

ROCHESTER



REPORTER

Published by the Rochester Town Board to Keep Citizens Informed and Involved

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MEETINGS & EVENTS

4/12 (Th) Draft Subdivision Law & Zoning Map Presentation, 6:30pm AcF

4/16 (M) Historic Preservation Commission, 4pm TH

4/16 (M) Draft Subdivision Law & Zoning Map Presentation, 6:30pm Samsonville Rd Firehouse

4/17 (Tu) Planning Board, 7pm TH

4/18 (W) Youth Commission Board, 9:30am CC

4/18 (W) Fire Commissioner Board Meeting, 7:30pm AcF

4/23 (M) Code Task Force, 6pm TH

4/25 (W) Town Board Audit/Workshop Meeting, 4:30pm TH

4/26 (Th) Code Task Force, 6pm TH

5/01 (Tu) Filing of Tentative Assessment Roll, Town Assessor

5/02 (W) Fire Commissioner Board Meeting

5/03 (Th) Public Hearing: Extension of Building Moratorium, 7pm TH

5/03 (Th) Town Board, 7pm TH

5/08 (Tu) Zoning Board of Appeals, 7pm TH

5/10 (Th) Environmental Commission Meeting, 7pm TH

TH=Town Hall
CC=Community Center
AcF=Accord Firehouse

Stoplights get a "Go"

"It's taken nearly two years," Supervisor Duke announced at the April 5 Town Board meeting, "but it's finally here." She was talking about a letter from Richard Dillman, a regional traffic engineer with the Department of Transportation, giving approval for two fully activated, three-color traffic signals to go up at the intersections of Route 209 and Main Street in Accord and at 209 and Kyserike Rd. It is not yet known when the traffic lights will be installed. Stay tuned!



Condos Coming? Towns Get Ready

Through one of those quirks in tax laws, individual owners of condominiums find their property assessed in a manner that can reduce a town's tax revenues.

The way it works is this: Condominiums are assessed by a method that requires the total value of individual

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When "Closed" Open Government Makes Sense

Long before Dudley Moore was the star of "10" and before Peter Cook directed Metropolitan Opera productions, the two performers were in a legendary comic skit. Cook was a director publicly auditioning actors to play Tarzan in a new film, and Moore came for an interview. There's just one problem: Moore is on crutches and has only one leg. Cook tries to turn him down gently, saying, "Don't get me wrong, I've got nothing against your right leg — but neither do you." When Moore smilingly insists he's right for the part, Cook says, "When it comes to playing Tarzan, you don't have a leg to stand on."

Laughable, yes, and it's noted here because at the April 5 Town Board meeting, three issues that were raised concerned "open government."

Executive Session. At the urging of constituents, a Board member moved unsuccessfully to make interviews for candidates to various boards and commissions open to the public. The NYS

Open Meetings Law says public business must be conducted openly, but it lays out specific instances when a "closed door" policy is best. One is when discussing "matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person..."

As the Tarzan anecdote illustrates, there's an advantage to a private interview, held in "executive session." That is to protect each applicant's privacy — and coincidentally shield unqualified persons from public ridicule.

Salaries are Public. A questioner at the Board meeting asked why a wage increase for the Town Supervisor was not presented to the public for consideration. The answer: It was, in the annual budget hearing, which only a handful of people attended. "And no one asked a question," said Supervisor Duke. The increase was subsequently passed unanimously by the Board.

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HELP WITH EARTH DAY CLEANUPS, APR. 21 & 28

Call the Youth Dept. to sign up NOW! 626-2115



Public Voices Opinion on State-Mandated Code Revisions

After hearing input from the public during the hearing held just before the April 5 Town Board meeting, the Board moved closer (pending final minor revisions) to approving Local Law #2. When approved, this law will replace the present Chapter 78 of the Town

Code on Building Construction with a revised Chapter 111 that incorporates new provisions for **Fire Safety and Property Maintenance Inspections**. A few residents questioned various time limits specified in the draft document, voicing opinions that they were more

restrictive than limits appearing in the New York State Code. "The least government is the best government," is the way one resident put it. And in at least one instance — involving frequency of inspections — the less stringent standards of the New York State Code

were accepted as satisfactory by the Board. After the hearing was closed, the Board agreed to make the agreed upon revisions to the draft Law before adopting it. The complete Building Code is available for study on the Town website, www.townofrochester.net.

(Open/Closed, from page 1)

Anonymous Complaints. Another member of the public suggested that the name of anyone reporting a suspected Code violation — for example, a neighbour with a leaky fuel oil tank — to the Code Enforcement Officer should be made public "because in this country, we all have the right to face our accusers." Code Officer Jerry Davis saw no reason to reveal the complainant's name since it's the Code Enforcement Officer's job to check on possible violations and get them corrected, no matter who reports them. Asked what he does about "false reports," he said, "We've never had one."

(Condos, from page 1)

units not to exceed a market value calculated as if the condo complex were assessed as one rental facility.

Although condos are scarce in these parts at present, many towns are adopting a resolution calling on the Governor and State Legislature to amend the state's present tax laws.

The Rochester Town Board agreed to join the appeal after a presentation by the Tax Assessor, Sharon Hornbeck. Ms. Hornbeck's PowerPoint presentation is available for viewing on the Town website.

Let's Bring in Those Veterans' Names

There is a debate going on in Town about which veterans qualify to be listed in the Town's register of veterans: Should they have lived in Rochester while serving, or at any time during their lives?

Whatever the outcome of this question, more names are needed for inclusion in the Town's database. Please call Councilman Francis Gray (626-4527) if you know of any man or woman who you believe should be included, and/or to voice your opinion on "Who's a Rochester veteran?"

Other News About Town

Youth Dept. Grant

NYS Sen. John Bonacic recommended a \$2,500 grant to the town's Youth Department from the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Busy Community Center

Much has been going on for seniors and youngsters alike, including a Red Cross seminar on disaster preparedness, and a discussion on children's rights by a representative from Crime Victims of Ulster County. For information, call 626-2115/626-3745

Historic Preservation Hunt

Several names have been suggested for someone with skills to install a newly-made "Accord" sign and ones for the other six hamlets. Suitable safe locations on the roadways are currently being scouted.

FEMA Gives \$45,095

The Town Board resolved to accept \$45,095 from FEMA for the cost of road and bridge repairs on Upper Cherrytown Road due to June 2006 flood and storm damage.

Mohonk Invites You for a Visit, Free!

In a special gift to local residents, Mohonk Preserve is offering free one-month memberships. On Saturday April 21 and April 22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., if you show up at any Mohonk trailhead or the Visitor Center with proof of residency, you'll get a pass good for 30 days of hiking, bird-watching, etc. Not a bad deal, since basic annual memberships cost \$40-\$50. For info, 255-0191, ex. 248.

But Hold Those Dates!

Before heading off to get in on the Mohonk offer (above), make sure you've teamed up with neighbors to help in the clean-up efforts in Rochester. Earth Day is April 21, but there will be clean-up crews working along the roadways on both that Saturday and the following one (Apr. 28). Contact the Youth Commission (626-2115) to find out where and when you can pitch in. Last year, Town residents gathered nearly 12,500 pounds of litter and 74 discarded tires during "Earth Day" week!

List Your Business (It's Free!) Place information about your local business on the Town's website. If you have your own website, a direct link to it will be offered. Go to www.townofrochester.net and click on the **Business Directory** link for more information and to sign up.