

Community Services

Committee Chair: Jeremy Baker

Committee Members: Didi Barrett

Key Observations

- The Town of Washington is governed by a Town Supervisor and Town Board.
- The Town is comprised of seven departments and four boards and commissions.
- The Town has two recreational facilities as well as a variety of other recreational attractions that serve Washington residents.
- Town residents are primarily served by individual wells and private on-lot septic systems.
- Town residents are served by three school districts – Millbrook Central School District, Webutuck Central School District and Dover Union Free School District.

Municipal Government

The Town of Washington is governed by an elected Town Supervisor and Town Board (five members total including the Town Supervisor). Town departments include: Town Clerk (an elected position), Justice Court, Highway Department (Highway Superintendent is also an elected position), Planning Department, Zoning Department, Tax Assessors Office, Tax Office, and Recreation Commission. There is a base of approximately 35 full and part-time employees with a significant increase during the summer to manage the various recreational programs offered by the Town.

- The Town Clerk is a Commissioner of Licenses for New York State for the issuance of Marriage licenses, Dog licenses, Sporting licenses and Disability Parking Permits and local permits, including Town Transfer Station Permits. The Town Clerk serves as the Registrar for Vital Statistics for the issuance and filing of Birth and Death Certificates. As prescribed by New York State Law the Town Clerk is the Records Access Officer managing the records and documents that are important to the lives of the townspeople. In the Town of Washington, the Town Clerk is also the Collector of Taxes (property, County, Town, Library and Fire Protection).
- The Justice Court handles minor civil and criminal litigation and the early stages of major criminal litigation arising within the town limits.
- The Town of Washington Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance and improvements of the Town's public road infrastructure. The infrastructure includes 64 miles of roads including 30 miles of unpaved roads. The Highway Department also operates and maintains the Town's Transfer Station which replaced the landfill which was closed in 1993.
- The Planning Department is responsible for administering the land use regulations and land subdivisions.
- The Zoning Department is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of the Town Zoning Laws.
- The Tax Assessors Office is responsible for maintaining the assessment roll for both the Town of Washington and the Village of Millbrook. The assessor's office also works in

conjunction with the building department to carefully monitor new construction as well as property enhancements and changes.

- The Recreation Commission is appointed and provides, supervises and coordinates recreational activities and facilities for Town residents, including those that live in the Village of Millbrook and/or attend the Millbrook Central School District. While the recreation commission functions all year, it operates a number of day camp programs during the summer serving more than 500 children (mostly residents of Washington/Millbrook). In addition, it offers several adult programs including trips to theaters, ball games and other events of special interest.

The Town also has four boards and commission: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Assessment Review, and Conservation Advisory Commission.

- The Planning Board is charged with administering land use regulations and land subdivision for the orderly, efficient and economical development of the Town. The Planning Board advises the Town Board on legislation concerning growth and development of the Town. Members are appointed to a 7 year term.
- The Zoning Board hears and decides on appeals from and reviews any order, decision and determination made by the Building Inspector. The board is empowered to modify the strict requirements of zoning adding flexibility to land use regulations through the exercise of administrative discretion concerning the unique aspects of a given lot, home location, or project. Members are appointed to a 5 year term.
- The Board of Assessment Review (BAR) is a lay body of citizens who live in the town or municipality. Their purpose is to listen to the grievances of property owners and possibly make recommendations in the assessments.
- The Conservation Advisory Commission is tasked with advising the Town Board on matters effecting pollution and conservation of natural resources within the Town.

Municipal Infrastructure Facilities

Water System

Most of the Town of Washington (excluding the Village of Millbrook) is served almost entirely by individual on-lot wells. There are some portions of the south Millbrook area that are connected to the Village water system.

Sewer System

The Town of Washington (excluding the Village of Millbrook) is served almost exclusively by private on-lot septic systems.

Solid Waste Facilities

The Town's Transfer Station replaced the Town's landfill which was closed in 1993.

Park and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Washington operates two public recreational facilities – Town of Washington Park and Village Hall Gymnasium. The Town Park is located on a 30-acre site off Route 44 in the Hamlet of Mabbettsville. Facilities include a bathing beach facility approximately one-acre in size which holds 1.5 million gallons of treated (chlorinated) water a large pavilion, a small

pavilion, a recently constructed (2006) park building, seasonal concession stand, rest rooms, changing rooms, a baseball field, a playground, a fishing pond, a basketball court, a bocce ball court, a sand volleyball court, mini-golf course, shuffleboard, and two gazebos. The Village Hall (originally a YMCA/community center) houses the Recreation Department office as well as gymnasium which are used for multiple activities and an after-school program that utilizes a portion of the basement.

Additionally, the Town's Recreation Department utilizes a variety of community locations for its programming including the fields of the Millbrook Central School District, the Dutchess Day School and the Millbrook Preparatory School for practices; the Millbrook Tribute Gardens for annual holiday events; the Millbrook Fire House for special events; the Village Band Shell for events; and the Millbrook Community Tennis Courts for the Youth Tennis Program.

Recent projects include the new camp building that was completed at the Town Park in 2006. This facility has the capacity to house the summer campers as well as camp staff in the event of inclement weather. A six-acre parcel adjacent to the existing Town Park facility was purchased in the Fall of 2006. Currently, engineering studies are underway. Future projects identified by the Recreation Department include the continued development of the six-acre parcel into a multi-purpose recreational field and consideration of the Town to purchase the current Village Hall for recreational activities for all ages. (The Village of Millbrook Village Hall was originally built as a YMCA and therefore has a number of athletic facilities)

Other recreational attractions serving the Town of Washington include the Innisfree Gardens, Cary Arboretum, Millbrook Tribute Gardens, Trevor Zoo, and Millbrook Golf and Tennis Club. A summary of each site is described below:

- Innisfree Gardens is a 150-acre private garden that surrounds Tyrrel Lake. Innisfree is open to the public from May to October and there is an admission fee. There is also a picnic area.
- The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies/ Mary Flagler Cary Arboretum are located on nearly 2,000 acres of land on Route 44A. They offer public ecology programs, nature trails, display gardens, tropical greenhouse, and scientific seminars. The Grounds are open seasonally, from April to October.
- Millbrook Tribute Gardens Park is located on Franklin Avenue and provides a garden and children's playground. A parking area near the Tribute Gardens is home to the Millbrook Farmer's Market (open Saturdays from Memorial Day Weekend to October).
- Trevor Zoo is located at the Millbrook School (the only zoo in the country located at a high school). The Zoo houses more than 180 exotic and indigenous animals and is one of 216 zoos in the United States accredited by the Associations of Zoos and Aquariums.
- Millbrook Golf and Tennis Club is a private club that is open from May through October. The Club includes a nine hole/eighteen tee golf course, six Har-Tru tennis courts, 25 yard swimming pool and restaurant.
- Thorne Building – Located on Franklin Avenue, this building was originally a high school that was given by the family and maintained by the Thorne Trust and Village of Millbrook. Previous uses include office space for the Board of Education and as a Day School.

There are also a variety of clubs and community organizations serving the Town and include the following:

- Dutchess County Cooperative Extension –Offers programs in five broad areas: Agriculture & Food Systems; Children, Youth, & Families; Community & Economic Vitality; Environment & Natural Resources; and Nutrition & Health.
- Rotary Club of Millbrook – Provides service to the Millbrook community, to know and understand each other, to encourage ethical standards in all vocations and to support the goals of Rotary International.
- Orvis Sandanona Shooting Grounds - Oldest licensed shooting grounds in the nation. Sporting clays, shooting and fly fishing schools, lodge, sporting goods store
- Tamarack Preserve – Located on Route 44, the Tamarack Preserve is a private shooting club
- Millbrook Rod & Gun Club – Located on Woodstock Road, the Millbrook Rod & Gun Club is a private shooting club.
- Millbrook Arts Group – Mission of this not-for-profit is to present, encourage, support and coordinate cultural, educational and social activities in the Village of Millbrook and Town of Washington, in particular those occurring at the Thorne Building and community band shell.
- Millbrook-Town of Washington Business Association – is dedicated to fostering and preserving commercial activity in the vibrant historic village and its neighboring hamlets.

Educational Facilities

Educational facilities in the Town of Washington are provided by one centralized school district: the Millbrook Central School District. According to the Millbrook Central School District, their mission is “to prepare our students to deal effectively with the challenge of an ever-changing society and to guide them in becoming humane critical thinkers, decision makers and problem solvers.” The Millbrook Central School District includes Elm Drive Elementary (Grades K-2), Alden Place Elementary (Grades 3-5), Millbrook Middle School (Grades 6-8) and Millbrook High School (Grades 9-12). During the 2006-2007 school year, the District enrolled 1,193 students and employed 55 teachers.

For the 2006-2007 school year (the most recent year statistics available), only about 7.0% of the student body was eligible for the free lunch program compared to 37.0% eligibility statewide. For the 2005-2006 school year (the most recent year this statistic is available), the District spent \$16,673 per pupil, compared to the statewide average of \$16,212.

In addition to the usual sources of funding (local taxes, state and federal assistance) the Millbrook Central School District is the recipient of assistance from the Millbrook Educational Foundation, a 503(c) (3) tax exempt foundation, which provides funding for special programs, trips, and equipment which are beyond the usual budget availability. During the 2007-2008 School year, the Foundation provided almost \$60,000 in assistance. Another unusual source of funds is the private Tribute Garden Foundation which provides thousands of dollars in scholarship aid and special assistance to the School District, the Village and the Town.

The school dropout rate has been the same for the past three years and is slightly lower than the NYS rate. The dropout rate during the 2006-2007 school year was 2.0%. In comparison, the New York State dropout rate was 3.2%. Across the state increasing emphasis is being placed on graduation rates for high school students. In the Millbrook Central School District 93% of students who started ninth grade in 2002 graduated on time in 2006. Further, approximately 95% of all students at Millbrook High School received a Regents Diploma in 2007. In addition, 35% of all students received a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. Among the 2007

graduates 49% were planning to attend a four year college and 44% were planning to attend a two year college.

Other schools located in or near the Town of Washington include:

- St. Joseph's School – St. Joseph Catholic School is dedicated to excellence in education and to the spiritual development of youth within the framework of the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church. The School offers a pre-kindergarten program for 3 and 4 year olds; elementary school program (Kindergarten to Fourth Grade) and upper school program (Grades 5-8).
- Dutchess Day School – Dutchess Day School is a private school providing educational services from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade. It was founded in the 1950's by a group of parents interested in offering their children the advantages of a small-school environment in the Millbrook area.
- The Millbrook School – The Millbrook School is a coeducational, college preparatory boarding and day high school located in Armenia. It was founded in 1931 by Edward Pulling.
- Cardinal Hayes School for Special Children- Cardinal Hayes School for Special Children is a not-for-profit day school serving students who are multi-handicapped. Affiliated with Cardinal Hayes Home for Children, the school provides special education programs for many of the children who reside at the Home and also accepts special needs children residing in the community who are referred by their school districts.

Emergency Services

Law Enforcement

The Town of Washington does not provide any law enforcement functions. However, the Town does employ two court officers. The New York State Police are the primary law enforcement facility. Troop G Barracks are located on Route 44 in Washington Hollow on the western edge of the Town of Washington. The small Millbrook police department can provide limited backup for the State Police in an emergency. The Dutchess County Sheriff's Department is also available when necessary.

Fire Protection and Rescue Services

The Town of Washington is served by Village of Millbrook Municipal Fire District, for which it pays the Village more than \$400,000 each year. In 2008, the Millbrook Fire Department responded to 845 calls. Over one-half of the calls were for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and nearly one-quarter were for automatic fire alarm. Two-thirds of the calls were located in the Town of Washington while 30.6% were located in the Village of Millbrook. The remaining calls were out of district.

Medical Services

Hospitals serving the Town of Washington include Sharon Hospital in Sharon, Connecticut and Vassar Brothers Medical Center and St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers in Poughkeepsie.

Public Library

The Millbrook Free Library is located in the Village of Millbrook at the corner of Franklin Avenue and Friendly Lane. The Millbrook Free Library was founded in 1901 and in 1908 the family of Captain Robert M. Hayes gave the property and building that currently houses the library. The Cary Wing was added in 1973 and the entire building was expanded and renovated in 2002. The newly renovated building contains the Flagler Reading Room, a separate reference and nonfiction room, the Children's Library, and the Bennett College Community Room. The Library is open Monday through Thursday and on Saturdays year round.

Community Services Subcommittee

In preparation for the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Steering Committee established separate subcommittees each charged with direct responsibility for data collection, analysis, and making recommendations to the Steering Committee on topic areas typically covered in a Comprehensive Plan. Some observations on the Washington's community services from the Subcommittee include the following:

- Town uses Village of Millbrook fire and rescue services – cost has become a major issue to both the Village and Town
- Volunteer levels going down at the Fire Department and Rescue Squad. Both services have been losing volunteers that cannot afford to live in Washington or find appropriate housing for their families. Alamo is a private ambulance service company owned by Vassar Brothers Medical Center that has been hired by the Village of Millbrook to provide services weekdays. Nights and weekends are covered by volunteers.
- The amount of mandated training is a problem for recruiting volunteers for emergency services.
- Water and sewer – need supplemental pumping station on town land/depending on precipitation. The municipal and well systems are totally dependent on precipitation.
- Bennett College (vacant) Habson Hall - \$3M for demolition – 27 acres – proposal for 90+ units
- Town Park – recreation
- 1,250 Millbrook central – uses indoor village gym
- Lots of churches
- Free library
- Town court
- Town and Village DPW share equipment/joint purchasing
- Landfill (transfer station)
- Hunt Club (crossing properties) – less interest in “hunting” and questions of liability
- Harriet Park (beagling)
- Horse breeding and training
- Arboretum
- Roger Aikley (County Planning) – many unpaved roads – study 20 years ago – cost agricultural \$.20; industry \$.80; residential \$1.50. Residents generally prefer the unpaved roads (except during the “mud” season)
- Overlay zones for environmental issues
- Can gravel roads limit development?
- Large properties – several under single ownership. About half of the land in the Town of Washington is controlled by 50 owners. This is not always obvious since many of the large holdings are made up of several individual parcels, some of which may be owned under different names.

- Former infirmary has been converted to the Eastern Dutchess Government Center and includes the Health Department (Immunization Clinics, Home Care and Maternal Child Care) Department of Mental Hygiene (Continuing Day Treatment, Clinical Services, and Substance Abuse Services), Department of Social Services (Food Stamps, Child Care and Medicaid Eligibility Services) and Office of Probation and Community Corrections (Youth and Parent Group Programs and Youth Bureau Counseling Services).

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