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VILLAGE OF BELLPORT **THE SCOOTER**

MAY 2024

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Greetings from Village Hall

Spring is finally upon us, and it's a good time to reach out to you with the second edition of **THE SCOOTER** (creatively named by Christine Novelli) to keep you up to date with what's happening in Village Hall and throughout the village.

This progress aligns with some of the key values I promised when I ran for Mayor:

- Transparency
- Financial Responsibility
- Environmental Stewardship
- Traffic Safety
- Village Infrastructure

Maureen Veitch
Mayor

TRANSPARENCY

The best way to keep you informed about the village is to make information easily accessible to you. Starting earlier this year, there have been improvements such as:

- In March, we began sending residents email push notifications on Sunday mornings highlighting that week's calendar of events. If you'd like to receive these regular notifications, please fill out the form located at the bottom of the Village website (www.bellportvillageny.gov) or call Village Hall (631-286-0327) and we can add your name for you. To date, we have roughly 600 residents enrolled to receive these emails!
- Village meeting agendas are now available to you on the Village website days in advance so residents can plan to attend when issues of interest are being discussed. At all Board meetings we have an "open to the public" segment where you can make your views known. Board meetings are available on zoom and are recorded for later viewing.

Continued Inside

Transparency Continued

- We have improved the quality and detail of Village meeting minutes so you can get up to speed on issues if you have missed a meeting. **Note:** Meeting minutes are approved by Board members at the next Board meeting, so minutes will be posted on our website the following month. For example, February's meeting minutes are approved and posted in March.
- Lastly, the Village website has been rearranged to make the most frequently visited features easier to see and use.

Improving communication and transparency is a work in progress. We will continue to update our website, and our next task on improving communication is securing the audio and video equipment needed to bring meetings to you in a more seamless fashion.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

As your elected officials, the Board is responsible for developing policies, monitoring financial operations, financial planning, and ensuring that we have audits conducted on behalf of the village. The fiscal year runs from June 1 through May 31 each year.

The day-to-day financial responsibility is in the hands of our Village Treasurer Darcia Palmer. Here is what our treasurer's office has been up to:

- The 2024-2025 budget process began in January and was approved by the Board on April 22. The process for building the budget included extensive meetings, gathering information with each department head, the Treasurer, and the Board; six public meetings; and a public presentation from the Treasurer on March 25. Village residents remarked that this presentation was the most comprehensive and easily understood budget presentation in recent Village history.
- On Saturday, May 11 at 11am at the Community Center on Bell St., Jay Diamond (a member of the Budget and Fiscal Policy Committee) and Treasurer Darcia Palmer will present and explain the budget once again for residents who wish to learn more.
- In addition to the annual budget process for 2024-2025, our Treasurer is responsible for creating a five-year financial plan for major projects that the Village needs. This includes infrastructure repairs such as streets and sidewalks and other major expenditures. The planning is led by Darcia Palmer who will work closely with the Board and with input from members of the Budget and Fiscal Policy Committee.
- Every payment that the Village makes is reviewed monthly by our Treasurer's office, a Trustee, and me. Trustee Lorraine Kuehn has that responsibility and performs it with a keen eye to ensure that our expenditures are carefully reviewed before any money is spent.
- We are nearing the completion of the 2023-2024 fiscal year audit which is being conducted by the outside auditing firm of Cullen and Danowski, LLP. Those results will be shared with the public in the coming weeks. Recommendations from the outside audit will help us continue to improve our financial and operational procedures.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

As the Board liaison to the Bellport Environmental Committee (BEC), an advisory body, I am thrilled to update you on some of the BEC's recent projects:

On May 25, from 4pm to 6pm at the Community Center, nationally recognized expert Doug Tallamy will be presenting strategies for Village residents on creating habitats for pollinators in your own backyard.

- This Spring our Department of Public Works (DPW) will be installing elegant bike racks at seven locations throughout the Village. This new bike rack network is a joint project between the Village and the Bellport Village Program Fund.
- This year marks the third year of weekends and holidays free from the noise, vibration, and pollution of gas-powered leaf blowers and hedge trimmers, thanks to the recommendations of the BEC and other concerned community members.



- The ever-popular pre-season Ho Hum Beach Clean Up will be on May 18 (rain date May 19). The end-of-season date will be announced in the coming months. Notice of these events will be posted on the Village website and in the weekly email notifications.



- The BEC's most ambitious project to date is the 1000 Yards Campaign. Read how it works here: www.bellportvillageny.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/1000-YC-ONLINE-GUIDE.pdf You can help protect our Great South Bay from harmful nitrogen pollution by using low-nitrogen, slow-release fertilizers on your lawn. You can create new habitat for butterflies, birds, and bees—our precious pollinators—by planting native plants and trees in your yard. Please join in! If you would like a brochure to learn more about the program, contact Village Hall.

Looking ahead, Bellport Village is going to participate in the Clean Energy Communities Program, joining more than 20 other Suffolk County towns and villages and the State of New York to address the causes and consequences of our environmental challenges. I extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the BEC for their contribution to these important initiatives!

TRAFFIC SAFETY



This administration continues to proactively address the nationwide problem of speeding and reckless driving. Traffic calming and pedestrian safety continues to be a priority and a challenge.

- Now that the winter months are behind us, the traffic monitor sign (that indicates when motorists are speeding) has returned to our roads, not only reminding drivers to slow down but also tracking speeds and saving the data. Sharing this data with the Suffolk County Police Department's Fifth Precinct will enable the officers to track peak speeding times and deliver more targeted speed enforcement.

- Trustee Steve Mackin has been working closely with Representative Dominick Thorne to install pedestrian crosswalk signs at intersections identified as the most dangerous.
- Of course, one of the biggest solutions to traffic calming is **you**—everyone is responsible for abiding by traffic laws and making the roads of Bellport Village a safe place for all. Please commit to adhering to our local speed limit of 30 MPH.

VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Village's infrastructure – buildings, roads, sidewalks, solar panels, bulkheading and more – are in dire need of improvement. Responsibly leading existing projects and initiating new ones has been a focus of our time and energy.

We have been fortunate to have the expertise of our Building Departments' own Marylou Bono and Peter Sarich to help with permitting, planning, site inspections, and project management.

Key projects and news include:

EXCITING GRANT NEWS!!

The Village of Bellport is thrilled to announce that it has been allocated \$3.33 million in FY24 Community Project Funding for its Howells Point Coastal Resiliency Project. We would like to thank Representative Andrew Garbarino, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Senator Chuck Schumer for ensuring that this project was included in the recently passed FY24 federal appropriation package.

The Howells Point project will help preserve Bellport's shoreline against erosion and storm damage and will protect against flooding and ensure the safety and resilience of the Village for years to come.

- Completing the work on Village Hall includes installing gutters and shutters, shingling and painting to return the building to its historic condition. This project is being led by our own DPW with experienced carpenters and sheet metal workers along with input from James Carson, Chair of the Village Historic Commission.
- We are assured by our DPW that the Brown's Lane/Shore Road roadway, which has been closed for way too long, will be open for vehicle and foot traffic in May. We appreciate the work of the DPW, Nelson + Pope (for helping secure permitting) and Paul Warner, a village resident with an engineering background and road design experience. We look forward to reclaiming this beloved walking route!
- The HUD Marina Project is a \$2.8 million grant earmarked for improving safety and refurbishing both the Bellport and Ho Hum marinas. This grant is a 75/25 grant, meaning 75% of the project cost is covered by the HUD grant and 25% is covered by the Village. Over the last few months, we, along with the dedicated members of the Waterfront Commission and Peter Sarich vetted qualified engineering firms and selected VHB to lead the first phase of the project. Next phase is to complete the Environment Review of the project.
- The solar panels at Ho Hum Beach are the only source of power at the beach. The panels are nearly 30 years old (well past their useful life) and need to be replaced. Securing a new solar field (on the same footprint as the current ones) requires coordination with regulators, solar experts and identifying funding solutions as part of the project scope. Each week we are closer to having solutions on these fronts so that we can move ahead. Of course, we will keep you posted once we do.
- In early April, we submitted a grant request for improving cybersecurity and digitizing records for preservation and historic research. We will learn more about that later this year and are working on record clean-up in preparation for the possibility of those funds.

STRENGTHENING THE TEAM IN VILLAGE HALL

None of this could have been accomplished without having the right team of people in place, so two new and valued additions to the team in Village Hall are:



Swearing in Pontieri

MARY PONTIERI, our new Village Clerk; she joined us in January and has been a tremendous resource to everyone in the office. Mary came to us with experience as Village Clerk in Patchogue and as Clerk in the Southampton School District. She has an incredible grasp of what the role of clerk entails and is a gifted administrator who brings efficiencies that elevate Village Hall operations.



Perillo Taking Oath

LISA PERILLO is our new Village Attorney. Lisa is another fantastic asset to the Village. She is a Partner at Perillo Hill, LLP and has extensive municipal, real estate, contract negotiation and litigation experience. In addition to running her own law firm and focusing on the legal matters of Bellport Village, Lisa is also the Village Attorney for East Hampton.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS IN THE VILLAGE



Holiday Parade with BBYC Float



Menorah Lighting



Pattersonsquash Gunners Association



Breakfast with Santa and His Helpers



SCPD Easter Egg Hunt



Arbor Day Celebration

NOT-FOR-PROFIT FEATURE

In each edition of The Scooter, we are going to highlight the work of one of the not-for-profits and in this issue, we are proud to feature Friends of Bellport Bay (FoBB):



Friends of Bellport Bay (FoBB) was founded by Katia Read and Thomas Schultz in 2015, and currently has four co-directors: Ellis Kocay, Maria Slavnova, Christina Woodard, and Larissa Chraim.

The goal of FoBB is to restore the ecosystem of the Great South Bay by planting oysters. These extraordinary shellfish act as a natural filter capable of removing toxins from the water.

Since its inception, FoBB has planted 3.5 million oysters on the bay bottom surrounding Bellport, which has significantly mitigated nitrates and other pollutants that have made it into our water. Now in their ninth season, FoBB aims to plant another 1.5 million oysters, which will bring the total to 5 million oysters planted in Bellport Bay.

Due to FoBB's success, the Brookhaven Town Board voted unanimously to double the size of the protected shellfish management area from two to four acres in January 2024, ultimately bringing back harvesting and recreational fishing to benefit the regional economy!

FOBB INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE.

FoBB also runs a paid internship program for high school and college students who have an interest in environmental marine biology. To apply for a summer internship please send a letter and resume to Maria@Fobb.com.

The young marine biologist interns will learn from a professional team of aquaculture specialists from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (CCESC), as well as work with a certified scuba diver, and other volunteers and professionals.

You can learn more about Friends of Bellport Bay at friendsofbellportbay.org, and follow them on Instagram and Facebook.

If you would like to have the work of your not-for-profit featured in The Scooter, please contact Village Hall.

GOOD WORKS BY LOCAL NOT-FOR-PROFITS

Bellport Village and the greater Bellport area is full of wonderful not-for-profit organizations doing amazing work. Here are some:

- Bellport Bay Sailing Foundation
- Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society
- Bellport Garden Club
- Bellport Teachers Association
- Bellport Rotary
- Bellport Village Program Fund
- Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area
- CEED
- Friends of Bellport Bay

- South Country Education Foundation
- South Bay Art Association
- The Fire Place Initiative
- The Gateway Playhouse



GARDEN CLUB

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **The Tennis Camp begins** on July 1 and runs for six weeks. You can sign up for as many weeks as you would like. Registration is available now at bellportvillage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-Tennis-Clinic-Form.pdf.
- **Sign up for the Village's Kids Camp is now open.** The camp runs July 1 through July 26 (no camp on July 4) from 9am to 12noon. You can apply at bellportvillage.org/summer-camp/.
- **Bellport Marina opens on May 11.** The ferry to Ho Hum will begin running on May 25 for Memorial Day weekend. It will run weekends only until July 1, and then it will run on a daily schedule for the rest of the summer.
- **Memorial Day Parade May 27** at 11:00am beginning at Village Green (Bell Street and Bellport Lane)
- **South Country Library is hosting a Juneteenth celebration** on Thursday, June 13 at 6pm. The event will include music, speeches, a poster contest, and food, in addition to educating attendees about the history and significance of Juneteenth.
- **Village Voter Registration Day** is June 8, from 12pm to 5pm at Village Hall. This is open to Bellport residents who are registered to vote elsewhere who wish to vote in the Village election.
- **The Bellport Village Election** will be held on June 18, 2024. The polls will be open from 7am to 9pm at the Community Center. On the ballot will be two Trustee positions and an opening for Village Justice.
- **Artists on the Lane** will be held on July 4. Visit southbayart.org for more information.
- **The South Country Education Foundation's Annual Cocktail Party and Auction** will be held on Saturday, July 13 from 5pm to 7:30pm. Go to www.scefonline.org for more information.
- **The Bellport 5K Race** starts at 5pm on July 14. For more information visit www.bvvpf.org/.
- **Bellport Day is July 27!** More details will be posted at www.bellportchamber.org.
- **Bellport Fire Department Annual Car Show** June 30
- **Family Night at Mothers Beach** will be on July 27 from 4pm to 7pm. Further details can be found at www.bvvpf.org.

The lineup for our Friday night summer concerts at the marina bandshell are now posted on our website. Always keep an eye on our website calendar to stay up to date on all that is happening in Bellport Village!

Now... it's time for me to get back to work!

Maureen Veitch