

## Mayor's Column

April 4, 2016

After our unseasonably mild weekend, my thoughts have turned to spring and some of the issues that are particular to this time of year. The following information is a refresher of procedures and facts germane to such activities.

Home renovations and even smaller household projects traditionally commence on early spring and large and small most often require a building permit from the Village.

If you anticipate any work on your home, start by calling the Building Department at (914) 337-7338. The staff can guide you as to whether permits or variances are required. Undertaking work without permits results in the doubling of fees, both on the cost of the permit itself and the estimate of the value of the project. Many residents are running into this problem when they go to place their home on the market and find projects have no valid Certificate of Occupancy so the home cannot be transferred. Even seemingly small projects, such as electrical or plumbing work, need permits. The overriding concern is safety both for one's own home and nearby neighbors.

The terms of a Village permit allow work to be done from 8AM to 6PM on weekdays only. If the project is one for which a permit is not required, for example painting, work can be done on weekends. However, even work acceptable to do on weekends must respect the Village's noise ordinance and not create an undue disturbance. Villagers can call the Police Department with any noise concerns.

After a permit request is filed, work cannot commence until the permit request is reviewed and signed off by the Building Department. All building permit requirements and application are now available on our website.

Walkways, patios, sheds, emergency generators, roof replacements and fences, even replacements, require building permits.

The Village does not have a Tree Ordinance as we have historically relied on the foresight and stewardship of our residents to value this intrinsic asset. With few, though glaring exceptions, this has been the case. Many of our neighboring communities have enacted tree ordinances of late and the care and stewardship of the privately owned trees is something we are monitoring very closely as the loss of even one healthy tree effects the entire Village ecosystem.

The village owned “street” trees serve architectural and engineering functions beyond the aesthetic value. They enhance building design, reduce glare and reflection, screen unsightly areas, muffle urban noise and reduce the “heat island effect” caused by pavement and commercial buildings.

As an added plus, urban trees grow in value as they age while most other municipal assets including roads and sewers decline in value.

Trees on private property produce even greater monetary value. Studies have demonstrated that 10 to 23 percent of the value of a residence is based on its tree stock. A municipality also captures some of this monetary value as enhanced property values increase assessed values and the resulting tax base.

Trees also provide important symbolic links with the past and are important often simply because they have lived through eras with which we have few other connections left.

Spring also galvanizing “spring cleanup” on many fronts. If you want to rid your home of furnishing or large bulk waster, requests and payment can be accomplished 24/7 on our website [www.villageofbronxville.com](http://www.villageofbronxville.com), saving a trip to Village Hall.

Also, the purchase of new recycling bins can be accomplished in the same way with delivery of bins to your home by our DPW staff.

Spring also brings more residents out walking, jogging and exercising pets.

The repair of a sidewalk, cracked or damages from the wear and tear of winter, is the responsibility of the homeowner. The Village is responsible for road resurfacing and curb restoration.

The Village requires dog owners to pick up after pets. What damages the Village’s infrastructure and water system in general is the deposit of doggie bags down our sewers. The bacteria that enters our water system is extremely toxic and long lasting.

The warmer weather also brings an increase in door-to-door solicitations. Individuals selling goods cannot do so legally without first receiving a permit from the Village. Do not hesitate to call the police department if the salesperson cannot produce their permit. Upon investigation, the police have found that some of the charities that were purported to benefit from our purchases were non-existent. The

First Amendment does protect all those “selling” an idea or cause so groups such as the Jehovah Witnesses or Greenpeace do not need permission to ring your bell. To limit this kind of visit, a small “No Solicitation” sign near the front door has proven effective.

Spring also brings greater turnover of residents in Village houses and apartments. Residents of some of our townhomes and apartment complexes often rent parking spaces on a first come, first serve basis. However, when one sells or purchases a unit, the parking space is not part of the deed of transfer. This confusion has led to many frustrated new purchasers. However, there is a solution. If you plan on purchasing in the Village, one can put their name on the waiting list in anticipation of purchase. Conversely, if you plan on selling in the not too distant future, you may put your name on the waiting list as well to save a spot for your anticipated purchaser.

Between the daffodils on the railroad banks combined with the trees blossoms – and my favorite – elementary classes taking walks through the Village, I can say spring has sprung.