

Mayor's Column

June 11, 2018

The following is a compilation of timely issues affecting Villagers as we enter the summer season.

Police Activity

Eight suspects have been arrested and several others being actively sought for mail theft and bank fraud in connection with the recent spate of mail tampering and check “washing.” The Police Chief still cautions against placing mail in the new boxes in the Village and even at the main post office. There is evidence to believe that this is an internal crime with jurisdiction solely in the hands of the Inspector General’s Office. They have not acted with the same swiftness and level of seriousness as our local department.

There have also been a few instances of counterfeit money passed in Village shops. Two suspects have been arrested and three more have been identified. The two crimes are unconnected.

In light of the increase in opioid use and fatalities, the police departments of Bronxville, Eastchester, Scarsdale and Tuckahoe have renewed a mutual aid and enforcement agreement (BESTAID) to conduct investigations, hopefully leading to drug suppliers.

Tax Payments

Based on the above ongoing mail fraud activity, we urge you to deliver your check to Village Hall by hand. If the office is closed, checks can be dropped off at the Police Department. Alternatively, if you use the USPS system, write the check out with a Sharpie or gel pen as they cannot be “washed.”

The first half property taxes are due by July 2, 2018 without penalty. A mandatory penalty of 5% will be charged against payments received after July 2, 2018 and an additional 1% will be charged for each month unpaid thereafter.

New York State Charitable Deduction Mechanism to Mitigate the Effects of the Federal SALT Tax Law

As an overview, New York State is the largest “donor” in the nation, contributing \$48 Billion more than we receive back in benefits from the Federal Government. The impact of SALT would increase this imbalance by an additional \$14.3 Billion with 52 of 62 New York State Counties adversely affected.

Village Administrator Palmer, Bronxville School Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dan Carlin and I spent an afternoon at a symposium given by the crafters of the charitable contribution provision. Though quite admirable in its effort to help the New York State taxpayer, almost to a person at the meeting, had little confidence it would meet accounting, IRS, or judicial muster.

Chief among the defects is a provision that school districts and municipalities must certify that no goods or services were given in exchange for the donation, something no one could sign truthfully. Also should the provision fail at any level of review, taxpayers would have to then pay taxes in the regular way with the non-discretionary late fees of 5% and upwards attaching to their bill.

Sagamore Park

Redesigned not so long ago, the Park is in need of refurbishing due to the constant high volume use. New sand, mulch and minor repairs and stop gap measures are being made this week, but a major capital expenditure is needed to bring the park to 2018 standards. The Trustees, in consultation with park users, will be reviewing the needs at the park going forward.

Commuter Parking Migrating to Residential Streets

Commuters from all over have taken to parking all day on residential streets within walking distance of the train, most currently on Avon Road. We will be surveying the affected homeowners to ascertain and accommodate their street parking needs while crafting legislation that forbids 7 to 7 parking in front of people’s homes.

Bronxville Giving Garden

A huge success least year, producing over 250 pounds of fresh vegetables that were donated to area soup kitchens, the garden is back in full swing in no small part due to some of our community’s youngest philanthropists. Ms. Vise’s Junior Kindergarten students at the Reformed Church Nursery School decided to hold a

bake sale and donated the \$506 in profits to the Giving Garden. Before getting a gardening lesson with hands on work from resident Farmer Dave Phillips, the students stopped by Village Hall for a visit complete with a tour of the Police Department – a Village favorite. I remain in awe of the young students' generosity and social concern.

Comprehensive Plan

As a corollary to last week's column, our review will also include an assessment of Building Department procedures especially the permitting process and building performance measurements which impact quality of life for nearby neighbors; an evaluation of needed neighborhood enhancements such as trees, sidewalks, street lights and other infrastructure improvements; and the measurement of resident participation in the Village's existing recreational facilities to determine if current uses are appropriate or if alternative programs/facilities could generate stronger interests and better serve the Village.

Midland Avenue

The current gas line installation is an entirely Con Edison initiative run by the utility and its subs. It involves the placement of a 16 inch steel line that requires above and below ground hand welding which has proven to take an extraordinary amount of time and labor. When completed, Con Edison will repave the road and replace all the plantings.

Coals Restaurant

Westchester food lovers descended on Kensico Dam over the weekend and crowned the winner of this year's Best Burger in Westchester. Bronxville's very own Coals Restaurant took first place with a flame grilled mini short rib chuck blend patty, smothered in buffalo sauce and topped with Vermont cheddar, red onion and a creamy guacamole. Head over to Parkway Road and try the best burger in the county served in your own backyard.