

Wesley's World

MAY 2015

Be a Good Neighbor / Get Involved With Your Community

From
Mayor
Marshall
Katz



Wesley Hills is a beautiful place to live and a lot of great people have made it their home. Our residents come from many different backgrounds, ethnic groups, interests, and religions and all have unique ideas and talents to contribute to our community.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to reach out beyond my personal background and interests and meet residents from all parts of the community. All these interactions have given me a great appreciation of what people can offer to their neighbors and to our Village.

Many of us have a tendency to stick to what we know, but the benefit to putting yourself out there, meeting your neighbors, and volunteering is immeasurable. The following are just a few ideas of ways you can reach out to others or volunteer to make our Village even better:

Introduce yourself

Whether you have lived here for years or are new residents, introduce yourself. Smile and say hello. It's an easy thing to do and it shows that you are kind, friendly, and approachable.

Communicate with your neighbors

Touch base with them regularly and keep them in the loop. If anything you are planning to do may affect them, minimize it and let them know in advance. Keep the channels of communication open by reminding them that if you're doing anything which disturbs them, they should feel comfortable approaching you about it. Check in regularly on elderly neighbors who may be living alone.



Be aware of your surroundings, as well as those of your neighbors

Even if you are not organizing a "neighborhood watch" community, keep your eye on anyone you don't know acting suspiciously around your neighbor's property. When in doubt, call the police so they can quickly curtail any criminal activity.

Put together an annual block/neighborhood party

This is a great opportunity to get all your neighbors to come out and meet each other.

Get involved

In order for a community to thrive, members have to do things together. From community preservation activities such as a neighborhood watch, to recreation like a softball team, community spirit is built on participation. Attend a Village meeting and voice your opinion.

(See page 3 for a story of how your neighbors got together this month to clean up the Village).

Take responsibility

When you see a situation that undermines the integrity of your community, seek to change it. This could be as simple

as picking up your neighbor's trash can that has rolled into the street, clearing a snow covered fire hydrant, or reporting a non-working streetlight. Responsibility means taking action.

Follow the rules

Keep your grass cut and keep your dog on a leash. Rules are part of what holds a community together. If you disagree with the rules, work to change them. But

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Tribute to Lu France	2
Let's Talk Trash	2
Wesley Hills Cleanup	3
Who's New	4

always follow the rules that are currently in place.

Volunteer for the Village government and other local organizations

Wesley Hills has a small paid staff and many volunteers who man our various boards. We are always looking for people to fill openings. If you have the acting bug, we are home to the Antrim Players. If you'd like to organize a social group, our underutilized Senior/Community Center is available to you. Your passion for an issue can often offset any direct experience you might not have. (See page 2 for an article about our Planning Board).

Vote

Get out and vote as a way of expressing your part in the community as a whole and having your voice heard.

As retired Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court Sandra Day O'Connor has said, "As a citizen, you need to know how to be a part of it, how to express yourself – and not just by voting."

This list is hardly comprehensive. If you have other ideas you'd like to share, please email me at mayor@wesleyhills.org and I'll include them in a future issue of Wesley's World.

A Tribute to Lu France

The Village of Wesley Hills was saddened by the passing of Dorothy "Lu" France this past January.

Immediately after the formation of Wesley Hills a driving force was needed to get things going and keep everything in order. Lu France fit that bill and then some. She was our second Village Clerk, after the first found the work load too demanding. "LuLu"

stepped up to the plate and fit the bill as if she was created to do the job.

None of us knew anything about municipal budgets, garbage contracts, zoning boards and so many other things. We were groping. We had to have a budget in place almost immediately. Thankfully, Lu kept us all on our game, she made appointments with established Villages to help us get insight on what was required. She spent hours on the phone with State and County legal and personnel representatives. She worked with the Village Attorney, Accountant, and of course the Mayor to make sure that it all was done correctly.

Lu France got it all done without an instruction book. She did it almost all alone and she did it well. The Village of Wesley Hills owes a great deal to Lu France for her dedication, courage and loyalty and mourns her passing.

By Robert Frankl (Former Mayor of Wesley Hills)



Get to Know Your Planning Board

The Wesley Hills Planning Board reviews applications for approval of subdivisions, special permits, and site plans.

The Planning Board is staffed by community residents who volunteer their time to oversee these important tasks. The Board receives assistance and advice from the Village Engineer, Village Planner, the Assistant Village Attorney and the Building Clerk.

When a property owner owns a lot that is large enough and suitable to be divided into several lots, each of which can have a house, he/she can request that the Planning Board approve a plan creating several lots that conform to the Village Zoning Law. The subdivision review includes an analysis of traffic impacts, road patterns, set-backs from the lot lines, placement of houses on the lots, drainage, topography, and wetlands, among other issues.

Special permit uses are non-residential uses, usually in residential zoning districts, that are permitted only if they satisfy specific standards and conditions in order to minimize their interference with the established character of the neighborhood. The role of the Planning Board in reviewing special permit applications is to determine how those uses can be accommodated in their neighborhoods. The Planning Board may impose conditions to protect the neighboring properties, such as limiting hours of operation and volume of traffic and requiring sufficient parking spaces and screening.

Site plan approval is required for the construction of any use other than a one-family house. The Planning Board will consider many of the same factors that are involved in subdivision approvals.

The Planning Board also reviews applications for wetlands permits.

A wetlands permit is required for any construction activities in or within 100 feet of a wetland. In reviewing a wetlands permit application, the Planning Board must make sure that the proposed activity will not have any adverse impact on the wetlands.

By Vera Brown, Planning Board Chairperson

Lets Talk Trash

Wesley Hills is a beautiful place to live and for the most part, our residents all pitch in to keep it this way. However, even in my short time as Mayor, I have noted that a common complaint is that people leave their trash cans out at the curb.

The Village does not have a specific law concerning leaving out trash cans, as we do not want to be ticketing residents and bringing them into Justice court. However, I want to encourage people to respect their neighborhood and neighbors by not leaving cans out.

We have twice weekly garbage pickup and the trash contractor is required to come up your driveways to retrieve your garbage (with a few exceptions to this rule in heavy snow), so there is usually no need to bring your cans down in the first place.

Besides making the Village look unkept, cans at the street (as opposed to in non-tippable bear-safe bins) often result in garbage being strewn about and encourage wildlife to invade our neighborhood.

In April, as many residents were preparing for the Passover holiday, there were instances of cans being put out in the street on eve of Passover, Friday morning, when the next pickup

Continued page 4

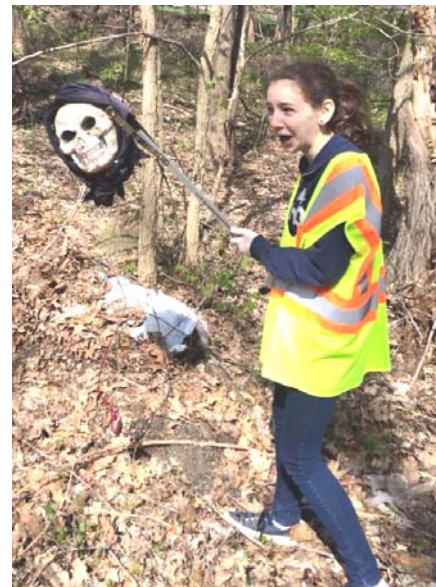
Wesley Hills Cleans Up!

On May 3rd 48 enthusiastic neighbors and friends came out for our Village Clean Up event coordinated with the assistance of [Keep Rockland Beautiful](#).

Our volunteers spread out to 12 sites around the Village and collected 72 bags of trash, 28 bags of recyclables, 11 tires, and lots of metal and other debris.

Some of the more interesting finds included snakes (we did not collect them), a Halloween skull, rusty golf clubs, someone's old mailbox and a TV.

A good dent was made in the mess around the Village and I hope even more people will turn out next year to help.



Village of Wesley Hills

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*Sign up for Village
Eblasts to get Village
announcements and
other important local
information.*

*Send a request to
mayor@wesleyhills.org*

WWW.WESLEYHILLS.ORG

Who's New at Village Hall



Camille Guido-Downey is our new Village Clerk. Camille comes to us with significant prior Village and Municipal experience, most recently as Planning and Zoning Clerk in the Village of Airmont, prior experience as Deputy Village Clerk in the Village of Montebello, and Confidential Secretary at the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority.



Donalee Berard of Berard & Associates CPAs will become our Village Treasurer and Receiver of Taxes as of June 1st.



Trash

Continued from page 3

was the following Monday. This combined with high winds spread garbage around the area and onto the properties of people's neighbors. This mess was completely unnecessary as the Village had planned ahead for the religious requirement of these residents to remove this garbage from their possession before the holiday, by arranging for large dumpsters to be available to them at Village Hall.

Going forward, I hope that everyone will make a greater effort to keep our community looking its best.

Mayor Marshall Katz