

MAYOR'S COLUMN

The following are some items that were mentioned at our monthly Trustees' meeting but need wider distribution for public notice and comment.

The Trustees have noticed two public hearings for our April 13th meeting.

The first deals with a language modification to our sidewalk law to include all types of sidewalk material; be it concrete, blacktop, gravel, or dirt path that must be properly maintained, cleared and shoveled. We have been encouraging residents to do more walking to school and town and it is our duty to make sure passage is safe and clear. We encourage all residents to review the condition of their sidewalks, which is the responsibility of the homeowner, and make repairs if necessary now that the nice weather is here. The Village will be checking the condition of sidewalks and will issue violations when warranted. Please help us make the Village even more pedestrian friendly.

The second public hearing concerns the prohibition of meter feeding on Pondfield Road and Park Place. The goal of this code amendment is to help merchants by maximizing the turnover of these prime spots so customers can find spaces adjacent to stores. We have monitored the parking practices on these streets for the

past few months and have discovered a great deal of meter feeding by store employees. Store employees often park away from their own businesses, but in front of others, severely limiting the availability of customer parking. For merchants or customers who require longer time to visit our Village, be it for lunch or a hair appointment, parking is available in the Kraft lot now in abundance due to the transfer of our commuter parking to the Avalon lot.

On the same subject of parking, we recently reviewed our overnight or street parking regulations. The policy had strayed from its original intent which was to offer emergency or special circumstance parking for residents. For example, residents could ask for on street parking permission if they had overnight guests or a health issue. However, over time it evolved into something quite different.

As an illustration, a check of January 2009 police logs revealed that 571 people were granted permission to park on our streets overnight. This volume of vehicles hampers street cleaning efforts, discourages the purchase of our overnight permits, punishes those who do not know enough to call the Police Department every night, can at times overwhelm the desk officer who needs to log the date, location, plate number and last name of every caller, and defeats one of the main objectives of the law – to allow for easy detection of suspicious vehicles parked on village

streets overnight. Many of the callers have overnight permits for our parking lots that they do not use because they are aware that all it takes is a phone call to the police and you do not have to move your car. The remaining do not apply for permits because the nightly calls are free and easy. It was clearly time to get back to the original purpose of our “special circumstance” parking waiver.

Residents should contact the Parking Office to obtain an overnight permit for one of our lots and we have issued warnings as opposed to tickets as we transition back to our longstanding policy. However, violators will receive parking summons going forward if they do not comply. Our policy still allows residents to call the Police Department for true emergency or “special circumstance” waives. The police can then assess the situation and exercise discretion.

Our much anticipated e-Alert system is now up and running and can be accessed via www.villageofbronxville.com. Click on the e-Alert notifications link and then click on the subscribe tab to enter your information. You may choose to have messages sent to you via text message/e-mail or both and can subscribe to Village notifications as well as Police Department notifications. All future Police Department alerts will be sent via the eAlert system. All technical/privacy questions are addressed on the opening page of the eAlert link. Please share this information with your friends and

neighbors. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Village Hall or the Police Department.

As we continue in our 2009-2010 budgeting process, we recently received the disappointing but not surprising news of decreases in several of our revenue lines. Since approximately \$5 million dollars of the Village's \$13 million dollar budget is generated from non property tax revenues, the impact is felt immediately. Our sales tax revenues, which we budgeted at \$875,000, will come in closer to \$861,000 so we will only budget \$860,000 going forward. Mortgage tax revenue predictably took an even greater hit. In 2009-2010 we anticipate receiving \$245,000 instead of the very conservative 2008-2009 budget estimate of \$300,000.

The County Clerk's office, which compiles statistics on a town-wide basis, relayed to us that the month to month mortgage tax collection in the Town of Eastchester dropped by 65% since October 31, 2008. The economic downturn continues to have a domino effect on all of our budget lines. Building permit fees are down by almost \$100,000 since there are fewer construction projects undertaken in the Village large or small. Even meter revenue is down since there are fewer shoppers in our business district. In a nutshell, we expect shortfalls this year in several revenue lines and smaller revenue projections in our upcoming budget. .

We continue to look for savings wherever we can as we review our spending with a fine tooth comb. For example, we are “shopping” our insurance and reviewing all of our coverage needs hoping to achieve cost savings, something that has not been done since 1992.

We will be scheduling our budget workshops in the coming weeks to which you are all invited to attend.