

## **Assessor**

- The Board of Assessment Review has finished deliberations. There were 20 complaints resulting in 2 changes by the Board of Assessment Review and 3 stipulations with the Assessor. One grievance was received after Grievance day which can't be accepted.
- Those changes have been recorded on the Tentative Roll and we be seen on the Final Roll.
- The Final Roll file has been sent to the county to be processed and printed.
- Final Roll will be available to view on July 1 st
- New Lebanon was set to have an equalization rate of about 75% down from 90% last year. With the Reassessment we are at a level of 100%. This has been officially confirmed by the STATE!
- Through the past couple year's process it is clear that people didn't understand the actual value they are taxed on when we are not at 100%. Keeping the assessments in sync with the market trends would make the Assessments more transparent. This would mean slight changes each year, either up or down. This would be during the non-reassessment years. It would also make much smaller changes during the Reassessment years. I would like to look at this a little closer before making a decision.
- I urge everyone to always check the Tentative Roll for your full value. Just because your assessment does not change, that doesn't mean your full value hasn't changed. If the level of assessment is lower than 100% your full value is actually higher than your assessment.
- We will soon be out in the field working on Data verifications again. More info to come on that.

## **Building Department**

No report

## **Business & Economic Development**

No report

## **Outreach & Marketing**

No report

## **CAC, Climate Smart & Environmental Management**

### **CAC:**

DWSP2 (Drinking Water Source Protection Plan) Water testing is going well with 97 tests completed, some of those are retests. We have a few dozen still wanting tests and we are going out again in July. We are figuring out the best way to start our canvas

of resident's to discover potential PFAS sites and will do more PCB testing near the brown field. Overall things are good - some coliform and very little ecoli. We have no update on the DWSP2 status of approval. The NYSDOH continues to be very helpful and is mapping the water testing with results so we can use that for the Wastewater Feasibility Study. We will reach out to County health to figure out how to include the public water systems into our work.

Joint Committee on Wastewater and Muni water Feasibility with BEDC - things are about to get going and we are utilizing water testing data to help. More to come on this!

Trees for Tribs: CAC is transitioning out of plant care and are still working in park a few hours a week to make sure everyone is tubed and happy. We are looking for any ideas of plants to untube so if anyone sees something you wish to see un tubed please make a check mark on the tube and we will see what we can do. We hope for plenty of rain so we will not need to water which is a big production with hoses and a pump in the stream. The REC committee with Craig kindly volunteered and moved piles of mulch and dirt and mulched almost all the plants. We are looking forward to working with them to progress the project further and to get some expert tree advice from Joe Zema.

### **CSC:**

The CSC was approached by Cornell Extension staff to see if New Lebanon wanted to participate along with Canaan in two projects that would be funded by NY State grants that Cornell Ext. would apply for and administer starting in 2025. Both of these projects can be considered part of the town's commitment in the Hazard Mitigation Plan that we are working on now.

The first project is in support of the implementation of CSC actions [PE 9 Education and Engagement](#) and [PE 9 Social Media](#) and involves:

1. The development of emergency preparedness information for your municipal website and at least 12 social media posts for the Village to use.
2. The development of community focused emergency/disaster preparedness print resources tool kit.
3. The development of a Flood guide for business and residents
4. All of which are also suggestions that our Cornell grad students have proposed in their research which you can see separately.

The second project is based on CSC action [PE 7 Culverts and Dams](#) and involves town-wide road stream crossing (culvert) assessments and development of road stream crossing (RSX) management plan. This involves a survey of all culverts in town and will prepare a report of which ones need repair or replacement. That report puts the Town in line for existing grants from the state. I spoke to Pete about this and he is onboard. It will require a letter of consent signed by the Supervisor and Pete. The project team will make 3 trips to New Lebanon which will require Pete or staff to accompany them in locating all the culverts. So, I'm asking the Town Board to approve participating in the project and having the Tistrya and Pete sign the letter.

This will be an agenda item as well.

As I've mentioned in previous meetings, the CSC and the Town have been fortunate enough to have two very talented grad students Johanna Van Fleet and Alejandro Ramos from Cornell's Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy working with us to assess vulnerabilities in town and propose actions to mitigate them for the county Hazard Mitigation Planning process.

They have submitted a brief review of proposed actions and, subject to Town Board approval of them, will come to New Lebanon on July 1 for a presentation in Shatford Park to the CSC, Town Board members and the public at 5pm.

This will be an agenda item as well.

We have received a bid to seal the garage roof from the only regional authorized dealer of Gaco sealant which Pete recommended getting. We would like to propose that 50% of the funding for the sealing come from the CSC and the rest from ARPA funds. A positive vote on this will allow the CSC to proceed with the proposed projects in the \$175,000 grant that were itemized last month ie- solar panels for the garage roof, heat pumps for the garage, electrical upgrades for the garage and the purchase of some battery operated chain saws and garden equipment for Pete and the park team.

#### **EMC:**

Due to the holiday there was no EMC meeting in May , so no report.

Only other update was we had nearly 100 people at Darrow for showing Ted Timerick's beautiful film about the shaker swamp. Attendees were very responsive and asked many interesting questions

## **Fire, Law Enforcement & Emergency**

No report

## **Highway**

No report

## **Historian & LVHS**

#### **Historian:**

Since May 14, I have worked on the following:

- Research on pre-colonial history of the town and indigenous interaction with the Shaker

community in preparation for an interview with a former Mount Shaker intern who is preparing a narrative history.

- Read an article in the online newsmagazine of the American Historical Association, Mapping the Landscape of Secondary United States History Education, by James Grossman. One of the duties of a municipal historian is to prepare educational materials.

- Received and answered an inquiry from a New Lebanon Jr.-Sr. High School student seeking information on his home, which was once owned by a blacksmith who worked on the railroad.

- Answered an inquiry as to why the spicket at the Springs is closed.
- Received information on John King, buried in Cypress Hill, who was a member of the NYS Legislature in 1824 and served in Congress from 1831-1833.
- Provided information on the Catholic Cemetery on Old Mountain Road in Lebanon Springs for a genealogist.
- On May 17 I was part of a virtual meeting of the Columbia County 250 th Committee.
- On May 23 I met with local historian Glenn Fisher to discuss our research projects.
- I began preparing information on the Lebanon Springs Union Free School cupola.

The

intent is to present a proposal to the town board to purchase an outdoor interpretative display sign with brief information on the school and the cupola.

**LVHS:**

No report

## Justice Court

No report

## Library

No report

## Buildings, Parks & Recreation

**Buildings:**

No report

**Parks:**

From Councilmember Skerkis:

1. Fencing Installation: The split rail fence is scheduled for completion next week. This will enhance the aesthetics of the park.
2. Exercise Components: Components for the exercise stations along the walking trail have been ordered. These will provide additional fitness options for park visitors.
3. Erosion Control: The preliminary Request for Quotation (RFQ) for erosion control has been completed. See below: We recommend looking for the sources sought to help with the actual RFQ.

Subject: Request for Site Walk and Erosion Prevention Plan for Shatford Park Stream  
Dear Prospective Bidders,

I am writing on behalf of the town of New Lebanon, NY, to request your expertise in conducting a site walk and developing an erosion prevention plan for the stream that runs through Shatford Park. We believe that your industry knowledge and experience will greatly contribute to the preservation and enhancement of this natural resource. The purpose of the site walk is to assess the current condition of the stream and identify potential erosion risks. We are particularly concerned about the impact of erosion on the park ecosystem and the surrounding community. By conducting a thorough evaluation, we aim to develop a comprehensive erosion prevention plan that

will mitigate any potential damage and ensure the long-term sustainability of the stream. We kindly request your presence on [XXX date] to conduct the site walk. During this visit, we would appreciate your professional insights and recommendations on the necessary measures to prevent erosion and protect the stream's integrity. Additionally, we encourage you to engage with local stakeholders, such as environmental organizations and community members, to gather diverse perspectives and ensure a holistic approach to the plan. Please let us know if you require any specific information or documentation prior to the site walk. We are more than willing to provide any necessary details about the park's layout, previous studies, or other relevant materials. We understand the importance of your time and expertise, and we greatly appreciate your consideration of this request. Your contribution will not only benefit Shatford Park but also contribute to the overall environmental sustainability of our community. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your positive response and the opportunity to collaborate on this important project.

Sincerely,

Town Board New Lebanon

4. Trees for Tribes: Consultation with Joe Zima for the Trees for Tribes program has been completed. This initiative provides direction and technical advice on best practices for management of the trees and shrubs in the park. Joanne Amlaw is working with Peg Munves and Bill O'Neil of the CAC to take on this effort. The CAC is focusing on water testing throughout the town. The Trees for Tribes effort will be an ongoing attempt to reduce erosion of the stream.

5. Mulch and Soil: The park has completed the placement of mulch and soil piles, which will support ongoing landscaping and maintenance efforts.

6. Softball Field Adjustments: Discussions to remove the lighting and fencing for the softball field has brought to light the sad reality. Although there has been some interest in resurrecting a softball league, after some further investigation, we don't have enough interest to have a league. It is recommended we sell or donate the lights and fencing to clean up that area in the park.

7. Tennis Court Bathrooms: There has been no movement on the rehabilitation of the tennis court bathrooms, which remains an outstanding project. We are discussing making the bathrooms gender neutral or family bathrooms would allow for the removal of the dividers and addition of door locks

8. Skate Park: Jesse Newton is currently waiting for repairs on his large forklift to complete work on the skate park. This effort should see movement within this month.

9. Funding and Grants: Shatford Park received a \$500,000 grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. This grant along with the match and "in kind" funds bring that total to \$700k. The walking trails are installed, and we are working to create a new all-inclusive playground.

10. Summer Youth Program: The Summer Youth Program will run from July 1 to August 23, 2024, providing an affordable summer activity for children in the community. Registration closes on June 28, 2024.

**Recreation Commission:**

We had a good month for events, the Shaker Swamp Movie screening we helped set up at Darrow had about 150 attendees!

We had a nice small group at the rail trail walk.

We should have a good crowd for the Newcomers event on Saturday and the walk and paddle on Sunday.

At our monthly meeting we finalized picnic, MitP, future walks/paddles and movie night plans. We discussed other event ideas, such as the town wide yard sale. I haven't gotten a single response from anyone saying they were interested in participating in yard sale weekend, so we might skip that for this year. We've lined up a bounce house and were able to get a lot of the food donated from Hannaford's for the second year in a row.

## **Seniors**

The Office of the Aging reports that the HEAP benefit has been extended to 8/31 and includes cooling and weatherization funds. A new administrator has been introduced at the Office of the Aging; her name is Nina Benvenuto. She is looking forward to meeting the people of New Lebanon. I have invited her to join me at the Senior table at the Community picnic.

A grant from Greene County bank was received to be used for emergency repairs to homes of seniors. If you would like to apply or know someone who may need this help, contact the Office of the Aging. The State has also put monies into the Senior program for emergency repairs as well.

There are lots of activities around the County for seniors, see the Web site for Office of the Aging as well as the Towns in the County. Senior centers around the County also have many new programs. Everyone is welcome to join at a local center in any town. Farmers Market Coupons will be delivered in July to the County centers. If you want coupons contact the Office of the Aging after July 1 st if you do not attend a center.

The County Senior picnic will be at the VFW in Stuyvesant on Sept. 12.

Locally, the New Lebanon Seniors are having their meeting on the first Friday of the month with dessert and the third Friday games and special events or special luncheon are on the agenda. Trips start this week, and they are filling up fast. Members enjoy the games and speakers.

## **Traffic Safety**

North Rt 22 culvert has been repaired and traffic has resumed traveling the previous route. Detours over New Lebanon roads have been redirected to RT 22 with a reduction in traffic on the local roads.

Columbia County has received a state grant for improvement of public transportation. The first goal will be to start a shuttle between Hudson and Chatham. Hudson has several shuttles already in place to go to the mall, hospital, downtown and the college. The shuttle coming and going from Chatham connecting to these other shuttles will expand the ability for members of the village and town of Chatham to go to other places in the County to do business and socialize. A shuttle coming to New Lebanon is in the future per Assemblymember Barrett.

The request for a state survey for possible improvements of safety at the Speedway intersections has been submitted with no response yet as to when it will occur. The crosswalks were repainted, and the State Police and Sheriff's departments have been seen sitting on the road edge during the time prior to opening and closing of the track.

A new guardrail was installed on County Rt 5 to reduce the incidents of accidents into the private property at a curve. Safety training is being given to all County and Town highway personnel on June 11 and 12 th at the Fairgrounds. The Traffic Safety Committee approved the grant requests from the City of Hudson and the County Sheriff's department to be forwarded to the State.

## **Volunteers**

No report

## **Quality of Life**

No report

## **Zoning Re-write Committee Update**

A second set of suggested revisions to Mr. Campanelli's draft was sent to him on June 3. These were changes to which he and the Town agreed, however, the Town was asked to draft the changes. We await his reply. Please note that we reminded him of the need to conduct a public forum when the draft was ready. He previously agreed to attend and explain the reasoning underlying the updated code.

Members of the ZRC met with Tistrya and Steve to determine any additional changes needed to self storage. Only minor changes will be made.

Members of the ZRC continue to participate on the working group regarding the historic Shaker area around Darrow Road. It is anticipated that a fairly solid proposal will be ready for Board review next month.

## **Community Center/Free Store Update**

### **Free Store:**

I only have 10 recorded days for May. 2 Saturdays, 5 Wednesdays, and 3 Sundays (we were closed for Mother's Day) for a total of 231 customers. Sundays are particularly busy now that the weather has warmed up. I've noticed that people are strolling in after

dining at either Blueberry Hill or Jimmy D's. This is introducing the Free Store concept to many people who are just passing through and they all find it to be beneficial and wish their communities had one. We're trend setters!

Kitchen items seem to be the hot ticket item lately. Everything from forks to toasters go almost as soon as they're dropped off. Along with kitchen items, the linens are also having their moment in the sun. We've gotten a lot of cleaning and personal care products lately as well. We don't always get these things but when we do they go fast. Even if it's a half used bottle of laundry soap or shampoo, it will go. So if anyone has stuff they no longer like and use we'll happily take it and pass it on. Every little bit helps!

Previous numbers

Jan (1/2 month) 66

Feb 142

March 168

April 279

### **Community Center:**

#### **From Community Center Coordinator – Rob Long:**

Last Months totals (May 2024) - 181 total signatures for the month.

This includes:

86 people utilized both the hall space and the community center for our Community Dinner 5/2 & 95 people utilizing the community center during the month.

Total 181

We gained some new faces this month who started a card game group who now play weekly of about 5 people. Group is looking to expand to more tables.

June is gearing up to be a busy month.

Three events already scheduled

1. 2nd Community Dinner 6/13

2. Bingo Day 6/20

3. Ice Cream Social 6/22

I am also setting up a video game tournament for the month as well details coming soon will announce date at Community Dinner.

Also while I don't physically track numbers for free store, approximately a dozen people a night that the community center is open utilize the free store



### **From Councilmember Skerkis:**

Additional Date Requested: We are drilling down to get a more detailed picture of who is actually using the facility. Recommend asking LVPA for actual sale price of the facility as our budget process begins Sept. Recommend a business plan for the facility be created. This purchase has long term benefits and liabilities. I want to share a post on social media from a local business owner.

“who’s going to run the building , who’s paying the salary’s of who’s running , heat lights , build expenses , painting that giant eyesore , it’s a giant new startup business basically so where’s the business plan. That’s a full time job for several people with self employed experience, handling workers comp , book keeping , that’s with out even the programs , ect , just the heat alone prolly 4-500 a month in winter , plowing , plus all the cost of owning a big warehouse . So figure at least 3-4 k a month in expenses , my payroll , just payroll for my Tiny 3/4 man tree company is 3500 to 6k a week, not a month that’s a week , so who’s staffing this place and managing all this and where’s your business plan . Even a nonprofit gov sponsored thing is still a business that need to be balanced and ran 24/7 to not go belly up . Is the town and I mean us taxpayers going to pay for all this ? I would love a place to drop off daughter for a few I went to the boys club in Pittsfield a ton as a kid almost everyday and was sweet , millions and millions of dollars of taxpayer money required to make that place work and it was awesome . Takes a huge crew of dedicated people . Do we have that ? It’s a lifelong commitment to do it right and not fail and waste everyone times so who’s carrying this whole project and what if they get sick or injured who’s taking over . What’s the salary going to be for the Director . Ya’ll better have an idea and not just winging it with major plans for the town that should have a legit biz plan not just some utopian vision running on hope and luck .”

## **Shaker Preservation Committee**

No report

## **County Update**

No report

## **Depot Committee**

No report