

# Viewpoints

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters may be edited for legal considerations, reader interest and length. Please include a telephone number and address for verification purposes. **Deadline for letters is Friday at noon.** Letters must be submitted by e-mail to be considered for publication. Letters can be e-mailed to [newsplace@aol.com](mailto:newsplace@aol.com), and the phrase "Letter to the Editor" should be included in the subject line of the e-mail.

Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff or management of the Southern Dutchess News Group.

### Pedestrians don't have much trouble 'accessing' Main Street

#### To the Editor:

In "Members of Main Street initiative committee introduced at meeting" (Beacon Free Press, March 4), Mayor Kyriacou says "The overall goal is to develop a holistic plan for sustainable Main Street parking, traffic, public transportation, pedestrian and non-vehicular use."

I understand "holistic" and "sustainable" are important words these days, but I was still unclear as to what exactly was implied by this goal. And I was curious what non-vehicles besides pedestrians would be included in this holistic plan. So I took a look at the City's press release about the new committee, which refers to the Main Street Access Initiative. Here Kyriacou elaborates: "The City has not kept pace with development in terms of planning for and providing Main Street parking, traffic management and pedestrian access. We must quickly make some basic improvements in Main Street access, while laying out plans for longer term capital investments." An example of the quick improvements was big blue "P" signs.

Also from the press release: "Traffic and parking plans should take into account changing patterns of private vehicle use, as well as public transit, pedestrian and non-vehicular access."

From both my observations and personal experience, pedestrians don't have much trouble "accessing" Main Street. So my guess would be this is mostly about motorists, and particularly, where we put our cars when visiting Main Street.

Unfortunately, the press release gave no further explanation of the curious term "non-vehicular access." Maybe this refers to our four-legged canine friends? A "vehicle" is a conveyance on wheels, runners, tracks or the like. For example, a car is a motorized vehicle; a bicycle is a human-powered vehicle. Back in September, city administrator Anthony Ruggiero was quoted in a local paper as saying "Maybe there are other streets that are better than Main Street" for bicycles. So perhaps they do mean dogs. Or the city actually classifies bicycles incorrectly as "non-vehicles." Either way, like pedestrians, bicyclists don't have trouble accessing Main Street.

In the press release, pedestrians are mentioned four times—mostly in terms of "access," which as we have noted is not really an issue when traveling by foot-pedestrians (and bicyclists) have issues with safety, a word not used in the press release. Transit is mentioned three times. Transit is a bit of a red herring for a city the size of Beacon, as there will never be the critical mass required to run regular service, and very few will routinely take a bus when they own a car—which is just about all of us at the moment. Dogs /non-vehicles are mentioned two times. Bicycles/human-powered vehicles are referred to zero times. Parking is mentioned 11 times.

Again from the press release: "Plans at a high level must consider funding mechanisms - other than property tax increases - for proposed capital investment in parking or other infrastructure."

That's prudent, because, just suppose, after long and thoughtful months of deliberation, the committee ends up recommending another bus shelter or two, a couple of bike racks here and there, and, say, a parking garage structure for 100 cars on property adjacent to the Lewis Tompkins fire house across from City Hall that the city is currently in negotiations to purchase. All that would be a conservative minimum of at least

\$2,600,000, of which \$2,550,000, give or take, would be the parking garage. More if it goes into the kinds of overrun costs that plagued the construction of the City's highway garage a few years back. Less of course if no grants or other funds are available and we just pave it over. (Which is perhaps more likely now that our economy looks headed for a big-time slump.)

One might consider it admirable that the City of Beacon is not afraid to buck the trend of towns and cities around the world that are actually limiting car access to make the streetscape more livable, safe, economically viable, and inviting. You could also say this is all conjecture, and the committee has not even officially met yet.

Fair enough. But based on the wording of the press release and the stated goals, there is an undeniable bias, if not a pre-determined desired outcome, being telegraphed. So either change the goals, or please just call it the Beacon Sustainable Holistic Parking Committee. And let's not have any talk about making Beacon more "walkable and bikeable," because that is not possible as we look for ways to give cars ever greater access and accommodation.

Mark Roland  
Beacon

## Beacon Blotter

The following is from the City of Beacon Police Department:

Feb. 24: Harassment- Fishkill Avenue-Caller reported ongoing harassment from a fellow employee. Both parties were advised to avoid interaction with each other.

Feb. 24: Lost Property -Municipal Plaza- Caller reported losing her employment identification. A report was taken.

Feb. 25: Harassment-Church Street-Landlord/Tenant dispute. A report was taken.

Feb. 26: Fight-Main Street-Richard W. VanTassel, 52, of Beacon was charged with assault second-degree.

Feb. 26: Auto Accident-Main Street-Caller reported damage to his car by a vehicle that left the scene. A report was taken. The subject was located.

Feb. 27: Larceny-Forrestal Heights-Caller reported a missing center cap from front driver side wheel of her car. A report was taken.

March 1: Traffic Stop- North Avenue-Traci A. Bakai, 49, of Newburgh, was charged with aggravated unlicensed operation third-degree & miscellaneous V & T.

March 1: Auto Accident- Wolcott Avenue-Maine A. Banks, 41, of Albany, was charged with Driving Under the

Influence, criminal mischief, reckless driving, reckless endangerment and miscellaneous V & T.

March 2: Fraud-Municipal Plaza-Caller reported fraudulent activity to her accounts. A report was taken. An investigation was conducted.

March 2: Warrant-Fishkill Avenue-James Sylvester, 61, of Beacon, was charged with trespassing and criminal mischief.

March 2: Attempted Burglary- Prospect Street- Caller reported an attempted burglary after discovering an open window in his home. A report was taken.

March 2: Criminal Mischief- Willow Street- Caller reported that someone slashed the tires of her parked car. A report was taken. Investigation conducted.

March 2: Warrant- Forrestal Heights-Atrayu N. Felix, 23, of Beacon, was processed on an open bench warrant.

March 2: Disorderly Individual- Main Street-Emad M. Dabashi, 26, of Wappinger Falls, was charged with assault second-degree.

March 4: Warrant-Municipal Plaza-Marc S. Mann, 42, of Albany, was processed on an open bench warrant.

Number of Calls: 308

Domestics: 3

Auto Accidents: 7

### Spring high school sports season in jeopardy?

By Rich Thomaselli

The spring high school sports season, which began practices on March 9 and was scheduled to begin playing official games next week, is in jeopardy.

Virtually all Dutchess County high schools have postponed spring sports through April 30 due to the spread of the coronavirus. There are four who have questioned the validity of a six-week postponement, including John Jay and Beacon. The decision was made during a conference call by all Dutchess County school district superintendents and the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro declared a State of Emergency in the county on March 14 and closed all schools for a minimum of two weeks, with a tentative return date of students to the classroom on March 30.

The news came just one day after the New York State Public High School Athletic Association canceled state championship play in ice hockey, bowling, boys basketball and girls basketball, despite the fact that the tournaments in hockey and basketball were already underway. The state cited the growing spread of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

The decision to postpone spring sports until April 30 was made in agreement by the superintendent of each Dutchess County school district, said Arlington Central School District Supt. Dr. Brendan Lyons, who sent a detailed, three-page letter home to parents and guardians outlining Arlington's response to the coronavirus.

"In support of efforts towards community containment of the COVID-19 virus, and based on the recommendation of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, effective Friday, March 13, 2020, we are cancelling or postponing the following activities and events through Thursday, April 30, 2020," the letter read.

It then ticked off a series of activities ranging from adult and continuing education classes to school trips to athletic contests.

"We will re-evaluate this determination based on continued information and guidance from the Dutchess County

Department of Behavioral and Community Health and other federal, state and local agencies," the letter concluded.

No teams are allowed to practice during the two weeks that schools are out until March 30. Teams and players will be allowed to practice beginning April 1, but not allowed to participate in games until May 1.

Four Dutchess County high schools – John Jay, Our Lady of Lourdes, Beacon and Poughkeepsie – said they are unsure if they will comply with not playing games during the entire month of April and will re-evaluate the situation at the end of March.

The month-long hiatus has many coaches worried.

"The writing is on the wall. You'll end up seeing the whole season cancelled," said one Dutchess County high school baseball coach. "I mean, I don't want to alarm my players but people above us haven't even discussed with us yet the parameters of what happens if we do start playing on May 1."

That includes questions like how many games will each team play? How does league play shake out? How will teams qualify for sectionals?

Complicating matters is that several Dutchess County high schools – Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Pine Plains, Dover, Millbrook, Roosevelt, Webutuck and Spackenkill – all play in the Mid-Hudson Athletic League and Section 9 with Ulster County-based schools. A state of emergency also exists in Ulster, but beyond the two weeks off from face-to-face classroom instruction, Ulster has not postponed its spring sports season at all.

But not even Section 9 executive director Greg Ransom has any answers as to how this will play out.

"To my knowledge, as of this point, schools in Ulster, Orange and Sullivan counties have not postponed spring sports, so mostly this affects the Mid-Hudson Athletic League," Ransom said. "So right now, I can't give you an answer as to what will happen if half my league is not playing. Once we know for sure, the section is going to have to sit down and figure it out."

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