

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXVIII NO. II

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FALL 2008

Between The Mountain And The Zee— Piermont Enacts Slope Legislation

The Piermont Village Board unanimously passed the hotly contested steep slope ordinance in October. It is designed to plug loopholes in the former law.

The new law prohibits any disruption of slopes with more than a 40 percent grade, and limits disruption on a gradual scale with slopes starting at a 25 percent grade. To put that in perspective, Lower Ash Street from Main St. to Tate, has about a 25 percent slope. Up until now, in theory no building was allowed on land with more than a 25 percent grade.

The Piermont Ad Hoc Zoning Revision Committee wrote the new rules. Before they were adopted, the law was reviewed by the planning firm Tim Miller and Associates. It was also reviewed and approved by the Rockland County Planning Department and the County Drainage Agency.

Many hillside residents along Route 9W protested the action at several public hearings, complaining that it made their property less valuable (developable), prevented them from rebuilding in case of a fire, and did nothing to solve the drainage problems they were experiencing from above them on Tweed Blvd. The Mayor and Board assured residents that the zoning does not stand in the way of their replacing their homes should disaster strike, and that current runoff problems are an enforcement issue, not a zoning one, because the development has already occurred.

Observers at the public hearing were at first puzzled that many hillside residents, while saying that their property was made less valuable by the new law, were asking that the older MORE restrictive law be left in place. On the face of it, this seemed to get it backwards. If you want more development rights on your property, you would prefer the new legislation

which expanded that 25 percent slope restriction to a 40 percent. However, the old law was very weak.

Under it, people wanting to develop steep hillside areas would take their application to Zoning Board of Appeals for a waiver. The ZBA would then review the application with a law that might have been restrictive on the books, but offered no clear purpose of intent for the restriction, no remedy, guidance, or mitigation guidelines. The result was often months, sometimes years of review and engineering studies as the ZBA, and then the Planning Board sought to shape a reasoned outcome to an application.

At times, neighbors will tell you, it was as if the 25 percent restriction never existed. It seemed to be ignored once a variance was requested, and the result was that some very steep areas in the village were allowed to be cut out and developed. A real estate agent who owns property along 9W said that he had been telling buyers that they could build on property on these steep

areas based on what he was seeing. The new law finally gives the planning and zoning board the tools to protect the hillside.

The Village Board, Mayor Chris Sanders said, looks at the legislation as one part of a two-part approach to hillside development and drainage problems. The new zoning tries to limit future draining woes. The huge problem of runoff on the hillside from existing development requires urgent and ongoing attention of another sort. This second part requires stepped-up pressure on the State and County to maintain and improve its 9W storm drains, and on Orangetown to manage development runoff from Tweed Blvd. The Board wants the town to follow Piermont's lead in restricting hillside development.

It is a simple fact that when a house, driveway or other impervious surface covers land, runoff occurs. Up until now, planning and zoning boards have been allowing steep slope develop-

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Twenty-five years ago—Main Street retrofitted for Purple Rose of Cairo. See Page 7. Photo by Sally Savage

President's Corner



Piermonters are busy. They have careers, children, houses and gardens to tend. The last thing they want after a long day at work is to go to a Village Board meeting but when someone scares the hell out of them they show up.

Recently, a large group of frightened and angry residents from above the Erie path suddenly started attending meetings and it's no wonder. Someone had told them that the Village Board had aimed its proposed new zoning rules directly at them. They wouldn't be able to rebuild if a fire or some other calamity destroyed their homes. They'd also now have to get approval of the color before they painted their houses.

There was just one trouble with all that—it wasn't true. The Village Board had no such plans. To put it politely, the hillside had been misinformed. After many hours of everyone's time and energy, the Board convinced most of them that the proposed new laws covered the whole village, not just the hillside. And, of course, no one was going to stop them from rebuilding after a fire, or painting a house any color they desired.

It all was reminiscent of the near hysteria opponents of the village's property reassessment program generated a couple of years ago. They told Piermont Landing residents that the Village Board was singling them out so it could hike their taxes while short-changing them on services.

The argument defied logic. Two of the five members of the Board are Landing residents. Would they want

to unfairly raise their own taxes and cheat themselves out of services? The controversy died after the Board explained that it was reassessing all of Piermont and providing the Landing with every service the law allowed.

The reassessment dispute has moved to the courts. The Village seems confident it will prevail. But the misinformation continues. Not long ago, a Landing group came to a meeting asking about their money. Their leader had told them that Piermont had settled the suit and their checks were in the mail. Again, someone had lied to them.

The people who led the hillside opposition against the new zoning laws and the leaders on the Landing who fought the reassessment had much in common. They both scared people with big lies and unsigned fliers. We all should be suspicious when the authors of political circulars are too cowardly to reveal themselves.

The Village Board can make mistakes, no doubt about it. No one agrees with it all the time. But its members are honest, hard-working citizens who are sincerely trying to do what they see as best for everyone. Next time someone tells you that it is passing laws targeting your neighborhood don't let them scare you. It almost certainly is not true.

~Bob Samuels

Letter from the Editor

As a regular attendee of Village Board meetings, I have been struck by how often residents have, in frankly hostile voice, told the board that they shouldn't have to pay for improvements to sidewalks that aren't "theirs." The complaints come from folks who seem to feel they are alone in not having village sidewalks at their property line. In fact, many homes in the village do not have sidewalks in front. My street doesn't, neither does Piermont Place or Franklin Street among others. And many streets have sidewalks only on one side—does that count?

I don't buy this idea. Sidewalks are public property. As a taxpayer, I pay and I benefit. Piermont's streetscape is now repaired and beautifully maintained. It adds to the value of my property, to my safety, and affords me the great pleasure of an easy stroll through a wonderful village, which brings me to "buying local."

Our Piermont merchants give this community such a special vibrancy. There is an amazing array of food, flowers, gifts, clothes, art, music, service—you name it—right here at our doorstep. I proudly treat visitors to walks "downtown" to stroll, shop, and have dinner. I admit that I often take this part of village life for granted. I shouldn't. We shouldn't. Piermont's business community needs our support to keep going through what looks to be some grueling economic times ahead. So this holiday season, put on your walking shoes, step onto your terrific sidewalks and shop and dine in Piermont.

~Margaret Grace

The Newsletter is published three times a year by the Piermont Civic Association, Box 454, Piermont, NY 10968

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Piermont Underground

Is Piermont's land growing or shrinking?

If a small boy throws a pebble into the River, is Piermont the lesser for it? We found Joseph, who is 2 ½ years old, throwing pebbles into the water from Piermont Pier. We asked Joseph if he thought he was making Piermont bigger or smaller. He said, "Smaller." But since 41.74 percent of Piermont is under water, Joseph may have been rearranging Piermont, rather than throwing it away.

The Water Below

Most of Piermont's old cisterns and wells remain forgotten, filled with rocks so children and dogs won't fall in. One homeowner noticed water flowing from an old cistern in his basement. Curious, he began pulling out rocks. Then he got his 15-year-old daughter to climb down a ladder and load rocks in a bucket lowered to her on a rope. At ten feet she struck water. The homeowner took out his daughter and put an electric pump in her place. Now they enjoy fresh, pure, frequently-tested Piermont basement water.

History In The Yard

Perhaps the most glamorous items found in Piermont archaeology were four cannon balls fired by British ships toward the Onderdonk house. A less exotic find was a large stash of empty half-pint whiskey bottles under the floorboards of another Piermont-er's house. The former Village dump behind the baseball field holds its trea-

asures. Marc Blomquist was amazed by an old mattress, suspended above ground in the shallow roots of a tree that had been blown over.

There are bottle dumps near most old houses. If you're Interested in finding old shards of dishes and pieces of rusted metal, Rod Johnson suggests: "Stand in the back doorway of your house on a cold winter's day and throw a bottle as far as you can. Then get your spade out and start digging where it landed."

Living In Piermont

If you live in Piermont, you have to live here to stay here. If you aren't living here, you have to leave.

That's because there are no cemeteries in the Village. But there used to be one under the rear part of Village Hall. The old burial ground of the Salem Baptist Church was located there. When the church was torn down in 1937, the bodies of its parishioners were reburied up the hill behind the Hall. After some years, tombstones were removed; the land seemed empty and neighbors planted gardens, the dead Baptists helping vegetables to grow. As a boy, Anthony Iurica remembers swiping tomatoes with Ed Miggins. They were scolded by adults for "stealing dead people's eyes."

Mr. Iurica remembers seeing tombstones from the old cemetery stored in the basement of the Sidewalk Bistro building.

The Mine Hole

There are various theories about the Mine Hole, Piermont's infamous cavern on South Piermont Avenue. Perhaps it was dug as a horizontal shaft in the search for iron or silver. Or perhaps the quest was for a fine sort of rock, suitable for millstones. Anthony Iurica tells a different story. "The entrance to the Mine Hole is a façade," he said, "The mine, itself, did not start on Piermont Avenue, but rather its entrance was below the high tracks." He said the mine was around 200 feet deep with water at the bottom. "It was filled in during the 1960s, when the sewer lines came in. They decided to fill the shaft so kids wouldn't fall in," Mr. Iurica said. What were they mining? "Iron pyrites—"Fool's Gold'," he said.

More On The Underground

Piermont was a station in the Underground Railroad, helping slaves travel to freedom in Canada. Mr. Iurica said that a tunnel ran from a house next to the old Sons of Italy building, across Main Street and up Tate Street to another safe house, providing a secret escape path in the event of a slaver's raid. He said that during the 60s furniture from a nearby bar was dumped into the tunnel and the rest of it was filled with earth when the Village installed sewer lines.

~Fred Burrell

Annual Village Holiday Celebration

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Kathryn Smith, Growing Up On Paradise



Kathryn Smith in 1984 at a community meeting to discuss development on the Piermont Pier. Photo by Sally Savage

Kathryn Smith, former village board member and lifelong resident of Paradise Avenue, was only 19 when, wearing white gloves and a new suit, she went to work for Park-Bernet auction galleries in New York. That was the start of a career that led to the Foreign Service. In 1952 she was assigned to a consulate in Stuttgart, Germany, where she stayed for two years and then to Syria where she worked for the United States Information Service in Damascus.

After she returned to the States, she

worked for IBM in Westchester County, starting as a secretary and becoming a manager, and other advancements followed. Her career there encompassed 30 years.

She recalled with a smile an incident with the auction house when she was sent along with her boss to catalogue the fine furniture and paintings belonging to Benson Ford, Henry's heir. At the end of the day, they asked the butler if there was anything else. "Nothing but a few pieces of silver downstairs," he answered. They followed him down

and discovered that the "few pieces" were all made by Paul Revere!

Asked about her memories of growing up on Paradise, Kathryn Smith gladly reconstructed the village of her childhood.

Years Before The War

On a late summer afternoon this year, sitting in the 1820's house where she grew up, across from the creek, Katherine Smith thought back to her girlhood years in Piermont and recalled how things had been when she was young.

Her mother seemed to know when the fishing boat would come into the creek in the afternoon each day and when she saw it from her window would give her young daughter 35 cents and tell her to take it to the boat and ask the man to give her a fish.

At least one horse and wagon carrying produce from local farms would go past their house each week, so Piermonters had the benefit of home-grown vegetables. Baxter Bros. Produce was one she remembers.

There were two bakeries on Main Street and Henny Wolf brought a wagon full of fresh baked goods down Paradise when she was a child. Jelly doughnuts were always to be had. Others remember there was a watermelon wagon in town, as well.

There were six children in the house, and sometimes an extra one or two that her mother took on as a foster child. The Great Depression brought hungry men to the back door several times a



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week to get a "handout." No one was ever refused, and her mother had a standard meal she fixed for them: two eggs and two pieces of toast.

Piermont During The War Years

"We had ration books, air raid wardens (men who were our neighbors) walking the streets every night looking to see if there was any light showing from any house. If they saw a light, they knocked on the door and asked you to fix it so that no light showed from any house."

Up on Mount Nebo there were watchers looking out for aircraft during the day. Every plane had to be identified. "I was too young for that job. We kids collected pots and pans and foil from wrappings, anything they asked us for, we collected. We also had a "victory garden", as did many others--to help the war effort."

When she was 16, the telephone company needed young women to answer the phones and Smith was hired as an operator on incoming calls, working out of Sparkill. Since she was going to school, she worked Saturdays, Sundays, and weekday evenings from 6 to 11. "I made so much money, since all the hours I worked were overtime. I still remember the number for Camp Shanks. It was 2400. I would pick up the phone and say "Nyack" and the caller would identify

where he was calling from, for example, "Haverstraw" and generally ask for Camp Shanks 2400." In those days everyone had a party line with several houses sharing a line.

"During the war years our refrigerator broke down and you couldn't get another one until after the war, so we had to get the ice man to deliver ice to us." He would give the customer a card specifying the amount of ice she wanted, 25 lb., 50 or larger. You would mark what size you needed that day and place the card in the window so he could read it from outside. As the ice began to melt, a pan was placed alongside and a small plastic tube was used to suction the water and drop it into the pan."

"When the troops were moved from Camp Shanks out to the end of the Pier where their troop ship would be waiting to load, the young boys would run out, often taking water to offer some of the troops a drink after their long march from Shanks." Smith remembers that early in the war years the men would march out on Paradise Avenue in full uniform with the boys chasing out to see them board their ships. Some of the soldiers would hand the boys a gift of uniform bars or troop insignia. After security tightened, the men could be heard marching past in the dead of night down Paradise Avenue while the families listened to the beat of marching from their beds.

She remembers when the so-called "army bridge" was built by the army and says it was completed within a few days. Why, then, she wonders does it take so long to fix the draw bridge? That was the only bridge Piermont had up to the 1940's.

The neighborhood children all walked to the school on Hudson Terrace, crossing over the railroad tracks that led along Piermont Avenue to the factory on the river. The Piermont "Flyer" rode those tracks and arrived on time at 5 o'clock each day. Later the children would attend the school on 9W at the bend of the road to the south.

A favorite memory of that time was when Smith was 15 and belonged to the CYO. The girls played girls' basketball (fewer dribbles, for one thing.) A young priest from St. John's approached the girls one day and asked, "How would you like to play the WACS at Camp Shanks?" The girls were gleeful. No more girls' rules. Playing grown ups. However, they could only round up five girls to make a team. On the day of the game, an army truck came into Piermont to pick up the players. They were high with anticipation of the game. However, once started, they had no alternates and thus no time outs. They played for hours and the WACS scored time and time again, until the score against Piermont mounted to 20 times the score of the Piermonters, or maybe more. At this point, Smith's memory blacks out. She knows one thing. That it was a great day, and being picked up in Piermont by an army truck played a large part in it.

Thanks for the memories, Kathryn.

~Rosemary Cone



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The Greening Of Piermont, A Two-Part Story

The "greening" of Piermont started some 30 years ago when the word meant simply cleaner air and water, as the paper plants on the pier converted from burning coal to oil. The grit underfoot and dust in the air, not to mention the hiss of escaping steam and the sight of dyes dumped into the river, began to ease off for the first time since the Civil War.

After that, there was steady progress (up or down, depending on your point of view) toward the factories' shutting down and the eventual metamorphosis of a small industrial community into a larger residential one, a definite plus for the environment despite a negative side in the loss of jobs and some of the old ways.

Today, the concept of greening consists of the challenge of conserving natural resources and reducing global warming. Is Piermont still doing its part? The answer, according to Superintendent Al Bartley of the village Department of Public Works, is a resounding yes. Bartley counted off some of the steps his department is taking to keep Piermont green, with emphasis, he says, on the word "recycle".

The village recycles about everything that people throw away. Leaves and brush left in the familiar bio-disposable bags (available at Village Hall and the DPW garage) are composted in the pile near the Rittenberg athletic field. Batteries, paint and other hazardous materials are carted off to Pomona (residents are supposed to do this for themselves). Used motor oil is picked

up by a recycler. Refrigerators and everything else are taken to the Clarkstown recycling center. Last year, the village recycled 140 tons of materials, and was paid the welcome sum of \$4466.20.

The DPW works with the agency Keep Rockland Beautiful to improve the pier, in addition to the routine maintenance. Their combined efforts show up in the orderly row of mulberry trees where once had been a tangle of weeds interspersed with styrofoam and poison ivy.

Last year, the DPW contracted with the Daylight Savings Company to do an energy research audit of the five village-owned buildings, the results of which have been passed on to the Village Board. The company predicts that if Village Hall alone takes certain steps such as upgrading the lighting, heating and air-conditioning, installing temperature controls and improving the building's "envelope", it can save \$2000 annually (the company takes a 50% cut the first year of energy savings). Another contractor, Cost Control Associates, is working with the Village Clerk's office on a so-called cost recovery and reduction study involving communication expenses. A similar study saved Nyack \$8000. in one year.

More evidence of the greening of Piermont is the Sunday farmers' market, whose presence owes a debt to village trustee Joan Gussow, a nationally-known teacher and writer who has pioneered the trend to locally-grown crops. She brings her own shopping bag to market (some countries, she

says, have banned plastic bags altogether) and is a force behind the community garden. One of her main concerns is the availability of pure water, a resource that is often taken for granted. She cautions that aquifers supplying water locally are not bottomless and have been shown to contain harmful minerals, and that using water sparingly and carefully is everybody's job. (Locally, of course, water has an extra dimension, as run-off from poorly-planned hill sites has been known to cause massive damage.)

Having come from a gritty mill town to a thriving suburb, where does the village go from here? The dreams of some residents range from the prospect of drinking water from our own wells (yes, the hillside is dotted with springs) to enjoying the open parkland of the Cowboy Fields, if we're lucky. Eventually, who knows, a forest of windmills on the pier and turbines in the river supplying our electricity by harnessing the breezes and tides?

~Bob Cone

The Newsletter Is On The Web

- The Piermont Newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web. You can find it at:
- <http://piermont-ny.com/newsletter/>,
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The Purple Rose Of Cairo

In October, 2008 Piermont celebrated the 25th anniversary of the filming of Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* is Piermont with an exhibition of period photographs by Sally Savage and a screening of the film at the Piermont Public Library. Sally shares her memories with the Newsletter:

The first sign was—a sign! On the side of the Meyer family home at 437 Piermont Avenue appeared a scaffold and a handsome, faded painting of an old milk bottle and advertising for Meadow Fresh dairy products.

Suddenly, early one morning the street was filled with small, black cars and actors in 1930s garb, and we knew the “shoot” had begun.

Woody Allen had chosen Piermont as the main location for his film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. It was late 1983, but for the next few months, Piermont was turned upside down to look like a 1935 depression-era town. Main Street's

buildings took on a drab dark green hue, and two fake buildings appeared opposite the Turning Point. One was the theatre showing *The Purple Rose...* (where actor Mia Farrow went often to drown the sorrows of her sad life); the other, Wm. Ross & Son pharmacy.

Perhaps the most fun was checking the unrecognizable contents of windows of our main businesses, and the actual shop owners had to place sidewalk “Open for Business” signs between filming shoots, so as not to lose trade. Gordon Willis was artistic director, and created some wonderful store fronts, all of which were represented in a photographic display at the Piermont library in October.

Piermont's village hall became The Public Library. The Turning Point became The Salvation Army, but John McAvoy did not have to remove its sign, as it was adapted to: “He is Your Turning Point”. Some key scenes with Jeff Daniels took place at the current Side-

walk Bistro, whose windows became Gutterman's bakery and a candy store. Among our new/old storefronts were Rudy's Tavern, a pawnshop, Crane's plumbing supplies, a barber shop, a vegetable stand, Style Mode ladies' apparel, and a real estate window offering prime Piermont houses for a few thousand dollars. Community Market had to remind customers that the prices in the window were NOT current (a 3 lb. tin of coffee: 65 cents; 2 lbs. of cookies: 25 cents; and a dozen eggs: 11 cents). An enormous billboard advertising Sunshine Krispy crackers was erected to hide the bank, and through the winter of '83-'84 Piermont watched, enthralled, from the sidelines as Woody Allen worked his magic with the film's crews and its main stars Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels.

~Sally Savage

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From The Library

The Smartest Card

September was designated Library Card Sign-up Month by the American Library Association (ALA), which believes that a library card is one of the most important back-to-school supplies that we can provide for our children. But in case you missed it, rest assured that you can sign up for a library card during any month of the year at your friendly local library! And the library card is certainly not just for those going back to school. With your card you have access to the resources of the entire Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS), you can create an online account which allows you to search for materials and place orders for them to be sent to Piermont for pick-up, and of course you can borrow books and other materials from any of the RCLS libraries in person. You can save money on popular titles, classics of literature, magazines, CDs and DVDs. A great many items can be downloaded free as well. For more information, please see our website at www.piermontlibrary.org, and come in to sign up for a free library card soon.

Children's Events And Programs This Fall And Winter

Taking the children to the library can be a great family activity. The lovely new Henderson Children's Room is the perfect place to introduce your children to the lifelong joys of reading and fun at the library. On Monday mornings at 11 a.m. we have a special Storytime for Toddlers, with Agnes Caniza, ably assisted by Judy Epstein, which is a real treat. The children listen to stories, play simple games and sing along

with their adults! On the third Wednesday of each month we welcome Music Together with Catherine, a free class for small children that teaches music through play. Children are given the opportunity to develop basic music competence in a relaxed and supportive environment where they listen to songs, sing, clap hands and dance around the room with colorful scarves! It's delightful. And back by popular demand, starting in September we had a series of art classes for children, taught by Alexis Starke. Alexis studied art and design at Dartmouth and has taught in both private and public schools. In these classes students created imaginative art projects with a variety of themes. Projects included drawing, painting, collage and mixed media using a variety of materials and techniques suited to the age group.

In The Gallery

In November, Piermont resident Frances Wells will exhibit her paintings of the Hudson River here. Wells was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and began painting landscapes as a child working with her grandmother, Eloise Long Wells, a Missouri and Mississippi River painter. She later studied art at Bennington College in Vermont. She now lives on the banks of the Hudson River and works to "capture moments of a river which I consider an ever changing work of art in and of itself." For more information, see www.franceswells.com.

We'll wrap up the year by welcoming back the annual Gift of Art Show with an Open House reception on Sunday, December 7, from 2 to 4 pm. The

Gift of Art Show was started in the early '90s as a way for artists who had exhibited their work at the library to help in the building effort with a donation of a work of art for sale. The Open House became one of Piermont's favorite holiday events, but was set aside for a few years while we concentrated on the relocation. Now comfortably settled in our new home, we hope to reestablish the tradition. Check our website for more information on this event later in the fall.

The First Friday Film Series

A few months ago the library launched a new monthly film series utilizing recently purchased equipment funded by the Sons of Italy and planned and directed by Piermont's Marc Farre. Marc chooses films that he finds appealing and meaningful which may not have been widely distributed. "You probably won't be seeing blockbuster movies here," he says, but "why would you want to?" Marc envisions the series as "an opportunity for our wonderful community to gather and enjoy a couple of hours of pure cinematic bliss." Admission is always free. Films are introduced by Marc, and there's usually a lively discussion afterwards for anyone who cares to stay. On Friday 12/5 at 7:30 pm, *Scrooged* (an hilarious adaptation of "A Christmas Carol") will be screened.

Ways To Help

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS: The Library now participates with the Literacy Volunteers of Rockland, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing student-centered English

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The Dennis P. McHugh Piermont Public Library is located at 25 Flywheel Park West and is open Monday through Thursday from 10 to 8 p.m., Friday from noon to 5 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. Closed Sundays and holidays. For more information, please call 845-359-4595.

~Grace Mitchell



Dig they must for a better Piermont: sidewalk reconstruction on Main Street. Photo by Fred Burrell.

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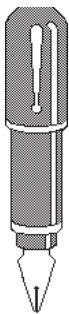
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Reader's Write

Editor's note: Denise Kronstadt led a group of volunteers who helped form the Diplomat Gardens Tenant's Association. Redbrick Partners did not return calls for comment about its plans. The company's website, which a year ago listed numerous projects, now list none.

The Office of the New York State Attorney General, after receiving a complaint letter from Troutman and Sanders, pro bono counsel to the Diplomat Gardens Tenant's Association formed last year with a few of the remaining residents, stopped the conversion of the apartments from rentals to condominium ownership.

I presume the lending industry's problems also forced the developer, Redbrick Partners, to change its plans, although it continues working on the buildings. Certainly when (if) the market turns around—which many analysts believe will not happen for at least five years—the developer may again seek to convert the premises but I do not know Redbrick's business plans.

If it does it must again file an offering plan with the Attorney General's office. So what can we do? Where does this leave the community? It presents

another opportunity to think through ways to negotiate with the developer to create true affordability for those residents who remain and, perhaps, for those who left in fear.

My dream would be to create a group of Piermont residents and elected officials dedicated to meeting with experts in the area of affordable housing who could come up with a plan that would

meet the tenants' needs as well as offer the developer good economic options. Anyone who is interested can e-mail me at deniseannk@gmail.com. I continue to believe affordability is possible, difficult to achieve but realistic to expect.

Denise Kronstadt, Piermont



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Granny BODYPUMP

"Simply Irresistible!" The music of Robert Palmer throbs as I squat in rhythm with assorted kilos of weight on a bar across the "meaty" part of my back. What's a 61-year old granny to be doing in a place like this? I'm at Piermont's Diplomat Health & Swim Club, trying to keep time with Bruce Woolley as he leads the class. "Super Slow!" he coaches us into the next set of weight lifting exercises to music.

"Pump it up! Pump it up! Pump it up!" I'm on my back pumping iron in chest presses to the tunes of Technonics "Pump Up the Jam."

Bruce has been President of the Diplomat since 1975. A grandfather himself, he hadn't taught a group exercise class in 15 years. Looking for a new fitness challenge, Bruce found Les Mills' BODYPUMP. He launched the class about 16 months ago, and it caught on. "We were amazed with the demand for it and the tremendously diverse populations that participate," says Bruce. "We have high school students exercising next to seniors in their seventies

with everyone having fun and getting a phenomenal workout. The classes have a great mix of men and women."

I started the class after knee surgery for a torn meniscus. My surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery recommended exercise for recovery, with emphasis on squats and lunges. With BODYPUMP, everyone progresses at their own rate by adding more weights as they become stronger.

We warm up with lighter weights to the tunes of Nicki French's "I Surrender." Then we add heavier weights for squats. "The pulsating beat is very motivational," notes Bruce. "Everyone is challenged to their own ability."

In just a few months, I've noticed some real results. My aging flab is toning up. Those baggy "bat wings" under my arms are less floppy. I've lost a few pounds and I feel better. "With BODYPUMP, people see the results and they see them quickly," Bruce attests.

BODYPUMP became so popular that the Diplomat now offers it seven days a week. Bruce enlisted the help of

his two daughters, Kate and Maude to help teach the classes. Each class takes about 45 - 55 minutes. New routines are introduced to keep the exercises fresh. However, I like the familiar tunes. When I'm doing abdominal crunches on the floor to the music of "Crimson Tide, Crimson Tide,...Sweet Home Alabama," I know I'll be slowing down for the cool down stretching exercises that finish the work out.

When Bruce's beautiful daughter Maude teaches the class, a wonderful fantasy transformation takes place in my brain. As I focus on watching her guide us through the exercises, I am no longer a short, pudgy, 61 year old granny to be. As long as I don't break the spell by catching my reflection in the mirror; I become like Maude, young and beautiful once more!

"I can't remember ever getting fan mail for other exercise classes," Bruce observes. "But we've gotten them for BODYPUMP."

~PJ Mouquin

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Letter From The Piermont Fire Department

In the past year the Piermont Fire Department had its fair share of loss. It started with Leroy and Esther Lynch. Leroy was Chief of the department in 1967, and was also a member of the original 7 members of the Under Water Rescue Team, which was started in 1956. Leroy was the recipient of the Rockland County Fireman of the Year award for the rescue of a handicapped individual. His wife Esther was also President of the ladies auxiliary for about 13 years. Leroy and Ester's children and grandchildren have followed in their footsteps as volunteers.

The next member we lost was William Goswick, who was not only an Ex Chief but also Piermont Mayor for 12 years. Bill was awarded the Piermont Fire Department's Valor Award for the rescue of 3 children on the second floor of an apartment in the village. Bill was also part of the original 7 Underwater Rescue Team members. As with Leroy and Esther, Bill's children and grand-

children went on to serve the village.

In the past month, we lost James Alise Jr. Jimmy was a fighter; he never gave up. Just last year we had a major fire in the village and on that same day Jimmy had chemotherapy. Most people would have stayed home, but not Jimmy. He knew a lot of our members were away at a wedding. Jimmy drove the first due engine and stayed for the 8 hours it took to put the fire out. Jimmy never made a rescue, but at this year's fireman's dinner he was awarded the Chiefs award for his devotion and tenacious attitude. And as with the Bill and Leroy, Jimmy's son will be the new Chief come next April.

And just recently we lost Frank McDonald, also to cancer. Frank was also an individual who never quit. He was actually the founder of the Underwater Rescue Team, along with ex Chief Sedlack, and Ex Chief Delorenzo. From the stories you hear around the

firehouse, Frank was one of the best, especially when it came to diving. He made numerous rescues and recoveries over his years as a member of the department.

As Chief of the Department, I believe these are the type of people that makes it all worthwhile. The constant training that our members do really shows, in the service we provide to the Village of Piermont. We are always looking for new people in our ranks. We provide Fire Fighting, High Angle Rescue, Scuba Diving, and EMS. All training is free. Just recently we have had some problems with EMS personnel (driver and EMTS) during the day (between 7am and 7 pm). If anyone is interested in riding the ambulance, please come down any Monday evening from 7 to 9 or call me at 845-721-8948.

~Daniel Goswick,
Chief of Department

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Building Permits—Now You Know

If you are thinking of repairing, altering or doing construction on your home or property, you should be aware of local code requirements for building permits and for use of licensed tradesmen. The building inspector uses the NY State Building Code as the requirement for compliance when issuing a permit.

Here is an overview of instances when building permits are required. This does not constitute a complete list of instances when permits are required, but serves as an initial guide. If you have a specific question about construction at your residence, it is always best to call Piermont's Building Department at 359-1258 x1. Piermont's interim building inspector is Larry Picarello. He has office hours at Village Hall on Mondays, Tues., Thurs., and Fri., 8:30- 12:30.

Most broadly, building permits are required for construction, alteration, installation renovations, modifications, conversions or replacements of existing structures. Building codes and the permit process are there to help assure proper construction.

Examples of actions requiring a building permit:

Conversion: Such as changing an existing garage to a living space, conversion for a home office or reception area.

Change of use: Such as change from a single family to greater or apartment creation.

Additions, expansions, and enclosures: Such as adding new rooms, enlarging present space or enclosing an open porch or deck.

Here are actions that require permitting broken down to interior/exterior work:

Exterior Work:

Structural changes: Such as cutting away, in whole or in part, of any existing load bearing wall. For example, installing a window or door in an existing wall which requires any change to an opening or making a new one.

Repair of fire damage.

Roof or wall work: Sheathing, rafter, stud replacement

New Accessory Structures: Including garages and sheds over 100 square feet.

Pools: installation, replacement of swimming pools and hot tubs.

Decks and Porches: Creation of, enlargement of, or structural repair to porches and decks.

Fences: Over 6' in height require a building permit. (Note: Fences over 4' in height may require a zoning variance)

Site changes to walls and driveways: Construction or expansion of retaining wall, driveway or parking area, or site which results in a change to natural or pre-existing run-off patterns (drainage) that impact adjoining property – even if the change creates an improved condition.

Excavations: Street and sidewalk openings require Department of Public Works prior approval, to insure notice is given to all utilities to avoid accidental damage.

Interior Work:

Alterations: Additions/Removal of

existing walls.

Kitchens/Bathrooms: Installation of new or renovation of existing when you are not replacing like with like, that is, if you are changing location or nature of electrical, gas or plumbing fixtures.

Fire Sprinkler System: Installation of new or repair of existing fire place

Wood Stove: Installation of new or replacement

Mechanical work: Installation of a new furnace and/or oil burner or hot water heater, plumbing or electrical wiring. In addition, change of, or connection to an existing electrical system requires a permit.

Ordinary repairs: Are exempt from permit requirements. They are replacements or renewals of existing work, or replacement of parts made in the ordinary course of maintenance which do not do not affect the fire or structural

continued on page 14



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Building Permits continued from page 13

safety of your home. Some examples would be the replacements of a rotted wood tread on outside steps, replacement in kind of an existing window, repaving of a driveway without changing the water run-off, or replacement of a clothes washer with removable hose connections. If you are unsure, call the building inspector.

PLEASE NOTE:
LICENSED TRADESMEN: Home-owners should be aware that certain work may only be performed by licensed tradesmen who hold a valid Rockland County license.

PLUMBING: A licensed Master Plumber is required for any work requiring water piping, waste, vent and

drain systems, as well as all gas piping and gas appliance installations.

ELECTRICAL: A licensed Master Electrician is required for any work involving electrical wiring, fixtures and appliances (more than 50 volts). All electrical work, regardless of voltage, requires an electrical permit.

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Slope Legislation continued from page 1

ment in exchange for engineered "mitigation" of this water runoff. The problem is engineered runoff adds volume and velocity to water as it finds its way to engineered "solutions"—dry wells, storm drains, and catch basins.

In heavy rainfalls, like those "100 year" downpours that are now occurring a number of times each year, lack of maintenance of drains, or the sudden damming of a watercourse by fallen branches or displaced boulders creates a huge impact as the water screams down the hillside, looking for an outlet. Think "chaos theory".

By restraining disruption of steeply sloped areas, Piermont hopes to solve part of the drainage problem thus limiting the need for engineered "solutions". This new slope ordinance combined with the limitation on building size demanded by the Floor Area Ratio requirements that already exist in our zoning code, should go a long way toward guiding the planning and zoning board in decisions that protect the

hillside and its downhill neighbors.

You can view this legislation online at www.generalcode.com/Webcode2.html. Go to State Index, click on New York, then scroll down to Piermont. Click on table of contents - Code of the Vil-

lage of Piermont, Part 2. This specific legislation is Chapter 210, Article XIX, beginning 210-109.

~Margaret Grace

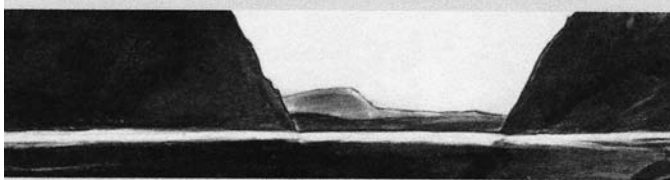


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A Message From The Piermont Police Department

The department is still investigating a series of thefts from automobiles that took place through the summer in Piermont. The department would like to remind residents that they should lock their cars especially at night and remove items such as GPS devices, laptop computers and cell phones which were some of the items stolen.

Residents are also reminded that it's never a good idea to leave your house or car keys or your wallets and purses inside unattended cars.

Residents are also asked to call the police if they see anything suspicious or that may seem out of place in the village. If you see something, say something. During the course of investigating the car thefts, the department found that some vil-

lage residents may have seen the suspect and thought that their behavior was odd but never called the police.

The department is also investigating several larcenies from homes in the village and would like to remind residents that there are a few simple things that they can do to prevent them from becoming a victim. Residents are reminded to lock doors and windows when they leave their homes especially when leaving for an extended period of time. Also, that if they have had an alarm system installed, to remember to use it.

Residents who may be hiring contractors, cleaners or other workers are reminded to get references and to verify the workers identification. Get the names, addresses and license plates

of the people you are letting into your home. The Rockland County Department of Consumer Protection can be contacted to make sure that a potential contractor is licensed, insured and allowed to work in Piermont and can provide a list of approved contractors.

The department would also like to remind residents that if they have had alarm systems installed in their homes, they must be registered with the department, and relevant contact information kept current. Any resident who has any questions about the alarm law in Piermont can contact the department for a copy of alarm law and form updates. The Piermont Police can be reached at 359.2040.



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