters is at Croton Point Park where heated tents and informative displays and exhibits are provided by many collaborators including the Village of Croton. There are hourly shows featuring live eagles, hawks, owls and other raptors. Several eagle-viewing

locations are in the immediate area including the Echo Canoe Launch at the south end of the Croton Harmon railroad parking lot.

Two Eagle Exploration Bus tours, with an environmental educator aboard and geared to adults and teens (12 and over) will leave from the headquarters. Tickets for the bus tours (\$20) must be pre-purchased. Tickets to the hourly shows (\$5) may be purchased in advance or on-site. Call 914-762-2912 ext. 110 for tour or show tickets.



## **Community Room Refreshed**

The much-used Community Room in the Municipal Building is getting a freshening up. While not exactly a complete makeover, the room is undergoing some sheetrock repair, cleaning and a complete repainting. The room is so heavily used that the wear

and tear of multiple users on a daily basis takes its toll on the walls and floors. The room is used by Seniors, teens, children's recreation programs, exercise and dance programs and discussion groups. It is also used as a polling place during elections. So many programs and events utilize the room that it is difficult to close it for repairs but that is what happened in January for slightly over two weeks. The freshly painted space will be appreciated by all its users.



## **Street Parking Reminder!**

On-street parking is not permitted when snow measures 2" or more. Keeping your car off the street helps DPW clear them of



snow. Violators will be ticketed.

## **Croton Seniors and the Census**

Based on the 2010 Census information available on the Westchester County website, Croton has 8070 residents. 2275 of these residents are Senior Citizens - that is, 55 years or older. Of those residents, men make up 1018 of the senior population and women total 1257. That means that 28.1% of the Village's population are Seniors. While the SkyView Rehabilitation Center, located in the Village, accounts for some of the total, some of its residents are transient and not counted in the Census figures. However, if all 192 of its beds were filled and counted as residents, the number of seniors who live in the Village outside of SkyView would be 2083 or 25.6% of Croton's population.

While Croton men outnumber or are equal in numbers to women in the 55-59, and 60-64 age groups, Croton women over 65 outnumber their male counterparts. In the 80-84 age group, Croton senior women outnumber men by 113 to 74. In the over 85 age group, women outnumber men by three to one: 158 to 51.

County-wide, the number of County residents 55 years or older constitute 26.7% of the county's population.

## **ASKPSC.com**

The NYS Public Service Commission has a Winter Outreach program which is designed to provide energy efficiency and financial assistance information to help consumers stay warm and safe in the winter months. Brochures on simple, low cost energy efficiency measures and on financial assistance are available in the Village Office and also at ASKPSC.com.

## **Skiing and Skating - New Programs**

The Recreation Dept. is partnering with Briarcliff Manor and New Castle Recreation Depts. in offering a **one-day ski trip** to Jiminy Peak on Sat., March 3. The fee of \$85.00 includes bus transportation and a lift ticket. The trip, which is for students in grades 6 - 12, will depart from and return to the Briarcliff Recreation facility at 5 Van Luvan Road in Briarcliff Manor. Signup must be done by March 1.



A **skateboard workshop** for students in grades 5 - 12 will be held over three Wednesdays (March 7, 14, 21) from 3:30 - 5:30 pm. Students will design and build their own skateboard. Each will craft their own unique skateboard to take home. The registration deadline is March 2 and is done online at 2nd Nature's website:



www.2ntr.com. The fee is \$80 res./\$95 nonres.

## Published for the Residents of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson

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Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building, One Van Wyck Street  
(914) 271-4781-2, [www.crotononhudson-ny.gov](http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov)

**Croton Zoning Cont'd.** zone. This zoning district applies to defined areas in three commercially-zoned entranceways to the Village - the North End on Route 9A, the Municipal Place entrance from Route 9, and the Harmon entrance from Route 9 on Croton Point Ave. and South Riverside Ave. The underlying zoning districts for these three areas, and their associated regulations, still apply but development in these areas must also meet some more rigorous "overlay" standards that are intended to give each area a cohesive identity.

In most zoning districts, there are defined uses which are permitted. These are known as "as of right" uses. There are also uses which are

deemed permissible if certain conditions are applied. These are called "special permit uses". Most development, even "as of right" uses, are subject to Planning Board review and approval to assure compliance with the Zoning Code.

Where an applicant cannot meet the dimensional requirements of a use in a specific zone, they can appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a "variance" from the zoning code to allow that particular situation. They can also appeal to the Zoning Board if they disagree with the Village's interpretation of the code.

Overall, the Zoning Code in Croton-on-Hudson, as in other municipalities, provides a framework for the development that can occur within its boundaries.

## Got A Question?



### **A recent amendment to the NYS Open Meetings Law requires documents that are to be discussed at public meetings to be available before the meetings. Does this affect board meetings in the Village?**

The new requirement on availability of documents before they are discussed at meetings is very good for the public in general as it increases the transparency of decision-making. Many municipalities provide only a bare-bone agenda to their public prior to board meetings. Fortunately, Croton residents have been able to get the relevant documents pertaining to agenda items for some time. This was possible through the implementation of a software program called NOVUSAgenda which the village implemented in June 2011.

Village Board agendas have been available on-line to residents for several years from the Village's website. With the implementation of NOVUSAgenda, the public was also able to view the backup documents supporting the agenda items. Croton Village Board agendas also include the actual correspondence received and the draft minutes of prior meetings which is unusual among municipal board agendas.

The new amendment to the Open Meetings Law also applies to the other decision-making bodies in the Vil-

lage such as the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Water Control Commission and the Waterfront Advisory Commission. While these boards have had their agendas available on the Village website for several years, they have not previously provided the backup documents for their agenda items. They will begin doing so in compliance with the law. Advisory committees and boards are not required to have their agendas or materials available under the law.

Exceptions exist, however, for the provision of the backup documents such as extremely lengthy documents or those subject to executive privilege. Where these documents are requested by the public, they will be made available but can be charged for at the same rate as those documents received under the Freedom of Information law.

The Village also provides additional means and opportunities for transparency of its meetings through the live telecast of its Village Board meetings on Cable Channel 78 and the live-streaming of the board meetings on the Village website. The live-stream broadcast is always available into the future as are the written minutes. Live streaming of Board meetings can be viewed as it is happening by clicking on Minutes and Agendas from the Home page of the Village website: [www.crotononhudson-ny.gov](http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov).