Mayor’s Column

February 16, 2016

For a change of pace, I thought I would cover some of the most frequently asked questions that come our way at Village Hall – be they from visitors, residents or visiting school children.

According to the most recent census, Bronxville has 6,148 residents, half of whom are under age the of 18. Sixty percent of Village residents live in single family homes and town houses while forty percent live in co-ops, condos and apartments.

* Though we only have 2300 addresses in the Village, over 10,000 people use Bronxville as their postal address.
* The Village has no County roads and only one State road – Route 22 - which incredulously was built with no drainage system along the entire stretch in our Village. Only the State is allowed to pave or improve this road.
* Scout Field is located on County land in the cities of Yonkers and Mount Vernon with only a small strip in our Village adjacent to Alden Place. As a result, our police department cannot patrol the fields.
* The Village has had 36 Mayors, 32 of them male residents who were originally called Presidents of the Village.
* There are 192 fire hydrants throughout the Village maintained by Suez/United Water at a cost of almost $100,000 annually.
* Bronxville has 1,114 parking meters which operate six days per week save Sunday and six holidays; New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

Free meter usage is not related to preference for honoring one holiday vs. another, rather the primary purpose of meters is to stimulate the movement of cars to increase turnover for customer parking for our businesses. The meters are free on holidays when our businesses are primarily closed. On holidays such as Martin Luther King Day, Presidents’ Day and Veterans’ Day when all of the stores are open, free meters would stifle turnover for shoppers and have a negative impact on our restaurants, businesses and theatre.

* With the exception of Kiryas Joel, an Hasidic Village in Orange County, Bronxville is the only other New York State community that is co-terminus with their school district and thus collects school taxes as well.
* Most communities collect taxes once yearly. The Village divides the payment into two parts with one mailing containing two tax payment stubs. Any interest added for delinquent taxes is determined by New York State and not subject to local discretion.
* Just over twenty percent of the property in the Village is tax exempt.
* The Village is responsible for the production of birth certificates for babies born at New York Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital. In 1934, 301 babies were born at Lawrence. The total now is approximately 1500 and climbing.
* The townhouse complex on Sagamore Road, Bacon Court, is named after the Village’s first Mayor and Maltby Field, encompassing the paddle court complex, is named after Mayor Roger Maltby who first acquired the open space for the Village.
* Palumbo Place was named for the Village’s Public Works Superintendent Joe Palumbo and Leonard Morange Park, on the west Side adjacent to the train station, is named after the Village’s first resident to die in World War I.
* Our Police Department currently has 21 officers, down from an all-time high of 28.
* Our officers wear Kevlar vests at all times while in uniform. The vests need to be replaced every five years as Kevlar deteriorates with age. Every officer also carries a Glock .40 caliber handgun and trains at least twice a year to maintain proficiency.
* New York State sets a minimum vehicular speed of 30mph for villages. The only exclusions are school zones (20mph), and exceptional circumstances that must be documented with evidence of a history of multiple serious mishaps.
* Just recently, our Police Department headquarters added a 24/7 secure “mailbox” for the disposal of expired/unused medications. Sometimes a temptation when left in cabinets, flushing them into the water system also causes chemical pollution of our fresh water sources.
* In addition to their customary police duties, upon request, our department will also:
  + Perform free security surveys of your home or business to assess vulnerabilities and suggest security precautions.
  + Check infant seats for proper installation; do vacant house checks if you are traveling and keep a house key at headquarters for emergency situations.
* Widening the scope to our home county, Westchester, already the richest and most populous New York State County in 1775, it is also now the second wealthiest in the state and seventh wealthiest in the Nation.
* As of the most recent census, Westchester County is home to just under one million people, 200,000 of whom were born outside of the United States. Covering 450 square miles, and 45 separate municipalities, our County is larger than 40 countries.
* Westchester is served by 48 public school districts, 118 private and parochial schools and 14 colleges.
* I close with my favorite observations about our treasured village made in an early prospectus for home buyers in the 1800’s.

“Few New Yorkers know that within three miles of the City limits is varied and undulating country…there are no fences; everyone appears to own everything. You will find the lawn of one residence winding curiously into that of another whose grounds turn, merge into still another occupants. There are not flat lawns or level gardens, but the slopes are dotted with trees, ribbed with fine rock, and starred with wild flowers.”