



VILLAGE OF BELLPORT

THE SCOOTER

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Greetings from Bellport Village Hall!

On Wednesday, July 3, I was sworn in as your mayor along with the newly elected trustees, Michael Young and Lorraine Kuehn. Current trustees, Nathan Rohrmeier and Steven Mackin,



FROM LEFT: NATHAN ROHRMEIER, LORRAINE KUEHN, MAUREEN VEITCH, MIKE YOUNG & STEVEN MACKIN

were also in attendance along with many Bellport residents.

It is an enormous pleasure to work with the terrific people on the Board. The Village of Bellport is fortunate to have individuals who care deeply about our community and are working hard on our residents' behalf. We all bring a dynamic blend of perspectives and expertise to the Board. This will create a positive and results-focused team to best represent our constituents.

Election day also served as an important historic moment: the first time the residents of the Village of Bellport elected a woman Mayor. It was an honor to be joined in celebration by

the Village's other "first" leaders: Leslie O'Connor, the first woman Deputy Mayor, and Sherry Binnington and Robin Roe, the first women to serve on the Board.



FROM LEFT: ROBIN ROE, SHERRY BINNINGTON, LESLIE O'CONNOR AND MAYOR VEITCH

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING...

October 10th marked the 100th day of this administration and I am excited to let you know what has been happening in these early months, including what has been accomplished and what challenges lie ahead.

BETTER COMMUNICATION

In August, we thoroughly assessed all the Village's technology vendors. We reviewed costs, contracts, and service quality. The most notable decision made from this audit was to enhance the Village website to relay more frequent updates to residents.

When we decided to close the marina's boat ramp at dusk to make the pedestrian traffic by the bandshell safer for all the concert goers this past summer, we announced it on our website. However, it would be helpful to send out notices to everyone who might not have checked the site that

day. Our goal is to communicate early and often, and keep the dialogue open.

If you are a resident interested in hearing from the Village directly on a regular basis, just visit our website – www.bellportvillageny.gov – and fill out the contact form and request email updates.

TRAFFIC CALMING

This issue is a big problem on Long Island and one that almost every resident highlights as a concern. Using data collected from speed monitoring devices, our Code Enforcement officers in the Village have begun to identify peak hours and locations of speeding. We have also had meetings with the leadership of the Suffolk County Police Department's Fifth Precinct to discuss ways to reduce speeding, and will continue to share what we learn with SCPD so we can coordinate to increase road safety.

We have installed traffic signs in key locations in the Village to alert drivers that speed enforcement is likely to be encountered. The Fifth Precinct has also committed to providing more coverage and enforcement within the Village on speed limits which will help address this problem. There are many other opportunities for improving safety on our roads and this is just the beginning.

FIRE SAFETY

At the "Meet the Candidates" event in June of this year, Fire Chief Dave Didio alerted the public to some of his concerns regarding fire safety, especially in our commercial district. In the first week of our administration, I met with Chief Didio and he outlined several steps we could take in Village Hall to improve fire and public safety.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING...

For example, Village residents and commercial building owners should be aware of the importance of numbering buildings and units. We have started that communication with the commercial building owners in the Village, but as a resident, you can do your part by making sure that your house number is clearly visible from the street, which will make it easier and faster for first responders to reach you in a time of need.

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

During the first several weeks of this administration, we spent a great deal of time bringing order to new and existing projects. Some highlights:

- In early 2023, the Village of Bellport received a \$2.8 million grant from HUD to improve the safety and conditions of our marina and the docks at Ho-Hum beach. The members of the Waterfront Commission are working to make recommendations to the Board regarding plans and cost estimates. They are also tasked with recommending an engineering firm that will develop plans, secure permitting, and manage the project. This is a very exciting project and will take place in phases so that we do not interrupt residents' use of the marina and beach. The project will likely include dredging the marina basin and creating a wave screen to protect the boats in the marina during storms, among other goals.
- We are awaiting approval for another potential grant for \$3.3 million. This grant is earmarked to address flooding at the road endings of Otis Lane, Thornhedge Road, and S. Howells Point Road. The grant was supported by Representative Andrew Garbarino; I met with him in August at Village Hall and later we toured the site. We are very appreciative of his support for the Village and hope to receive confirmation by year end on whether the grant has been approved.



MEETING AT VILLAGE HALL WITH REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW GARBARINO

- We are working diligently to finish up the Browns Lane/Shore Road project with hopes that the road will be open soon, providing our residents with full access to a road that is a favorite path for morning walks.

INVESTING IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

The need to invest in Village infrastructure is ongoing. Meeting with government representatives responsible for our area and educating them about our needs is a critical first step for getting local, state, and federal money earmarked for the kinds of projects needed to improve our roads, public buildings, and more.

One such need is the solar panel field that supplies power to the water pumps, bathrooms, and kitchen at Ho-Hum Beach. Assemblyman Jarett Gandolfo, our representative whose district includes Ho-Hum, visited Bellport in late September to view the site.

Our beach manager, Mark Leuly, led the tour with Representative Gandolfo, Michael Ferrigno (Co-Head of the



VISIT FROM ASSEMBLYMAN GANDOLFO

Waterfront Commission), Jason Crane (Superintendent of the Department of Public Works), Katie Mehrkens (Village Clerk), and myself. We were able to show Representative Gandolfo the beauty of our beloved beach and also identify the areas that need attention, such as our 26-year-old solar field. We plan to work together to identify potential funding earmarked for environmentally sound infrastructure improvements.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Village is still working on obtaining reimbursement for the main dock project that took place as a result of Superstorm Sandy in 2012. The submissions to FEMA for reimbursement were divided into three phases. The first phase was submitted and reimbursed in early 2023, and in early August we submitted the second request. Once feedback has been given by FEMA, we will make plans for the third and final submission.

GOLF COURSE

Howells Creek runs just to the east of the golf course and flooding from the creek has caused erosion along the west side of the creek, threatening to damage three holes on the course. Working with an engineering firm, we are in the permitting phase for permission to dredge the mouth of the creek. This remedy, along with planting native grasses along the creek, will help to mitigate any further erosion.

VILLAGE HALL

When we stepped into Village Hall on July 3, the office was in the middle of a stalled renovation. This renovation started months ago when it was discovered that the gambrel roof of Village Hall was leaking and compromised. With the roof now repaired, we needed to make plans to close the outside of the building, install gutters, and close up the interior walls. Members of our DPW worked hard to sheetrock, paint, and cover the uneven floors, making Village Hall a safer, cleaner workspace.

FUN FACT: Bellport Village Hall is on the National Register of Historic buildings and once served as our library. The Village Hall's barrel roof is a unique and beautiful feature. There is still work to be done to seal the outside of the building from the elements, but that process is well underway and should be finished before winter comes. As important, we are looking into grant opportunities to make the building accessible for all.

BETTER ORGANIZATION

We have and continue to optimize administrative processes within Village Hall. Village taxpayers have paid for comprehensive surveys needed for planning and permitting projects at the marina, golf course, roads, etc. We have cataloged all of these surveys so that they are easily accessible, thus eliminating the need to order more and waste taxpayer money when new information is needed.

This was an arduous job but the staff in Village Hall has and continues to do an amazing job with the ongoing organization project. Our ultimate goal is to digitize all major documents and historical records so that they will be easily accessible through a digital catalog, a best practice used in other villages. We intend to start this in the coming months.

News on our search for a new Village Clerk will be announced shortly. We are grateful to Katie Mehrkens for stepping up to this challenge, bringing her knowledge of Village operations to our daily decision making.

CHALLENGES

These first 100 days have not been without issues, but I am happy to report that we have made tremendous progress on all challenging fronts.

For example, a surprise storm with extreme winds in early September had our residents and Department of Public



*DPW DEBRIS CLEAN-UP
AFTER HURRICANE IDALIA*

Works busy cleaning up fallen trees. A team from our DPW was out at 6am on that Sunday morning and both Katie Mehrkens and myself coordinated the effort to have the debris cleaned up swiftly.

This past summer, we have also been challenged by some children on bicycles. They have been riding recklessly and "popping wheelies" in the middle of Village roads and sidewalks, creating dangerous situations for motorists, pedestrians, and other cyclists. Unfortunately, in some cases they have been verbally harassing people and blocking entrances to businesses. Residents have expressed their frustration and concern for the children as well as their own personal safety. There have not been any reports of violence but nonetheless, we are addressing this problem.

To find solutions for these troubling behaviors, we have been working closely with the Chief Inspector of the Fifth Precinct, John Sumwalt, and his team; the Superintendent of the South Country School District, Dr. Antonio Santana; Kim Livingston, the Director of the Boys and Girls Club; our own Code Enforcement; and other elected representatives.

We will continue to have regular communication to address this problem but, according to all with experience, the solutions are not easy given that the offenders are minors. That said, through coordinated, persistent efforts and parental outreach, we can find ways to redirect these children and maintain the quality of life we value.



*SUFFOLK COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
AT VILLAGE HALL*

Bellport, like many communities across Long Island, has also been experiencing problems with individuals attempting to break into cars at night.

On the night of Friday, September 29, the Board held two meetings: one with the officers from SCPD responsible for patrolling our area, and another emergency meeting with all our Code officers. As a result of those meetings, the following solutions have been identified for the aforementioned problem:

- Code Enforcement will be adjusting their schedules to provide more coverage.
- Village residents can play an important part in solving this problem by practicing what SCPD calls the 9 PM check in.
- <https://www.bellportvillageny.gov/900-pm-routine-for-residents-suffolk-county-police-department-see-below/>
- We encourage increased reporting by residents to SCPD directly by calling 911. Many incidents are caught on Ring cameras or other home security devices but are not reported to the police. Timely reporting will help Code and SCPD do their work.

EVENTS

In spite of the challenges, the Village of Bellport continues to be a place rich with exciting events! Some of these happenings have been sponsored by the Village and some were in coordination with outside organizations. We are happy to say that in the transition of administrations, all of these events went off as planned. In fact, we keep adding more great activities to our calendar in the weeks and months ahead.

All these events make the Village of Bellport a fun place to live and visit. They also require a lot of coordination between community members, the Chamber of Commerce, Village

Hall staff, Code Enforcement, the Department of Public Works, the Bellport Village Program Fund, Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society, volunteers, and many others.

The Village of Bellport has a number of committees and commissions that contribute so much to our community. In the next newsletter, I will feature the work these individuals do as volunteers for the Village community. The Board and I are grateful to all that give their time so generously.

The fall is a beautiful time to be in the village. Please support your local businesses with pre-holiday shopping

and dining and come to village meetings to stay informed on events, updates, and future plans.

Please check the website for our upcoming events - Our Annual Wreath Decorating Contest, Breakfast with Santa and our Annual Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting.

I would like to thank everyone at Village Hall for making my first 100 days an exciting and productive experience. The first 100 days of my administration have been fun as well as challenging, and I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve you and the village I love so much.



BLUE WATER VAGABOND SURF COMPETITION



OLD MAN OPTI RACE



BELLPORT DAY



SOUTH COUNTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION



BELLPORT BAY 5K



BELLPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL CAR SHOW



PEACE MARCH



BVPF/BELLPORT VILLAGE SANDCASTLE CONTEST



911 CEREMONY AT BELLPORT MARINA



REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW GARBARINO BACKPACK GIVEAWAY



OPTIMIST ATLANTIC COAST CHAMPIONSHIP