



The Croton-on-Hudson Village Newsletter

March 2005

Number 70

March

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Residential Zoning Amendments Approved

In late January, the Village Board of Trustees acted to implement an important recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2003, to "maintain the scale and character of Village neighborhoods."

The Comprehensive Plan Committee, with the advice of the Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart Consulting firm (BFJ), studied ways in which this goal could be achieved and then examined Croton's existing zoning code to determine where appropriate revisions were called for to implement this goal. Over a period of 18 months, the committee and BFJ examined various implementation techniques used in other municipalities to achieve the same goal. Revisions to Croton's zoning regulations as it pertains to residential construction, were drafted for consideration by the Board of Trustees, the Planning Board, and the public. After multiple drafts, public presentations in June and October 2004, a public hearing, several work sessions and completion of the SEQRA (environmental review) process, new regulations regarding residential construction were adopted in January.

Chief among the changes to the residential code, was the addition of a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for each residential district. The FAR determines the maximum amount of habitable floor area that any residence may have—both new and for additions.

The following FARs were adopted for Croton's residential districts:

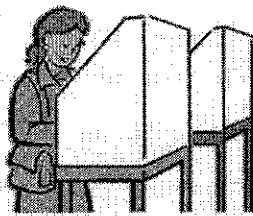


District	Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Floor Area Ratio
RA-40	40,000	0.15
RA-25	25,000	0.20
RA-9	9,375	0.40
RA-5	5,000	0.55
RB	2,500/unit	0.60

Maximum Floor Area = Lot area x FAR. As an example, in a RA-25 district, the FAR is .20. On a 25,000 square foot lot, the maximum habitable floor space would be 5,000 sq. feet. However, other constraints on residential construction are also imposed in the zoning code and serve to further limit the actual size of a house. The front, side and rear-yard setbacks, lot depth and width minimums, height restrictions, maximum building coverage and parking requirements all affect the actual size of a house.

The FARs were established for Croton's residential zones after extensive examination of all the districts to determine the existing range of house sizes in each.

The newly amended zoning law also made two additions to the duties of the Planning Board. One is to perform an architectural review function for all applications it processes. The second is a requirement for the Planning Board to exercise a new category of review for all new residential construction as well as for additions/renovations where the resulting residence would exceed .80 of the allowable FAR. This new process is termed 'Minor Site-plan Review'. Minor site-plan review requires submission of materials that are much the same as would be submitted for a building permit. It does not require a public hearing.



Village Elections

March 15

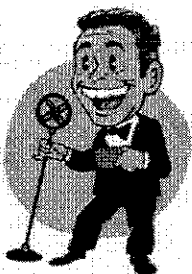
This year's Village election will determine three seats on the Board of Trustees—Mayor and two Trustees. All voting will take place on Tuesday, March 15th in the Community Room in the basement of the Municipal Building. The polls will be open from 6am to 9 pm. The results will be televised live on Channel 78 when they are finalized—approximately 9:45 pm.

Croton's current Mayor, Robert Elliott, is not seeking reelection.

Comprehensive Plan Committee Chair Ann Gallelli and Incumbent Trustees Georgianna Grant and Leo Wiegman, running on the Democratic and Croton Taxpayers lines, are being challenged by Trustee Gregory Schmidt for Mayor and James Steinberg and Tom Brennan for Trustee on the Republican and Open Government lines.

Croton Seniors

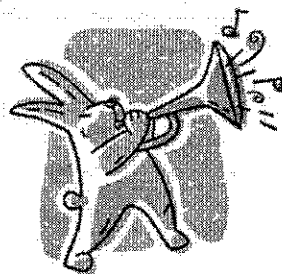
Trips by the Croton Seniors Club usually book up early so here is advanced notice about a trip planned for April 26th. It's a trip to Aqua Turf in Plantsville, Connecticut where the feature show will be "A Tribute to the Rat Pack". The trip includes round trip transportation, luncheon and the entertainment. The price is \$27/resident and \$32/non-resident. Reservations and payment must be made be received by April 1.



Senior exercise sessions meet on an on-going basis on Fridays from 10—11 AM in the Recreation Conference Room on the second floor of the Municipal Building. An annual fee of \$10 must be paid along with a completed registration and waiver form. Contact Yvonne Beldotti at 271-5804 for information on Senior programs.

Lunch with the Bunny

The Croton Recreation Department invites all Village and School District children to have lunch with the spring bunny. This annual event is greatly enjoyed by many children year after year. This year's lunch will be on Saturday, March 19 at 11:30 AM in the C.E.T. multi-purpose room. There is a \$5.00 fee per family and pre-registration is required.



Teens Summer Employment

It's not too soon to start thinking about your summer job plans. The Recreation Dept. has a variety of jobs including Day Camp and Tiny Tots camp, lifeguarding, gate and skatepark attendants and maintenance. Contact the Rec. Dept. at 271-3006 for and application. Apply early as positions fill quickly.

Residential Zoning Cont'd.

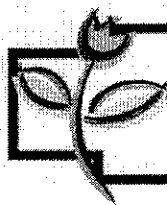
As part of this process the Planning Board will exercise architectural review oversight according to 12 designated criteria. These criteria seek to ensure that new construction will be in keeping with the scale and character of the neighborhood. Features that will be considered will include scale and proportion, setback and orientation, diversity of design, wall materials, and historic quality among others.

Other changes were adopted to make Croton's Zoning Code more user-friendly. Tables summarizing the permitted uses for each zoning district, their respective bulk requirements and a table showing uses requiring Special Permits and which Board grants them are also included in the code.

Croton's Zoning Code is available on the Village website for review. Copies may also be purchased in the Village Engineer's office in the Municipal Building.

Reminder!

The Village Offices will be closed on Friday, March 25 for Good Friday.



Spotlight on Connie Oswald

Connie Oswald has been Croton's Court Clerk since spring 2004. Returning to Croton after being Croton's Ass't. Court Clerk from 1992-99 and a four year hiatus during which Connie moved away, she came back just when Croton needed the Court Clerk position to be filled. Her prior experience in Croton's Court office as well as being Ass't. Court Clerk in the Town of Cortlandt has given her over 20 years experience in the field.

As Court Clerk, Connie is responsible for the overall operation of the court. Along with a full-time assistant and two part-time staff, she supervises the workload. In addition to the Croton Police, the

Court Clerk's office also deals with the State, County and MTA police. A major part of the work involves preparation for court days, where every case has to have a file prepared. These files may be for criminal, civil or traffic and parking. Most cases require numerous different forms and legal documents. Each case is placed on the court calendar by the clerk and during the court day, the disposition of each case requires a large variety of follow-up work. This may include fines, commitment forms, bail, and the appointment of an attorney. There is considerable correspondence and phone work as well. Court is held weekly on Wednesday mornings by Village Justice Guy Adami and Ass't Village Justice Paul

Hoffman, about both of whom she says "It is an honor to be their Court Clerk."

An average court day may involve 20-40 criminal cases, 4-5 civil cases and 30 traffic and parking cases.

Connie is also responsible for the financial aspects of the office which includes keeping and reporting monthly to the State on bail, fines and the judge's accounts.

Connie lives in the Town of Cortlandt and likes to spend her free time with her two children and three grandchildren. She also enjoys boating on the Hudson.



"My job is very diversified. There is always change and I learn something every day."
Connie Oswald

What is an Equalization Rate?

Every year residents hear that Croton's equalization rate has gone up or down and that this will affect our 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. It is the largest single revenue source for the support of their respective services. To assure equitable property tax allocation among nearly 4,000 taxing districts, 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 OPRS estimates the MV. The formula is $\frac{AV}{MV} = \text{Equalization rate}$

MV

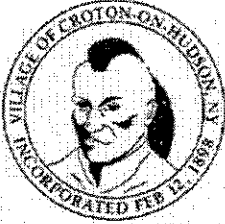
An equalization rate of 100 means that property is assessed at 100% of market value. A rate of less than 100% means that the municipalities total market value is greater than its assessed value.

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 4.21 in 2004. This translates into rising property taxes.

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

We're on
the Web. Visit us at:
<http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov>

March 2005



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

Robert W. Elliott, Mayor
Georgianna K. Grant, Trustee
Charles Kane, Trustee
Gregory J. Schmidt, Trustee
Leo A. W. Wiegman, Trustee

Richard F. Herbek, Village Manager
Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building
One Van Wyck Street
(914) 271-4781-2

Bulk Rate
Permit No. 111
Carrier Route
Pre-Sort
Yorktown Heights
New York 10598

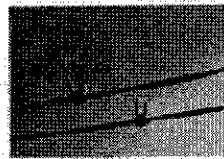
Got a Question?

I want to put up a fence on my property. Are there regulations about fences and where they can be placed? Do I need a building permit?

Robert Frost wrote that "fences make good neighbors" but he didn't mention that there are rules to be followed. Under Croton's Zoning Code, fences that are over 6 feet in height and greater than 25% solid are considered "buildings" and require a Building Permit to erect. If your fence does not meet those criteria, then, according to Chapter 230-40 E.(1), the fence may be erected anywhere on your lot except if your lot is a corner lot bordering on two streets.

If you have a corner lot then your fence cannot create an obstruction to vision that is higher than 30 inches above curb level. It also cannot be

erected within the triangle formed by the intersecting street lines of the lot and a connecting line drawn between the two points 30 feet distant from their intersection.

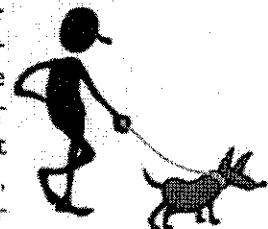


No barbed wire.

There is also an additional restriction that no barbed wire fences may be erected on any property that abuts a public street or grounds.

Dog Walking Reminder!

The regulations governing dogs, whether leashed or unleashed, were amended in December, 2004 to prohibit dogs from being on playgrounds and ball fields in addition to public parks and school property. Dogs may also not be on the property of another person without the consent of such other person, whether leashed or unleashed.



Village of Croton-on-Hudson Newsletter

A new visual identity program for the Village of Croton-on-Hudson

The original Request for Proposal by the Village of Croton-on-Hudson that was distributed and made available to designers in November of 2003 stated as its goal the replacement of an assortment of images and typographical treatments that had accumulated over the years, some less appropriate than others, with a single image and a consistent design approach that would be applicable to a wide range of village materials and uses, from stationery and business cards to gateway and directional signs, village vehicles, patches, hats, t-shirts, and banners. The request referred repeatedly to the desired end product as a "logo" and included several specific suggestions to be considered in approaching the project. Most prominent among them were the setting (at the confluence of the Croton and Hudson rivers), the natural environment, and a sense of history and "place."



Discussions of the unique qualities of Croton-on-Hudson often bring up such words as eclectic, diverse, inclusive, and informal. Accessibility to nature, the waterfronts, and such picturesque recreational sites as the Croton River Gorge, Silver Lake, and Senasqua are unanimously valued assets. The deep and complex social and cultural history of the area colors any serious conversation about the character of the village.

A rich and often divergent complexity is, itself, the very essence of the village.

The task, then, was to find a way to suggest this essential characteristic in a single image as unique as a fingerprint and as identifiable as a cattle brand.

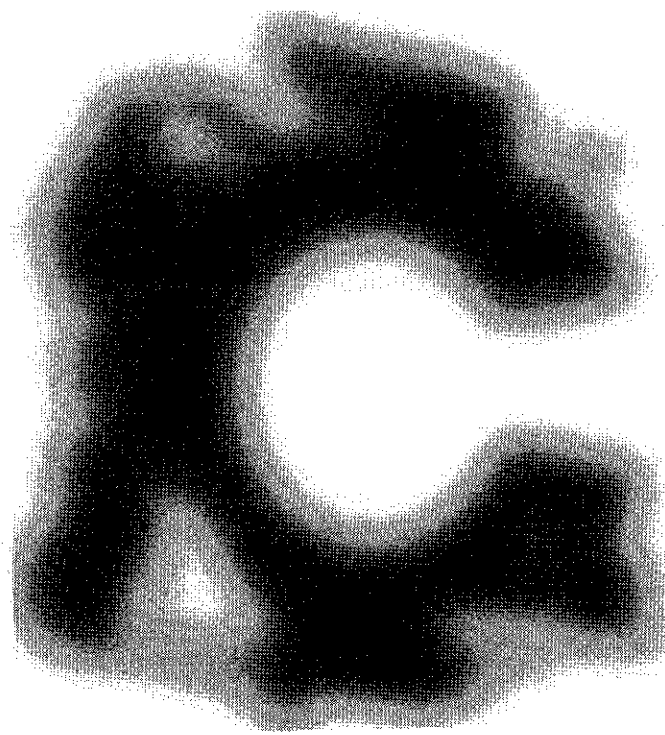
In collaboration with the Visual Environment Board (VEB), several approaches were explored. More than a half-dozen concepts were discussed, each with a number of variations.

A "logotype" is the name of a company or entity written out in a manner so distinctive that the name itself functions as a trademark or identifier (Coca-Cola, FedEx, People).

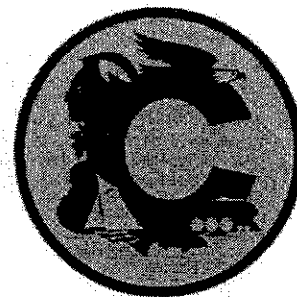
The "logo" that is presented at left—the product of the VEB, the designer, and the community itself—is not, strictly speaking, a logo or logotype at all, but an "icon" (CBS's eye, Chase's octagon, and Xerox's digital "X" are examples) designed to be used in conjunction with a prescribed system of typography and color to establish a flexible but unified visual identity.

Our icon uses the precisely rendered interior of a sans-serif letter "C" as its center, and surrounds it with an irregular outer circumference of silhouettes representing the complex, eccentric nature of the culture of which the village is the heart: Bald Eagle (nature, wildlife), Native American (looking back/history), oak leaf (surrounding woodlands, and/or the "Merwin" oak at the center of the upper village), cello (culture, the arts), Hudson River sloop (Hudson River commerce, recreation), fish (wetlands, wildlife), Twentieth Century Limited locomotive

(continued overleaf)



Here are two common tests to demonstrate the effectiveness of an icon under extreme conditions. The image above has been so drastically blurred that individual images become unintelligible. The interior form, however, maintains a shape still clearly that of a "C" while the irregular outside contour created by the ring of small images maintains its distinctively ragged character even though the images themselves have become unrecognizable. The example at right has been reduced to a size smaller than would be required by any anticipated use, yet the outer ring of small images remains legible, and the overall shape again retains its distinctive character.



Village of **Croton-on-Hudson** New York



The examples above and to the right are representative of the typographical relationships that will be prescribed for the great variety of uses to which the new program is to be applied. Variations such as the one at the far right are being created to make the icon adaptable to the largest possible variety of uses and materials.



Croton-on-Hudson
Parks and Recreation

(continued)

(railroad, modern commerce/leading forward into the twenty-first century).

The style of rendering as well as the relative complexity of the outer contour is consciously *un*-corporate, *un*-slick, and *un*-of-the-moment. There is no requirement here for instant identification and separation to isolate a product on the supermarket shelf, no desire to imply up-to-date technological prowess, no point in being the newest thing. On the contrary, we have chosen to identify our village with an image that may encourage and reward a longer look, that has overtones of the past, and that will look no older or newer ten or twenty years from now than it does today. The spirit is light and energetic, more playful than businesslike, and more casual than formal.

We will, however, make it thoroughly modern by the way we apply it, within a thoroughly contemporary system of graphic and typographical standards.

The Board of Trustees, the Visual Environment Board, and I all share in the expectation that this program will serve to enhance our residents' sense of place, self, and community pride in the years to come.

— Elton Robinson