

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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Linda Smyth & Jeff Kelly & family, Matt Brassard & family, Tom McDonald & family

May the Spirit of Christmas fill each person in our area with joy throughout the next year!

In the spirit of this particular Season of focusing on the wonderful qualities in human nature, Fact Finder would like to say **“Welcome to all of every belief!”** There can never be too much love-energy in the air or too many smiles upon faces. Port Henry, let us *all* out-do ourselves in smiles of love and understanding and then make it a habit for all the coming year!

We must all thank Linda Smyth for the following article which encourages each of us to enjoy, beyond its glitter and pleasures, the deeper meanings of the Christmas season.

“As I awoke Sunday to go about my day in Port Henry, I let the spirit of the Holiday season, as it is celebrated here in Moriah, show me what it had to offer. Not intending to go to church, I suddenly found myself drawn to the morning service at the beautiful and old Presbyterian Church. It was ever so welcoming! Rev. Ken Parker gave an inspirational sermon about feeling “the force” whatever you may refer to it. Let that spirit enter you and sustain you through difficult times. Everyone there made me feel so welcome with their hand-shakes and good cheer.

While I walked my golden retriever, it occurred to me that no one is more in the Christmas spirit than she. Every day of the year she demonstrates how to be friendly, how to say “hello” to neighbors and how not to carry a grudge.

Later, joined by my neighbors and friends, we went around in town singing Holiday songs. We went from business to business and home to home bringing good cheer. It reminded me of my Christmases past and I am grateful to those who organize music, for it does feel good and warms the heart.

As a light drizzle of rain started to form, I found myself lighting a candle at our very own newly-created spiritual place called “Angel of Hope”. Thank you Luci Carpenter for spearheading this project and to all who helped. I found myself delving into the deepest part of me as this holiday time finds us reflecting on those we love dearly who have passed.

Ahhh yes, this Sunday of mine, overall, had a spiritual feel to it, one not found, unfortunately, when politics rolls around.

As I observe all the wonderful decorations all over the Town of Moriah and in the Village of Port Henry, I am thankful to everyone who takes the time to make this happen. As we light up our community, could we ignite warmth in our hearts for one another and could we leave animosity, resentment and anger somewhere else. Can we beautify our Community inside and out? I guess it starts in my own self.... So.....in the spirit of the season, I say “Cheers” everyone. I wish you a wonderful holiday season.”

IMPORTANT “THANKYOUS”

Again Port Henry and the Town of Moriah must gratefully thank Ben and Tom Winters for the Oval’s Christmas tree. It is an unusually charming tree, just perfect for the space it occupies. The DPW’s crew and all the other helpers are also to be thanked and applauded for their putting up the tree and filling its branches with so many colorful lights. Again, thanks to the crew who saw to it that the lovely new

street lights on each side of the Park were decorated, enhancing the Creshe scene. The pH7 committee added a bit of daytime beauty to the tree by decorating it with many gold ornaments.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

The Port Henry Fire Department will hold its First Annual Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 20, 2015 from 5 – 7 PM in the center of Port Henry. Local fire departments have been invited to decorate their trucks with lights and join the festivities. We will lineup on Church Street, go west to College Street, east on Broad Street, south on Main Street and return to the Church Street station. We may make more than one trip depending on the participants, both the fire departments and the crowd.

At the end of the parade, all children (with parents of course) are invited to the Port Henry Fire Station to receive candy and meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. This invitation to a fun, family evening event comes directly from Port Henry's Fire Chief Jim Hughes. Come one, come all and, adults, if you don't have a child of your own, borrow one from someone.

The Moriah Chamber of Commerce office in Port Henry will be closed the weeks of Christmas and New Year's. Beginning in January, the office will be open on Tuesdays from 10am – 12:30 PM. During the closed weeks and at any other time, the Chamber may be contacted at 519-250-1050 or MoriahChamber@gmail.com.

The Village office will close at 12 N on December 24 Christmas Eve and remain closed on Christmas Day, December 25. The office will also be closed January 1, 2016, New Year's Day. The next Village Board meeting will be held on January 11, 2016 at its usual time, 7 PM and usual place, the Village Hall.

VILLAGE OF PORT HENRY BOARD NOTES

The Village Board meeting of December 14th was very informative on the many subjects covered. Chip Perry was please to announce that the first phase in the completion of the manhole 13 project had been accomplished with speed and excellence. Now, on to the second phase and completion.

"Digger" Laine reported on the DWP's past month's work. Streets were cold-patched, the Park lights had been installed, the Train Station area had been smoothed down for the Holiday Train's visit, the main shut-off on Convent Hill had had to be shut off for awhile to work on a house emergency, they installed the manger scene and Park lights, a speed sign at Sleeper's was put up, the sidewalk at the Fashion Corner was repaired, the dock and pier were attended to, and because of the warm weather manholes have been flushed and root killer applied. In among all these jobs there is always vehicle maintenance. I'm sure most readers are as tired as I became just reading of all their work and realize how very lucky Port Henry is to have such a hard working and effective DPW crew.

A "thank you" letter had been sent to the Town of Moriah Historical Society for their having allocated funds for the Village to have one of its Vital Statistic books rebound and preserved. I was noted that the book has been returned and beautifully restored.

With his report, Fire Chief Hughes, as always, gave our community a sense of security because of the departments average response time of 3.18 minutes and an average of 8.65 responders. Also adding to this sense of safety is that equipment passes it tests successfully and grants are applied for and granted, such as the sixteen new SCOTT X3 Air Paks which have arrived and been installed on both engines and Rescue Van. Final cost was \$113,808.00 (Village 5% match was \$5,690.) Chief Hughes requested of the Village Board permission to hold the PHFD Holiday Parade, for which the complete information is (above) under *Important Notices*. The Chief's request, that Benjamin J. Hanson's application to become a Port Henry fireman, was approved by the Board.

Trustee Matt Brassard reported to the Board and public on the late November dissolution meeting involving himself, Supervisor Scozzafava, Chief Hughes, Asst. Chief Ron Van Slooten, Moriah Fire

Chief Brian Glebus, Moriah Fire commissioners Buck Beebe and Ned Feeny, the Laberge group, and the gentleman from the Department of State. They talked about the options which available: to create a fire company which would be starting from nothing. They would have no building, no equipment, no money. So right off the bat this was tossed out. The next option was to do nothing, to allow Moriah to take over fire protection of the former Village. The Moriah Fire Department and commissioners stated they wouldn't house a sub-station in the village. Tom and Matt both said that that was not going work and tossed that option out. The last option was to create a new fire district. This new district would act just as the two other Moriah fire departments do right now. It would, at first, have board-appointed commissioners until the Village was fully dissolved. The new district would be created before the final day of village operations. It would have to be done this way because this would allow the village to give all equipment and cash to get started to the new district. We settled on creating a New fire District. This allows Port Henry Fire Department to keep going and keep its history alive. This district also will cost the taxpayers much less per thousand than they currently pay. Savings for all and Port Henry loses nothing.

The Board approved the Lake Champlain Fish and Game Club's request to hold coin drops on June 4 and August 30 of 2016.

A great bit of news, the Village received a \$600,000. REDC (Regional Economic Development Council) grant for Rice Street's water and sewer problems.

Note: There was a second dissolution meeting in mid-December, between both Village and Town representatives,

TOWN OF MORIAH BOARD NOTES

The December 10, 2015 Town of Moriah Board meeting began with the presentation of a plaque of appreciation to Elaine Adkins for her many years of service as Moriah's Town Clerk and Tax Collector. Warning Lainey, from one who knows, now you will really be busy, but it is fun as well. Enjoy!

The next order of business was opening three bids for two three-quarter ton trucks needed for water and sewer. After opening and considering the bids, a resolution was made to check the State Contract first and if it was not lower than any of the bids, the contract then would be awarded to the lowest of those submitted. Councilwoman Luci Carpenter announced the Lake Champlain Memorial Garden and Angel of Hope's participation in the world-wide event, sponsored by The Compassionate Friends, and issued an invitation to all to attend and light a candle in memory of a loved one on December 13 at 6:45 PM at the Angel of Hope Garden in Port Henry.

Ed Roberts reported that because of the nice weather, they were getting a lot of raking done and if the nice weather continued they would probably begin work on the campsite next week. Also, he wanted to mention the great volunteer work Greg Furness had been doing in the Town's abandoned graveyards and how white and readable the grave stones are now. It was mentioned that, as well as cleaning, Greg was also cataloging who is buried there.

Rich LaPier reported one complaint notice and a sub-division request from Fred Perea on Elk Inn Road. Perea had received approval from the APA and LaPier asked for approval from the Board. Supervisor Scozzafava explained that if the APA had jurisdiction then approval from the Town was not needed, but if the APA did not have jurisdiction, then the owner had to go through the Town. The Town also gave approval for a trailer permit to be issued to Joseph Hamner.

There was discussion on Water District 3 which has only 13 users and whose water is provided by Port Henry Village and the cost of which is decided by the Village. The district cannot obtain bonding for improvements because there is not a large enough tax base to cover a bond. Tom Scozzafava reported he had been in conversation with Senator Little about the problem and is still working on a possible solution.

Paul Salerno reported on the campsite's financials for the season. Total revenues were \$308,677.00, expenditures were \$155,506.00, a profit of \$152,000.00 which was slightly up from the previous year.

There was a discussion about tightening-up the operation as the insurance company was concerned and therefore the Supervisor felt the Town should be concerned. The Supervisor suggested that there should be some form of having visitors sign in, that it was done in all the State Parks.

Linda Smyth then asked for more information on the Town campsite in winter, as it differs from the Port Henry campground in winter. Port Henry does not allow winter storage of campers, which leaves the beach free for village residents to feel it is theirs and enjoy the use of it. The campground is closed to vehicles in winter as there has been costly vandalism over previous winters when the gates were left open. The Town allows winter storage of Campers, it allows vehicles in for ice-fishing, duck hunting, winter walking, etc. as it feels the public should have year 'round use of the facility.

There was then a dissolution discussion. Tom Scozzafava reported that there had been a couple of meetings between himself, Matt Brassard Laberge Group and a representative from the State at the second meeting. He said the meetings had been educational for him. The earliest dissolution date would be March 31, 2017 as the Town budget runs from the first of the year to the first of the following year and Village budget is from May 31st to the following May 31st. Supervisor Scozzafava noted that he really had no say in how meetings were run and decisions made, but everyone did concur that a plan should be put together, with input from the public and, finally, to be presented to the public. Along the way, updated information will be made available to the public. The Supervisor said he realized it was a "daunting" task which needed to be done while keeping in mind the needs of the public. Next in the dissolution discussion was how the fire departments will be handled. This concern seemed to be an area where most change from the original thinking has occurred. The latest plan is that a new fire district or new fire protection area would be formed which would keep Port Henry's Fire Department where it is and still covering the areas of the Town to the north and south, as it does now, but with its own governing Fire Commissioners, as a Town may not own a Fire Department. Supervisor Scozzafava said that what would make the most sense would be to keep the three fire stations as located but to go to a town-wide fire district which would then make all the rates the same. The next meeting is to be between the two DPWs to discuss this area of the dissolution.

The Supervisor mentioned the Board's awareness of the communications between the Town and the DEC concerning the waste water system in the Moriah area and said the DEC had been made aware of all that the Town had done so far in taking care of the matter and that a letter had been sent to the DEC questioning some of their concerns.

The following resolutions were considered and voted upon and passed:

1. Authorization for the Supervisor to sign amendment for Bulwagga Bay Erosion Contract with the Department of State.
2. To amend the Town Road Inventory to meet the requirements of NYS D.O.T. for an update of actual mileage and road names.
3. Change the hours of the Clerk Position in the Town Clerk's Office, effective January 1, 2016, from 30 to 35 hours per week, 8-4, M-F with 1 hour for lunch.
4. To accept the Teamsters Local 294 for the period from 1/1/16 through 12/31/18.
5. To discontinue Medicare reimbursement for retirees receiving this benefit as follows: 2016 – full reimbursement, 2017 – 50% reimbursement, 2018 – 0 - reimbursement. New retirees will receive no Medicare reimbursement.
6. Reduce water bills for Blanche Herrling in Water Dist. #3 to a half-year and reduce water and sewer bill for John McDonough in Water Dist. #1 to a half-year.

Note: FF did not make note of all the resolutions passed, as some resolutions were, basically, just Town Board "house-keeping."

Before the closing "Merry Christmas" and very much in the spirit of the season, the Board passed a resolution of "Thanks" to the Reale Construction Co. who (on their own and with no cost to anyone, except themselves) cleared all the debris that had been left by a mobile-home fire several years ago in which two people had died.

EXPLANATION

I hope many of Fact Finder's readers were able to take advantage of the opening (really two openings) of the new Laundry Service being offered at Ken and Paula LaDeau's Laudromat in Port Henry. There were two openings because of a slight mix-up on dates, so the public benefitted by two "freebee" days of drying and folding instead of one. It is a great service. Thursday, Friday or Saturday you just take your laundry in, drop it off, have it washed, dried and folded and pick it up at your convenience.

Look for the next issue on **Saturday, January 2, 2016** at Mac's, Moriah Pharmacy, Sherman Free Library, George's Restaurant, John Eisenberg's Service Center, Ken and Paula LaDeau's Champlain's Best Wash, Don Foote's "Miss Port Henry" Diner, and TFCU.