

Supervisor George Hoehmann

Weekly column

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## **Clarkstown Launches Small Business Signage & Building Beautification Program**

*Grants Available for Small Businesses in Hamlet Centers*

Improving the look and visual appeal of our community and helping our local businesses have been two priorities of my administration since I began serving as Town Supervisor in 2015. I am now delighted to announce that The Town of Clarkstown is launching our **Small Business Signage & Building Beautification Program**. This reimbursement grant program will encourage small business owners to beautify our ‘Main Street’ districts by providing funding to update and upgrade the exterior of their buildings. Enhanced aesthetics for businesses have been shown to increase property values, improve the marketability of space within buildings, and stimulate economic activity. An attractive and vibrant ‘Main Street’ draws businesses, consumers, and residents; not only to an individual business, but to the entire surrounding area.

To finance this program, the Town Board unanimously voted to authorize the use of American Rescue Plan funding for up to \$500,000. Qualified businesses will be eligible for a reimbursement grant for up to \$5,000 for sign improvements and up to \$10,000 that incorporates other improvements that seek to enhance the appearance of signage or the exterior of their buildings and storefronts. Eligible small businesses can be retail, commercial or mixed-use (business/residential) properties but must be for-profit and classified as a “small business” as defined by the Small Business Administration. Applicants must be located in hamlet center zones, be current on tax payments, and free of any outstanding violations that would not be cured as a part of an application through this program.

Eligible projects and improvements must involve work performed by a licensed contractor to the visible exterior of an eligible building, such as a façade or storefront.

Examples of eligible work include new signage, exterior lighting, painting, facade repair, masonry work, new awnings or canopies, and window and door replacement.

All work performed on a building must comply with applicable building codes, laws and regulations. Applicants cannot begin work on their project until after receiving any/all required permits and approvals from the Town.

An application form is available on the Town's website which can be filled out and submitted online. The application can also be printed and sent to the Town via regular mail or email. Proposed projects will be evaluated on a rolling basis until the authorized funds are exhausted. Full details on the specific rules and regulations of the program can be found on the Town's website.

The Town Board and I are very excited to launch this program. We are confident in the positive impact it will have on the aesthetics and success of our hamlet business centers. We look forward to working with our small businesses and local chambers to improve the look of their businesses and our Town.