



THE TOWN OF  
RHINEBECK · NEW YORK  
FOUNDED 1686

February 9, 2026

Dear Rhinebeckians,

It's been a chilly and snowy start to 2026 and I'm writing to remind you of some of the work that Debbie, Allan, Dana, Chad and I will be doing this coming year.

As always, our main goal is continuing to ensure quality of life and stability for Rhinebeck residents, while protecting our Town's environment and preserving our rural community character-- especially as we continue to grow and expand. We all thrive when Rhinebeck thrives.

To that end, here are five areas of focus for 2026:

1. Continuing to Provide Services While Being Mindful of Your Tax Dollars

We have been able to increase our spending in the Town budget, while *decreasing* the tax rate because we are growing responsibly, adding to our levy, and watching your tax dollars. In 2026, Town residents have a tax rate of around \$.88 and Village residents have a \$.70 rate. After we receive the County chargebacks, we believe that the Town of Rhinebeck will continue to have the lowest property tax rate in Dutchess County. We still plan to seek state approval to institute a 3% Occupancy (Bed) Tax on hotels and short-term rentals in Rhinebeck. This is a luxury tax -- levied on wealthy tourists, *not* on Rhinebeck property owners that will fund projects like the Town's portion of replacing the Village's Parsonage Street Bridge, starting a fund for a major Town Hall renovation and expansion, renovate the Adams Chapel at the Town Cemetery as a public meeting place, the Amtrak-to-Village Safe Walking and Biking Trail, continued park expansion, and more.

2. Looking to the Future of: Linwood

Last year, the Sisters of Saint Ursula let us know that they were planning to sell Linwood, their beloved 50-acre waterfront property and home to the Linwood Spiritual Center for more than 60 years. Having retained HR&A Associates, the Sisters are creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) to explore thoughtful, mission-aligned possibilities for the site's future

Working closely with the Town of Rhinebeck and HR&A Associates, the Sisters are seeking development partners who can honor the property's history and spiritual legacy while creating a vision that benefits the residents of the Town of Rhinebeck and ensures that the goals of the Sisters' mission continues. Their goals include:

- Respecting the land's natural beauty and tranquil character.
- Supporting the Town's planning priorities and small-town feel.
- Contributing to the local economy and tax base.
- Creating opportunities for public access and shared community amenities.

Potential uses being considered include hospitality, wellness, cultural or educational spaces, recreation, and limited residential components as part of a larger, well-designed project. Single-family subdivisions and tax-exempt uses will not be considered.

The Sisters' goal for this project is that it leads to a future for Linwood that reflects their deep roots in service and care for the community, while opening the door to new opportunities for Rhinebeck in the years ahead. The RFP is expected to be released to the public on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. Protecting Rhinebeck's Rural Character During this Time of Increased Growth

The SoHo House Grasmere project has received Planning Board approval and is ready to obtain building permits to begin construction. This plan is for a 250-person dining facility, spa, 17 eco cabins with 26 bedrooms, 4 new cabin buildings with 10 bedrooms and 12 bedrooms in the Manor –for a total of 48 bedrooms.

Rhinebeck Villas is navigating the Planning Board process. The project, just north of Middle Road on Route 9G, is proposing 60 rooms in 3 interconnected buildings with a common area/dining space, and an administration building.

The Town currently has about 44 Short Term Rentals (only 7 of which have valid permits), operating 26 guest rooms. With the codification of our most recent STR Local Law amendment, the Zoning and Building departments will be focused on bringing the 37 unpermitted STRs either into compliance or closed.

With Rock Ledge, the 36-unit luxury townhouse development, approved on Ackert Hook Road, the town is set to add about 160 hospitality rooms for overnight tourists and 36 units of what promises to be luxury second homes. We believe we will see unprecedented growth in the coming year or so as these projects come to fruition.

To this end, Deputy Supervisor, Debbie Hecht, has suggested that the Town Board look at Tourism Capacity Study and Plan to make sure that this growth does not fundamentally change our small town feel and our way of life. We get frequent requests from potential developers wanting to find more areas for hospitality venues or additional commercial uses in our RC5 Zone - -which is all land east of the Route 9 corridor where commercial uses are restricted. We want the public to be aware of the immense pressure for development that we are facing as we balance mindful growth with maintaining the character of our Town and we think a Tourism Capacity Study and Plan can help mitigate any potential issues.

### 4. Biking and Walking – the Rhinecliff to Village Trail

Councilperson Dana Colleen Peterson remains undeterred as she navigates the process of working with Alta Engineering on possible route plans, public outreach, and grant writing. While we have received dozens of letters from residents expressing their opinion on which route is best, Dana Colleen, and the Town Board, are keeping an open mind and listening to all comments as the project inches ahead.

5. Putting Projects into Motion: Pickleball and Tennis Shade Seating area, Parsonage Street Bridge, Public Meeting Space at the Cemetery's Adams Hall.

Engineering plans for the shade seating area near the Park's tennis and pickle ball courts are approved. This will turn a tarmac expanse into a grassy oasis with shade seating, pollinator gardens, and storage for soccer, bocce, and little league. We hope to begin construction before the end of the season, but, municipal projects always seem take longer than we'd like.

Having received a \$2.4 million grant from a the 5-year (2026-2030) program of federally funded Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) for replacement of the Village's Parsonage Street Bridge, the Town will need to fund 20% of the project, which could be well over \$600,000. The bridge replacement will allow the Village to complete their "Safe Route to School". Highway Superintendent, Bob Wyant will start the design process this year with an eye to beginning construction in 2027.

Our cemetery employees are using the winter landscaping down time to complete interior demolition of the Adams Chapel on the corner of Mill Street and Mill Road. We have had several enquiries from groups wanting to rent the space for their offices. We want to be clear that this will be a Town owned public space – for use to be determined but certainly for burial gatherings, services, and other quiet enjoyment of our residents.

We are happy to welcome new Town Board member and Deputy Supervisor, Debbie Hecht. Debbie is an incredible mom of an amazing 13-year-old daughter, has a PhD in Classics from Columbia University, a community organizer, co-founder of BeckHook Pride, and a staunch environmentalist who brings her own incredible set of skills, compassion, and intelligence to the Board.

As a reminder, you can learn a great deal about our agenda, actions and Rhinebeck issues by checking our website, signing up for email notices, perusing our meeting agendas, watching us online, and by attending our meetings. We always value hearing from our residents and you can also reach out to us at: [townboard@rhinebeckny.gov](mailto:townboard@rhinebeckny.gov)

With warmest regards,

Elizabeth  
Supervisor, Town of Rhinebeck