

Wesley's World

Village of Wesley Hills

November 2008



Wesley Hills Day

Our annual Wesley Hills Day celebration was a wonderful success. The weather was beautiful, and lots of fun was had by all. We would like to thank all the volunteers that helped out this year. Trustees Ed McPherson, Howard Richman, and Marion Ben-Jacob who helped setup, cleanup, and run the soda, popcorn, and hot dog stands. The key club helped with those activities, as well as face painting and balloons. Thanks to our other helpers, Arlene and Gary Ratzker, Abe Friedman, Rebecca, Sarah, and Josh Birnbaum, Isaac Selter, Yael Ash, and Flora and Shlomo Goldsmith. Thanks to John Hochstein for transporting all the equipment to and from the Village hall. Extra special thanks go to our Village Clerk, Barbara Cartaya for making all the arrangements. Visit our website at www.wesleyhills.org to see pictures of the festivities taken by Maya Richman and Flora Goldsmith.

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2009 Budget

We have made a lot of changes in the Village this year, to cut costs and lower expenses without reducing services. Some of the changes involved an inventory of our electric and phone services, as well as changing the Village insurance plans and maintenance contracts. These changes will result in thousands of dollars in savings each year. Some are actual savings, other avoided renewal increases.

	savings		savings
Computer services	\$3000	Phone	\$200
Liability insurance	\$5500	O&R	\$1000
Health insurance	\$4000	Rugcleaning	\$1650
Trash collection	\$5500	Office supplies	\$500

Unfortunately, these are not enough to offset the increased expenses that the Village will incur. The largest single increase is the Town Highway maintenance contract, which has gone up by 8.5% (almost \$30,000). That could result in an increase in Village taxes of about 3% (less than \$25 per year for the average household). In addition, given the downturn in the economy, we expect lower income as well. One of our primary sources of income is the percentage of the County mortgage recording tax that the Village receives each year. With the market the way it is, that will be substantially less than it has been in the past. We're still months away from our budget process, so things can change. We continue to look for additional ways to save, so that the lowest possible tax increase will be necessary, without cutting services such as road paving.

Road Safety

Recently, there were two unfortunate hit-and-run accidents in the Village. There are those that would try to use these accidents to further their own personal agenda without any regard for the facts. What are the facts? In the first instance, a 55 year old man was crossing Route 306 at 12:30 in the morning. He was wearing dark clothing and no reflectors of any kind. Prior to the accident, the man was often seen wandering around and across Route 306. It was reported that the man was walking home after the Sukkot Holiday, and that there was more traffic due to the Holiday. Neither of those statements is valid. During the Holiday, traffic is much lighter than normal in the Village, and the Holiday ended at 7:00 pm, more than 5 hours before the accident occurred. In fact, the victim was returning from the Mobil station where he had just made a purchase, something that would not occur during the Holiday. The accident occurred within feet of a sidewalk that currently exists on the West side of Route 306, beginning at Willow Tree Road, going North for several hundred feet. Therefore, sidewalks were not the issue here, especially since the victim was crossing the road at the time. But reading the newspaper you might get a different idea, as it said 'There are no wooded trails or shortcuts to avoid crossing Route 306.'

In the second instance, three young boys were walking on Lime Kiln Road, when one of them was hit and knocked into one of the other boys. Fortunately, in this case, the injuries were not very serious. Once again, the boys were wearing dark clothing and no reflectors. The accident occurred within feet of an existing sidewalk, but the boys were walking three abreast, on the other side of the road, in the direction of traffic.

Both accidents are very upsetting. One of the largest concerns, is the fact that the drivers of the vehicles did not stop. It is unconscionable that someone involved in any accident, especially where someone is injured, would not stop to offer assistance or at least call for help. Unfortunately, some people are under the impression that if you hit a pedestrian, you are automatically always 100% at fault. The Ramapo PD has informed us that all circumstances of every accident are taken into account, and there are instances where the driver is not considered at fault. (I do not believe any determination has been made about the two recent accidents in the Village).

Most importantly we need to focus on the correct ways to avoid accidents. As we have detailed in prior newsletters, there are a number of sidewalk projects already underway in the Village. However, sidewalks were not the answer in these instances. Both accidents occurred on well lit roads, so additional street lights would not have made a difference either. I was disillusioned to receive several emails from residents saying that it would be a good idea for the Village to give out reflectors. Both the Village and the Town have given out free reflectors for many years. Our last newsletter reiterated that as well. We need to focus on better pedestrian and driver education and awareness when traveling on busy roads both during the daytime and at night.

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Road Safety (cont.)

Pedestrians need to keep in mind that cars and trucks use the roads, and therefore need to take appropriate precautions:

- Always use sidewalks where they exist.
- Always walk on the side of the road facing traffic.
- Do not walk two or three abreast.
- Move over and/or walk single file when vehicles are present.
- Always wear reflectors when walking at dusk or night.

Drivers need to be aware of the many pedestrians we have in the area and need to adhere to the rules of the road:

- Obey the posted speed limits.
- Slow down when passing pedestrians.
- Drive slower in inclement weather.
- Stay alert (put down the cell phone).
- If you hit someone, **stop** and call for help.

Verizon FiOS

The Village has signed a franchise agreement with Verizon allowing them to offer fiber optic TV and high speed internet services. You may have noticed many Verizon trucks all around the Village. They are working hard to be able to make these services available to the entire Village as soon as possible. To find out if the new service is available in your area, you can contact Verizon at 888-591-6075, or visit www.verizon.com and click on the FiOS button, then Get Started, then Check Availability. If it is not available yet, you can sign up to be notified when it is.

Dig Safely New York

Dig Safely New York, a not-for profit organization, was formed to prevent damage to underground facilities and protect the public. They do this through communication with excavators and contractors, in an efficient and courteous manner, while complying with governing regulations. If you or a contractor are going to be doing any excavating, from tree stump removal to building foundations, call Dig Safely New York at 1-800-962-7962 or 811. At no charge to you, they will contact all the member utilities to mark out the area in question. Visit www.digsafelynewyork.com for more information.

Dog Etiquette

When walking your dog, please make sure to keep it on a leash at all times. Do not let your dog run off your property unattended. If you walk your dog off your own property, please make sure to clean up after it. Respect your neighbors, and don't leave dogs unattended outside, barking for long periods of time.

Bear Sightings

There have been a number of bear sightings in recent weeks in and around the Village. Please try not to attract them. Keep all garbage securely sealed in bags and closed containers. If possible, don't put full containers out prior to your trash pickup day. If you do see a bear, call the Ramapo Police Department at 357-2400.



Leaf Pickup Schedule

Special leaf pickup dates have been set for the following:

November 22nd
December 6th December 13th



Leaves must be placed in bio-degradable paper bags, curbside, by 6:00 AM on the day of pickup. Bags are available free of charge at the Village Hall. Please do NOT leave piles of non-bagged leaves at the curb. They will not be picked up, and are a safety hazard. For additional information, please call the Village at 354-0400.

We still want your Emails

We would like to thank all those residents that have given us their email address. The Village email list is now over 530 names. If you have not already done so, please send an email to mayor@wesleyhills.org, so we can add you to the Village email list.

Fire Hydrants

If you have a fire hydrant in front of your house, it is your responsibility to make sure that it is not covered by plantings or debris. Please make sure that this is attended to, because in an emergency, every second counts. If you know of any hydrants that are inaccessible or in disrepair, please contact the Village at 845-354-0400.

VILLAGE OF WESLEY HILLS

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November 2008 NEWSLETTER

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