



## January Calendar

- 1 New Years Day**
- 4 & 19** Village Bd. Mtg.
- 12 & 26** Planning Board
- 13** Zoning Board
- 6** Cons. Advisory Comm.
- 7** Bike/Ped Comm.
- 12** Rec. Advisory Comm.
- 18 Martin L. King Day**
- 20** Visual Env. Board
- 27** Trails Comm.

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## The Check That's In The Mail

Eligible resident property owners in the Village will soon be receiving a check from the NYS Dept. of Taxation and Finance, if it has not already arrived. What is this check for?

The check is an outcome of the NYS Tax Freeze Program, now in its second year of three. The Tax Freeze, enacted by the NYS Legislature in 2014, followed the previously enacted Tax Cap in 2012. The Cap is meant to put a limit on local property tax growth. The Freeze is meant to hold individual owners property taxes at their 2014 level. It does that by a system of reimbursement.

The check property owners get this year represents a cumulative amount of money that effectively "freezes" your property taxes at their 2014 level for all the taxing entities that affect them. For Croton residents, this applies to property taxes from the Village, Town, County and School Districts - 4 entities. The amount of the check is calculated by the State and depends on the applicable taxing entities having met the requirements of both the Tax Cap and the Tax Freeze legislation. The amount varies around the state from \$350 to \$800 with Westchester owners at the high end of the range. This year's "Freeze" check will be the largest of the three year program.

Due to differing fiscal calendars, school districts were the first to have to meet the Freeze budget criteria which both local school districts did. The check that property owners already received earlier this year was based solely on their school district having met the criteria. This was considered Year 1.

Year 2 of the Tax Freeze, the 2015/2016 fiscal year, affected all of the local taxing entities. In the case of Croton property owners, the Village, Town and County taxes were also included in the Freeze. Locally, all of these taxing entities met the Freeze criteria, so the check you received, or will receive in the near future, is a reimbursement for the cumulative amount of increases of all 4 entities over the base year of 2014. It is calculated by the NYS Office of Taxation and Finance and a single check is issued.

Next year, Year 3 of the Freeze, fiscal year 2016/2017, the check that property owners will receive will be the cumulative total of the Village, Town and County but not the School tax. All local taxing entities will again have to meet the criteria of both the Cap and the Freeze but the School Districts will have already completed their 2 years of meeting the Cap.

An additional complication in meeting the Tax Freeze criteria going forward is that each taxing entity had to provide to the State, a Government Efficiency Plan (GEP) specifying how it would save 1%, 2% and 3% respectively, based on the 2014 tax levy, in each of the three fiscal years beginning in 2016/2017, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019. The GEP for the Village was approved by NYS and the coming budget year will be the first year of its implementation.

For Village property owners that means that the 2016/2017 budget has to meet the Cap and satisfy its GEP plan in order for local property owners to receive a check in 2016.

The Cap is set each year by the NYS Comptroller at either 2% or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Given the recent low inflation, the Tax Cap



### **Skating at the Duck Pond**

When the winter is cold enough for long enough, ice skating at the Duck Pond is enjoyed by all residents both young and old.



**Duck Pond Skaters**

Very cold weather over a sustained period of time is required for ice to form and thicken enough to meet Westchester County safety requirements which require ice to be at least 6 inches thick. The Parks Dept. checks the thickness of the ice at

several locations on the pond itself.

Weather and ice thickness, permitting, there is **UNSUPervised** ice skating at the pond.

When skating is permitted a **GREEN** flag will be flying at the pond. A **RED** flag indicates it is unsafe and skating is not permitted.

Even when the green flag is flying and skating is permitted, the Recreation and Parks Dept. recommends that skaters be accompanied and not skate by themselves.

### **Youth Recreation Programs**

The Recreation Dept. is offering two, 6-session sport-related programs beginning in late January.

**Kids Wrestling**, for youth in grades 3 - 8, will introduce basic techniques used in scholastic wrestling. Wrestling gear is required. Sessions are Weds. 7 - 8 pm beginning Jan. 20. Sign up by Jan. 13.



**Youth Lacrosse**, for grades 1-4, provides an introduction to the fundamental skills of the game. Helmets are suggested and sneakers must be worn. Classes will begin on Sat., Jan. 30. Session 1, from 9 to 10 am, is for grades 1 & 2. Session 2, 10 to 11 am, is for grades 3 & 4. Sign up by Jan. 22. Fees for both programs are \$50/res. and \$60 nonres.



Additionally, the **Youth Basketball Program** will begin on Saturdays, starting January 2 at PVC. Participants will learn basic basketball skills such as ball handling, passing and shooting. Signups are still open for youth in grades 1 to 5. Grade 3 to 5, 9:00 - 10:00 am. Grade 2, 10:00 - 11:00 am. Grade 1, 11:00 - 12:00 pm. Fees are \$50/res. And \$60/nonres.



### **Damaged Dams to be Repaired**

The Village has received money from the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) to repair damage from Tropical Storm Irene and also mitigate future damage to two dams on the Croton River, Black Rock Dam and the Water Supply Dam.

Both dams create impoundments or holding areas in the Croton River that help to recharge the Village's water supply aquifer. The NYC DEP, which controls the NYC water supply system, has started to increase its use of water from the Croton system. As a result the flows in the Croton River have been reduced dramatically, close to the minimum regulatory level. This makes the impoundment areas created by the two dams increasingly important.



FEMA awarded the Village \$239,140 for the repair of Black Rock Dam and \$199,326 for mitigation of the same dam to prevent future damage. \$89,075 was also awarded for the repair of the Water Supply Dam. The FEMA award does not include the cost of engineering design services. The Village has engaged CHA of Albany, NY to perform the necessary design work, permitting and construction support for the proposed repairs and mitigation work on the two dams for the amount of \$75,700. Additionally, the CHA contract also includes \$15,500 for design work for the Water Supply Dam that is not related to the FEMA funding.

### **DPW Calendar**

Residents received the 2016 DPW Calendar in the mail in mid-December. It is important to keep this calendar as a reference for when regular services are scheduled. Sanitation pickups, Recycling pickups as well as those for Metal & Electronics are all shown in monthly color-coded calendars in the brochure. Holidays, when the normal scheduled is altered, are also shown.

The brochure also contains information on what waste is picked up and how to properly dispose of it. This includes information on yard waste as well as household waste, fall leaves, bulky items, the appropriate containers to be used and maximum sizes. It also identifies items for which an appointment must be made for pickup.

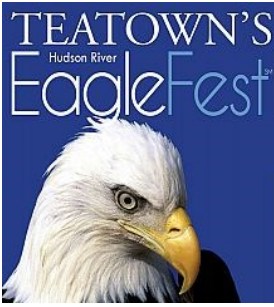
### **Reminder!**

**Offices will be closed Friday, January 1st for New Year's and Monday, January 11th for Martin Luther King Day.**



## **EagleFest Returns**

Teatown Lake Reservation's Annual Eaglefest event is returning to Croton Point Park for its 10th year. The event is scheduled for Saturday, February 6 (rain/snow date is Sunday, Feb. 7), from 9 am to 4 pm.



While the Headquarters for the event is located in heated tents in Croton Point Park, many other venues along the Hudson and Croton Rivers offer a chance to see bald eagles up close. These locations

will have spotting scopes and eagle experts in attendance. One such location is in the Village, at the Echo Boat Launch south of the train station. It will be hosted by members of the Saw Mill River Audubon Society.

At the Croton Point Park headquarters there will be multiple entertaining and educational shows and displays. Raptor shows with live birds, storytelling, childrens' programs, displays from over 30 participating organizations and local musical groups will be ongoing all day long. Food will also be available for purchase. General admission tickets provide entry to all the shows (seating is on a first come, first seated basis) and activities except the bus tours to other viewing sites. Bus tour tickets must be purchased separately. Ticket sales are available online at [www.teatown.org](http://www.teatown.org).

## **Find Us on Facebook**

Check out the Village FACEBOOK page for regular



updates on current happenings in Village government. The village FACEBOOK page is updated regularly. It provides an additional way for the Village Administration to let residents know important information. Go to FACEBOOK and search on **Village of Croton-on-Hudson, NY**.

To see other sources of information from the Village click on Stay Connected at the bottom of the Village's Home page. There you will find four ways to keep informed including the FACEBOOK page. You can sign up for email and emergency notifications, email distribution lists for information on agendas, activities, and field conditions, and K-12 Alerts from the Croton-Harmon School District.

## **Build-A-Snowman Contest**

It's easy to enter this contest. Build a snowman anytime this winter, take a 4" by 6" photo of the snowman and its builder, and send it to the Recreation Dept. no later than noon on Fri., March 11. Two categories of snow sculpture will receive an award: 1) Typical Snowman and 2) Snow Sculpture (animal, etc.) Remember to put your name, address and phone number on the back of the photo. Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow!!



## **SKIERS ALERT!**

In conjunction with the NYS Recreation & Park Society, the Rec. Dept. is offering discount admission tickets to many ski areas including Bromley, Hunter, Windham and Mt. Creek. No minimum purchase is required. The discounts vary but all offer significant savings. All tickets can be purchased at the Recreation Office and are non-refundable.



## **Roof and Brickwork Completed**

Work on the Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building has completed. Begun in June, the work was completed on schedule by Nua Construction Co. at a cost of \$1,450,000. The work included the removal of



roofing and replacement as well as repointing all the brick exterior.

During the period of the work, the building was covered in scaffolding which resulted in the loss of many parking spaces in the interim. Most village personnel and village pool cars and police vehicles were required to park off-site during the construction period.

Parking for people attending court, recreation programs or making office visits was primarily off-site. Due to the roof work, the cellular equipment in the attic leased by T-Mobile was also moved to a temporary tower in the parking lot at the east side of the building. The tower will be removed during January.

## **Tax Freeze Checks cont'd.**

has been below 2% every year since its inception in 2012. Last year the Village's Cap was set at 1.79%. This year the NYS Comptroller has set the cap for Villages at 0.12%. This is the lowest since the Tax Levy Cap law was passed. At this level, the allowable tax levy increase would be less than \$14,000 on a levy of over \$11 million.

## Got a Question?



**The walk along the Hudson River known as Elliott Way is spectacular. As a recent Village resident, I would like to know more about how long it has been in place and more about it.** The waterfront road officially opened on December 21, 2004. Prior to the road opening, access to Senasqua Road and the Yacht Club was across an at-grade railroad crossing near the pedestrian bridge. The opening of the road allowed this crossing to be permanently closed providing a safer access to the riverfront. It also meant more peace and quiet as almost 100 trains a

day no longer had to blow their whistles while passing the Brook St. railroad crossing.

The new road, utilizing the Half Moon Bay bridge, became the southern entrance to the waterfront and allowed pedestrians, cyclists, and cars to travel north to the location of what is now Croton Landing Park. Croton Landing Park land was acquired in 1996 and the park officially opened in 2009.

Funding for the waterfront road was primarily from Metro North Railroad and the NYS Dept. of Transportation. The road was named Elliott Way in recognition of the significant role Mayor Robert Elliott played in opening up access to the Hudson River in Croton.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



January, 2016

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

Gregory Schmidt, Mayor

Robert Anderson, Trustee

Ann Gallelli, Trustee

Brian Pugh, Trustee

Ken Walsh, Trustee

Janine King, Village Manager

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### Tax Cap Override Public Hearing

The Village Board has called for a Public Hearing on Monday, January 4 at 8 pm on a local law to allow the Village to exceed the NYS-mandated Tax Cap.

The 2012 NYS Tax Cap on local government's property tax levies sets a maximum increase beyond which the taxing entity will receive a financial penalty. The law, however, provides a mechanism that allows 60% of the governing body to vote to permit the Tax Cap to be overridden by passing a local law to the effect.

The Public Hearing is required for the passage of the override law. It is recommended by the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) that this action be taken to protect against the potential financial penalty. It does not mean that the Tax Levy will be in excess of the allowed amount.

### Tree Disposal Reminder

Discarded Christmas trees will be picked up by the Village DPW during the first two weeks of January. All trees should be free of all trim-

mings, tinsel or wires. Discarded trees should **NOT** be in bags.



### Renew Alarm Permits Now



Residents with private alarm systems are required to have an Alarm permit. These permits can be obtained in the Village Office for an initial fee of \$150. The permit expires on December 31. The annual \$50 renewal invoice will be mailed to permit-holders in January.