



March Calendar

- 1 & 15** Village Board Mtg.
- 16** Village Election Day
- 9 & 23** Planning Bd. Mtg.
- 3** Cons. Advisory Council
- 9** Rec. Advisory Comm.
- 10** Zoning Bd. of Appeals
- 17** Visual Environ. Bd.
- 31** Trails Committee

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Village Budget - Preparation and Process

On March 19, the Village Manager, acting in his role as Operating and Budget Officer, will put forward a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2010/2011. The dates for submitting a proposed budget and adopting a budget are set by State law.

Croton's fiscal year runs from June 1 to May 31. Work on the budget begins many months in advance of its submittal. Each Department head submits budget estimates and detailed work sheets to Treasurer Bullock. These proposed department budgets are reviewed with the Village Manager and the Treasurer prior to inclusion in the budget. Separately from the department budgets, the Treasurer and Manager develop proposed budgets for administration costs including salaries, pensions, benefits, insurance, legal costs, debt service and planning. Most of these expenses are non-discretionary.

A new mid-year budget report was requested this year to aid in the budget preparation process. The mid-year report indicates areas where revenues and expenses are varying from what was anticipated when the budget was adopted. This information helps in setting realistic revenue and expense expectations for the coming year.

Once the Manager issues the proposed budget, the Trustees begin a month-long series of work sessions and a public hearing to review the department budgets as well as the administration budget. These meetings are open to the public and provide a good opportunity for residents to listen to the details and offer comments. The final budget must be adopted before May 1.

The current year's budget is approximately \$15.9 million. A little over one third of that amount is raised from non-property tax sources - \$5,898,659. The remaining \$10,014,055 is raised through

property taxes. To date, the mid-year report indicates that \$2 million of the \$15.9 million has not yet been received. This is mainly from non-property tax revenue as Croton has a very high rate of tax payments. Although the current budget substantially reduced the anticipated revenues from sales and mortgage taxes relative to those of prior years, at mid-year these revenues remain even lower than the reduced projections. These revenues always reach the Village many months after when they are actually accrued so there may be an improvement before the end of the fiscal year. Employee benefit and pension payments as well as the new MTA Payroll tax were key areas of expense increases.

In addition to the General Budget, a Capital Budget is also prepared each year and adopted. This is a 5-year plan for capital improvements that are generally funded by bonding. It includes large equipment, renovations, community development and infrastructure projects, and new construction. It also includes large recurring projects such as sidewalk and curb replacement and ongoing road repairs. These types of unique large expenses are prioritized and spread out over many years. The Capital Budget is more flexible than the General Budget as it is a plan of action and not an actual appropriation. Additionally, the Water and Sewer Funds have their own capital budgets. These are partially funded by water and sewer fees as well as bonding of large projects. Work related to the Village well fields and the replacement of water and sewer lines are examples of Water and Sewer Fund projects.



Village Elections

On Tuesday, March 16, the annual Village Election will be held in the Community Room of the Municipal Building. The polls will be open from 6 am to 9 pm. Two Trustee positions and the Village Justice are up for election. Trustee positions are for two years and Justice is for four years. The parties on the ballot are Democrat -D, Republican - R, Alliance - A, Croton Taxpayers - CT and Justice - J. The candidates are as follows in alphabetic order:

Trustee: (Vote for two)

Ann Gallelli - (D and CT)

Richard Olver - (D and CT)

Gregory Schmidt - (R and A)

Randolph Swan - (R and A)

Justice: (Vote for one)

Sam Watkins - (D and CT)

Lisa Wolland - (J)

The two Trustee candidates receiving the highest number of votes will win the election. Results will be televised on Channel 78 after the polls close at 9 pm.

Spring Recreation Events

A lot of family fun is ahead in March with the coming of Spring. The annual Spring Window Decorating event and Lunch with the Bunny are always popular so don't miss out.



Windows of businesses all over Croton are available to be painted. This is not a contest but a fun event for the whole family. Flyers will be available in the businesses to register for this event. The Recreation Dept. will assign the windows. Participants may begin painting windows on March 29 and must be completed by April 2.



Take your family to Lunch with the Bunny on Sat., March 27 at the Community Room in the Municipal Building. Limited space means that pre-registration is required. The lunch is \$10/res. and \$12/non-res.

Reminder. Photos to be entered in the Build-A-Snowman contest must be received by the Recreation Dept. by Fri., March 19.

The Equalization Rate

Every year residents hear that Croton's equalization rate has gone up or down and that this will affect their property taxes. What is this rate, why does it exist, and who establishes it?

In NYS, property taxes are raised and spent to finance local governments and public schools. These taxes are the single largest revenue source for the support of their respective services. To assure equitable property tax allocation among nearly 1200 assessing units, the NYS Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) administers an equalization program. Equalization seeks to measure the relationship of locally assessed values to an ever-changing real estate market. Each year ORPS calculates equalization rates for each of the State's assessing units.

Equalization is necessary because (1) there is no fixed percentage at which property must be assessed across the state; (2) not all municipalities assess property at the same percentage of market value; and (3) taxing jurisdictions, such as school districts, do not share the same taxing boundaries as the municipalities that do the assessing.

At its simplest, the equalization rate is the ratio of total assessed value (AV) to the total market value (MV). The municipality determines the AV and the ORPS estimates the MV. The formula is $AV \div MV = \text{equalization rate}$.

An equalization rate of 100 means that property is assessed at 100% of market value. A rate of less than 100 means that the municipality's total market value is greater than its assessed value.

Each municipality is authorized to set a level of assessment (LOA) to be applied to all properties in its jurisdiction. A falling equalization rate means that market values are rising faster than assessed values. In Croton, the equalization rate has fallen from 4.93 in 2003 to 3.18 in 2008. This year, the equalization rate increased to 3.30, reflecting a decrease in market values relative to assessed values.

Equalization rates are also used to determine the distribution of NYS aid for education, establishing tax and debt limits, the level of STAR exemptions and apportioning sales tax revenue.



Reminder!

Turn Clocks Ahead - Daylight Savings Time Returns

Sunday, March 14



Spotlight on the Waterfront Advisory Committee

The Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) is the body that ensures that projects that occur in the Village are consistent with the Village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). Croton's LWRP was adopted in 1992, one of the earliest in NYS. The entire Village is encompassed by the LWRP. The LWRP is a set of 44 local policies that fall under the NYS Coastal Zone Management Law which, in turn, is under the federal Coastal Zone Act. The local LWRP tailors each of the state's 44 policies to Croton's local situation. The WAC provides oversight of these policies. The intent, as defined in Chapter 225 of the Village Code, is that "Preservation, enhancement, and utilization of the natural and man-made resources of the unique coastal area of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson take place in a comprehensive manner to ensure a proper balance between protection of natural resources and the



need to accommodate population growth and economic development."

The WAC reviews all projects that are considered either Type I or Unlisted Actions under NYS's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). It provides its Determination of Consistency with the Village's LWRP to either the Planning Board or the Village Board depending on which board will make the final decision on the proposed project.

The WAC consists of five members appointed by the Mayor. All must be from either the Village Board, Planning Board or Water Control Commission. At least one member must be from each of these boards but no more than two. Currently the Chair

is Fran Allen from the Planning Board. Members are Rob Luntz (PB), Stuart Greenbaum (WCC), Rick Olver (VB) and Demetra Restuccia (VB).

Over the years since 1992, the WAC has reviewed many projects of importance to Croton. One of its biggest achievements was its work in defeating the Millenium Pipeline proposal to lay a natural gas pipeline across the Hudson River and through Northern Westchester County including areas of Croton with potential damage to the Village's well fields. The proposal was deemed not consistent with Croton's LWRP by the WAC. This determination was upheld by NYS and, ultimately, by the federal government in a lengthy court action.

Seniors Have Busy March

Croton's Seniors Club continues to grow and is busier than ever. With over 160 members, most activities are well-subscribed. The annual St. Patrick's Day party is scheduled for March 12 where members are all "wearing the green" and enjoying a traditional corned beef meal. On March 25th, many will be trying their luck in Atlantic City on a day-trip from Croton.

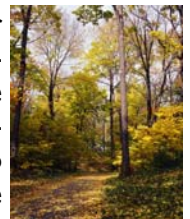


An AARP Defensive Driving Course is being held on Wednesdays, March 24 and March 31 from 9 am to 1 pm. Both sessions must be attended to complete the course. The sign-up deadline is March 19. The cost is \$12/AARP member and \$14/non-AARP member.

Hot Topics in the News returns for 6 Spring sessions on Thursdays beginning March 8 from 10 am to 12 noon in the Municipal Building Community room. Vincent Bonelli, PhD from Fordham University, leads this lively discussion of current headlines. This course is offered through Westchester Community College's MAINSTREAM program. The fee is \$24.

Greenway Trails Designation

At the recommendation of the Village's Trails Committee, the Village is seeking to have two Village trails designated as Hudson Valley Greenway Trails. The Village is seeking this designation for the 3-mile Riverwalk Trail along the Hudson River and for the three quarter-mile Croton Gorge Trail. The latter runs between the dead end of Cleveland Drive to the Silver Lake parking lot. Both trails are very popular throughout the year.



Croton has been a Greenway Community since 1993, now one of 261 such communities in the Hudson Valley region. One of the goals of the Greenway Trail system is to create a network of interconnecting trails throughout the Hudson Valley to promote and preserve the Hudson Valley's recreational, scenic, natural, cultural and historic resources and to contribute to the economic development of Hudson Valley communities.

The Greenway designation would mean that these trails would be placed on the Hudson Valley Greenway map available at their website: www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/Trailsandscenicbyways/LandTrail.aspx.

March, 2010

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

Leo A. W. Wiegman, Mayor

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Ian Murtaugh, Trustee

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Demetra Restuccia, Trustee

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Got a Question?



I keep hearing about the upcoming US Census. When will I get the questionnaire? What happens if I don't return it? The nationwide census will begin on April 1, 2010. It is the 23rd census in our nation's history. The US Constitution requires a census survey every ten years to find out how many people are living in each state. It is expected that more than 19.5 million people will be counted in New York State alone.

Among other things, the Census information is used to distribute money to community programs, determine the number of representatives NYS will have in Congress for the next 10 years, help decide where to locate hospitals, schools, bus routes, senior citizen centers and other facilities that serve you, and help businesses decide where to locate in your community.

In late March, most households will receive a questionnaire in the mail. It should take less than 10 minutes to fill out the household questionnaire which has 10 different questions on it. You will be asked the name of everyone in your household, their relationship to the per-

son filling out the form, each person's sex, age and date of birth, whether each person is of Hispanic origin, each person's race, and if you own or rent your home.

Each household should answer all the questions for each person in your household. A return envelope is provided for returning the form to the Census Bureau.

If you don't return your form or leave some questions blank, a census worker will try to contact you by phone or visit you in person. Answering all of the questions and returning the form on April 1 will greatly reduce the chances that a census worker will visit you.

The Census is fast, easy and confidential. By law, no one other than Census Bureau staff is allowed to see your questionnaire for 72 years.

Your answers are combined with those of other people to get a picture of your community and New York State. It is this combined information, not your individual confidential answers, that is put to many uses.

Further information on the census in New York State can be found at census2010.ny.gov.