

Mayor's Column

January 9, 2017

This is the time of year that the Village Trustees, as many of you also do in your personal and business lives, evaluate the successes/failures/unfinished goals of the year just past and set the initiatives for the year ahead.

The following are items on the Trustees' front burner to discuss in the coming months. Not all will be acted upon but all will get a thorough vetting and evaluation to determine their priority, mindful of the tax implications.

Top of the list is our Department of Public Works Facility. Not remodeled in any material way since its construction in 1942, it is woefully inadequate for 2017 needs and operations. Our equipment no longer fits in our bays. As a result, our mechanics have to repair equipment in the street on a public right of way or farm out jobs at a greatly increased cost to the Village. Our very specialized equipment now sits outside 24/7, decreasing its useful life by one third to one half. The structure also leaks and storage space is non-existent. But most importantly, our DPW staff deserves better working conditions than they currently enjoy.

FEMA Flood Mitigation Project

Massive in scope for our Village and over \$7million in cost, we will shepherd this to completion. The good news is, as of today, it is both on schedule and on budget. The end result promises to protect the school and nearby residential environs from storms of the 75 year catastrophic event.

Lighting

Still perfecting the lighting intensity in the Pondfield Road/Park Place neighborhood, we will be expanding the program focusing on the light quality, intensity and environmental benefit of changing fixtures throughout the Village. First on the docket will be on the West Side in the area of the train station and traffic circle. The upgrades will then extend into the residential areas. Mirroring our neighbors in Scarsdale who are undertaking same, we will try many different permutations and then solicit homeowner feedback. Unlike in the

business district, we are not as constrained by illumination requirements in our residential areas.

Parking

Coming as no surprise, our parking consultant who was helping us with meter timing, allocating spaces among commuters, merchants and customers and maximizing the use of the Kensington Garage soon to come on line, looked at our resources and determined our inventory is too small for our needs. As a result, we will be discussing the idea of a parking deck, the possibility of working with the Avalon to remove the former gas station in their lot to accommodate 20 plus more cars and discussing with New York Presbyterian - Lawrence Hospital a possible public/private parking venture.

We are also looking at maximizing the current inventory of spaces by experimenting with a dual use for some spaces. As example, a merchant might use a space until 5pm and then a commuter would return home and occupy the same space until morning. It could be a win-win. The space cost would be reduced for both users while the Village, in essence, doubles usable inventory.

Sewer Infrastructure

Given our aged infrastructure, (some of the repairs I have witnessed have been on crumbling clay pipes with a marking of 1906!), the cleaning, televising and subsequent repairs of our pipes remains a high priority. Preventive maintenance is so much less costly than emergency repairs. The program is expensive, disruptive and certainly the least sexy in the Village but most probably the most important going forward.

Comprehensive Plan for Development and Construction in the Village

We have undertaken analysis of our codes/regulations as they relate to the business district in an effort to remain a competitive choice for opening new businesses in Westchester communities. As example, we are discussing whether it makes sense to limit service businesses to second floors on certain Village streets. Should auxiliary services be allowed in first floor stores that sell a complementary product? What is the right balance of outdoor dining and the display of merchandise on the sidewalks vs. uncluttered wider passage?

On the residential front, some of the issues open for discussion will be:

- Do our floor area ratios currently allow for structures that are too large for our neighborhoods?
- Are the time frames on building permits too long for the peace and enjoyment of a neighborhood by surrounding homeowners?
- How do we regulate the increasing requests for yard generators and solar panels?
- Should permit holders be required to alert neighbors when their work will be particularly disruptive? I.e. Rock chipping, soil removal.

As is evident, some of the initiatives are major in scope for our Village, others require RFP's and long lead times and others are quality of life issues, small but evocative of how we care about our Village.

So while we discuss the "big" items, we will be washing benches, sidewalks and refuse cans, polishing brass plaques, trimming trees, and keeping all lights working in every neighborhood.