

**Village of Cold Spring
Village Board of Trustees
85 Main Street, Cold Spring, New York 10516**

**Workshop Meeting
12-15-2020**

The Village of Cold Spring Board of Trustees held a workshop meeting via video conference pursuant to Executive Order 202.1 on Tuesday December 15, 2020 at 6 pm. Present were: Mayor David Merandy and Trustees Marie Early, Heidi Bender, Kathleen E. Foley and Frances Murphy. Also present were Village Accountant Michelle Ascolillo and Village Clerk Jeff Vidakovich.

PRESENTATION OF FY 2019-20 AUDIT FINDINGS (EFPR GROUP)

John Costilow (EFPR Group) presented the audit findings for FY 2019-20. He noted that:

- Findings include a draft financial statement
- Audit is substantially complete and performed in accordance with customary accounting practices
- An unmodified opinion on the financial statements is to be issued
- Review of report and approval by VBOT remains to be completed
- There were no significant management changes during the fiscal year
- There were no uncorrected misstatements
- EFPR has no opinion regarding Village audit controls
- There has been no instance of non-compliance that would need to be reported

During the Board discussion it was noted that:

- The mortality table (currently included) is for males only and should be revised to include females

DISCUSSION WITH GREENPLAN REGARDING CODE UPDATE

Trustee Early introduced Ted Fink (Greenplan) noting that:

- Fink has drafted the resolution that the Board will vote on later in the meeting
- Fink has been consultant to the Code Update Committee and also to the Special Board for the Comprehensive Plan/LWRP and is fully aware of the history of events and circumstances leading up to current proposed code updates

Fink presented an overview of the SEQR process that is required as part of the code update process. He noted that:

- He has been involved with the Village since 2009
- The Village's first attempt to create an LWRP was in 1989 and that effort failed
- Benefits of an LWRP include:

- Access to federal and state funding programs
 - Allows Village input into federal/state coastal management decisions and to customize those decisions to fit the unique nature of the Village
- The SEQR process, as it applies to the code update process, involves land use requirements to be followed to protect the environment for future generations. Environment includes not only land, water and air, but also appearance, village character, impact upon population growth, in general any and everything that may impact quality of life in the Village.
- There are three types of action under SEQR:
 - Type I – for instances where there may be significant environmental impact and requires a long-form environmental assessment survey (EAS)
 - Type II – for instances where there may be insignificant environmental impact and only requires the short-form EAS
 - Unlisted Actions – for instances where there is no threshold for action under SEQR and no environmental study is required
- Fink presented a flow chart illustrating the SEQR process and walked the Board through the necessary steps to complete the process (relative to the code update)
- Fink will review the proposed code updates to determine SEQR requirements for each code section and to avoid segmentation
- For the code update, Fink recommended the Village conduct a full environmental impact study that will demonstrate a supportable position regarding SEQR compliance

TREE ADVISORY BOARD (TAB)

TAB chair Jennifer Zwarich presented a review of the recent tree maintenance work completed as part of the recent grant. She noted that:

- The grant was for just under \$50,000 and intended to allow needed maintenance of Village trees
- This review and presentation to the Board is part of the grant requirements
- This has been a two-year project that began in 2019
- Issues addressed included:
 - Water permeability around tree pits has been increased
 - Fencing has been installed around tree pits (to protect them from foot traffic and dog waste)
 - Some tree pits have been “adopted” by residents who have installed additional plantings
 - Metal tree tags have been installed that will allow identification of specific trees and tracking of any maintenance or other issues
 - 30 street trees were pruned
 - 12 diseased trees were removed and the stumps ground down
- A challenge to the TAB is outdated or unavailable surveys which can make it difficult to know which trees are Village responsibility

- Long-term benefits include:
 - Pruning protects trees from disease and storm damage
 - Removal of diseased/dead trees promotes public safety
 - Future maintenance will be made easier by the work done under this grant
 - Tree pits protect tree roots and also adjacent sidewalks
 - Community engagement

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

The Board will meet on 12-22-2020 at 7pm for its regularly scheduled workshop.

The Board will meet on 12-29-2020 at 6:30 to continue code update review and any items that may have arisen

DISCUSSION OF COVID-19

The message below was prepared by Trustee Bender and reviewed by the Board. It was agreed that this message should be published on Village web page, Village facebook page, and sent as a Letter to the Editor to our local newspapers.

A Message on COVID-19 from The Village Board of Trustees

COVID-19 rates in Putnam County are on the rise.¹ We do not yet have information about when a vaccine will be widely available.

While the state government is now looking at areas as [microclusters](#), and Philipstown has a relatively low infection rate, it's important that we as a community continue to work together to stay healthy throughout the holiday season and the coming winter.

The Village Board of Trustees encourages everyone to follow CDC guidelines, including wearing a mask whenever you are near people you do not live with, or are heading to a busy area such as Main Street.

The cost of this pandemic has been high and many have faced hardship. Isolation is difficult and it is normal to want to connect with your community. If you plan to see friends or family, please consider the following:

- You are less likely to transmit COVID-19 if you gather outside in small numbers and stay at least 6 feet apart.²

¹<https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

- Masks are proven to help stop transmission.³
- The more people you come in close contact with, the more opportunities there are to spread or contract the virus.
- You can spread the virus to others even if you have no symptoms and are feeling fine.
- Testing for COVID-19 is free through New York State, even if you don't have health insurance.

In addition to hospitals and urgent care centers, many pharmacies are now offering COVID-19 testing. If you use a test site run by New York state there is no fee, but you should call ahead. Here are some resources to find our nearest testing centers:

- Anthony Wayne Recreation Center drive through NYS testing site: 1-888-364-3065, Palisades Parkway, Exit 17 Bear Mountain, NY 10911
- <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites>
- <https://www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19/>
- <https://covid19screening.health.ny.gov/>

You may also be able to request home testing kits through your health insurance.

This has been a difficult year and we appreciate you continuing to take measures to keep one another healthy. We will get through this together. If you are struggling, please take advantage of our community resources:

- The Philipstown HUB for assistance with mental health services: Confidential call/text 845-260-1001
<https://www.philipstownhub.org/get-help>
- The Philipstown Food Pantry
<https://www.presbychurchcoldspring.org/food-pantry.html>, ptfp2481f@gmail.com

Please continue to check on friends and neighbors, especially those who are alone or have special needs. And if you have the means, please consider donating to the Philipstown Food Pantry--the Pantry is spread very thin serving many more families than usual. Now more than ever, we need to look after each other.

Additionally, we are looking for local residents to share with the community why you wear a mask. Please send one to two sentences on why it's important to you to trustee.bender@coldspringny.gov.

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0714-americans-to-wear-masks.html>

The Board discussed the statement, which will be posted on the Village website, on social media and in the local newspapers.

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

The Board has determined that the Highlands Current cannot be considered a “newspaper of record” because it does not meet regulations requiring a certain level of paid subscriptions. This does not preclude the Village from posting notices and display ads from time to time as it may deem appropriate.

At such time as the Highlands Current meets all requirements, the Board may reconsider the Highlands Current’s application to become the newspaper of record for the Village.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ABOUT FOOD TRUCK

The Board continued its discussion about the application by Natella Alhova to operate a food truck within the Village. During the discussion it was noted that:

- The VBOT may not be able to meet its promised deadline of two months to reach a decision (due to the large amount of other work to be accomplished during that time.) Mayor Merandy will contact Alhova.
- The Board should consider the issue of food trucks in the Village as a whole issue, rather than on a piecemeal, per application basis as there are many implications (increased tourism, increased vehicular/pedestrian traffic, street congestion and parking) to the Village
- The Board may solicit residents’ opinions on the matter as well in general about the nature of the Village and village life as it becomes a more popular tourist destination

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Trustee Murphy made a motion to approve Batch #5835 in the amount of \$53,494.15. Mayor Merandy seconded and the motion passed unanimously

MINUTES

None

BOARD BUSINESS

Mayor Merandy expressed his displeasure about a recent PCNR editorial regarding a cracked window at a Black-owned business; blowing it out of proportion and extrapolating it to the level of a hate crime. He noted that the editorial paints the Village in a bad light. Merandy noted that OIC Burke visited the business owner, who did not lodge any complaint stating that this was a racially motivated incident. The Mayor concluded his remarks noting that the PCNR should not jump to conclusions.

Trustee Murphy agreed with the Mayor’s remarks.

Trustee Foley cautioned that the Board not mis-characterize the incident lest it become guilty of the same sins as the PCNR. She also noted that the PCNR has no grounds to write an editorial suggesting

residents be kind to each other, given its past divisiveness, which the editor, Doug Cunningham, has yet to acknowledge or apologize for.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Foley made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Murphy seconded and the motion was passed unanimously at 8:40 pm

Submitted by: M. Mell

Mayor David Merandy

Date