

4/17/07

Village in Recovery from Destructive Storm

Mayor's Column

Not since Hurricane Floyd in 1999 has the Village suffered such a rain storm. We received over 7 inches of rainfall in a 24 hour period. The damage was severe and widespread across the Village. Hardest hit were the areas adjacent to the Bronx River. Cars were submerged on Paxton Avenue and businesses closed for several days. The Hospital mechanical room was within inches of being submerged and inoperable, necessitating a possible evacuation of Lawrence Hospital.

Many homes suffered extensive property damage – the townhouses at Field Court, Bolton Gardens and Meadow Avenue, and the homes on Parkway Road. Residents as yet have no heat or power and many have been forced to evacuate.

Other areas hit hard include homes on Alder Lane and North Road near the Alfredo property and Crawford Woods.

Hardest hit of all was the Bronxville School with flooding in the entire kindergarten wing, the new atrium and cafeteria had over three feet of water and two new gym floors were completely destroyed. The damage is widespread and Dr. David Quattrone said “recovery and restoration efforts will be time-consuming and expensive, constituting a major disruption to instruction.” School will be closed for the balance of the week with hopes for reopening on Monday, April 23. The Village website will post School information until power can be restored to the building.

We experienced the devastating effects of nature in one of its most destructive modes. Sadly, it appears, no pipes, no matter how large, could alleviate the volume of water since the ultimate repository is the Bronx River whose capacity was exceeded quite early in the storm. It may be time for the County to revisit the idea of dredging the length of the river.

The Village has declared a State of Emergency as have the Town of Eastchester and the County of Westchester. This is often a required declaration for any funds that may be allocated for relief on the State and Federal level. The County also recommends that residents save all receipts and take photos of the damage. County officials will be in contact with the Village if any reimbursement monies become available.

We have also asked for the assistance of the County Code Enforcement Disaster Assistance Response Team to aid residents in assessing the damage to their homes as well as estimating repair costs. Please call Village Hall if you would want this service.

One positive note was that in spite of the County sewage system becoming completely overtaken, much of the damage in the Village resulted from storm water rather than sewage backup.

Our DPW crews are currently out spot checking sanitary lines for any blockages in the aftermath. The Public Works Department will also be providing a Village-wide special pickup for non-garbage items destroyed in the flood. Place anything you need to discard curbside and we will pick up throughout the week.

If water reached your electrical box and power was cut off, Con Edison will not restore power until an electrician and an electrical underwriters inspector certifies the safety of your system. Please call Village Hall at 337-6500 if you have additional questions or ways in which we can assist in your recovery. Together we will work to mitigate the results of this destruction and return to normalcy. Many thanks goes to all who provided needed services during this disaster especially those still caring for their neighbors and friends.