

Mayor's Column
February 21, 2017

At first glance, it appears no corner of the Village is free of construction or repair - often soliciting the question, "Mayor what is going on?" So here is a recap:

Midland Avenue/Pondfield Road Intersection

The major and most disruptive by far of course occurred at our busiest intersection. In essence, when the flood mitigation contractor continued his threading of pipe under Midland Avenue, they reached an unknown vault from who knows when that caused the pipe to depress and sag, stopping the work. Con Edison monitored the depression as it was close to major gas lines. After discussion, they decided to replace what they saw as aged subterranean gas lines while the hole was opened. Though adding two plus weeks to the flood project, everyone agreed well worth the delay to get new gas mains.

Net-net, we anticipate opening Midland Avenue by next weekend, with the possibility of narrower passage if the second gas line closest to Library Lane needs restoration. We have authorized Con Edison to work weekends and holidays to expedite the reopening. A special thank you to the residents of Library Lane who bore the brunt of the disruption with patience and cooperation.

Additional Village Construction

A new gas line is also being installed near the intersection of Kensington Road and Sagamore Road, yet another major pressure point in the Village, hence all the metal plates.

Our water provider, Suez, also had to undertake major repairs on Route 22 to replace a defective water valve that had been leaking causing dangerous icing and deep potholes, necessitating periodic interruption of water service.

We were not satisfied with their communications to Bronxville customers as to water service interruptions or the possibility of "brown" water in a wider area when water pressure is restored. We are working with Suez to revamp their alert/communication system.

Yet more excavation is being done by the Village contractors on the length of Pondfield Road to line the pipes found damaged and/or leaking during our recent televising project. Much of our sanitation system consists of a labyrinth of one hundred year old clay pipes that are crumbling due to age so we expect the repairs/replacement to remain an ongoing project.

Parking

We are putting out an RFP (Request for Proposal) to review our current parking data and analyze the feasibility, size, location and funding sources for a parking level/structure and model possible alternatives.

We know the viability of our business district going forward depends more on restaurant and service business than dry good stores with parking already at a premium. Demand only increasing, we have to add to the inventory and not simply reshuffle the deck.

Kensington Garage will soon be on line so that in the interim, the parking situation will improve as commuters and merchants will be relocated back to Kensington Road. This will free up customer spaces in the Kraft and Garden Lots as well as adding a modest increase in garage inventory.

Lighting

Eight “tear drop” fixtures will soon be installed in the Kraft Avenue Lot as well as new lamps added on the triangle near Studio Arcade and the southbound tracks, both areas brought to our attention by commuters and pedestrians.

Environmental Study

The Village has hired Eco-Systems, an environmental analysis firm to review all studies/documents related to the proposed Marbledale Road hotel site as well as the analysis conducted on our school grounds by a consultant hired by the School Board. We have requested a review of the School findings first followed by a more global air and water evaluation of the other studies.

Street Safety

With spring approaching, some of you have asked about traffic calming devices or an increased number of stop signs to slow motorists especially in neighborhoods with many children.

The Village adheres to State and Federal standards in the use of traffic calming devices. Before any speed hump or bump is installed, a traffic engineering study must be undertaken to determine both its necessity and proper location with verifiable data on traffic volume, speeds and accident rates. Incorrectly installed bumps have subjected municipalities to significant liability. For example, a bump too close to a curve in a road does not provide adequate warning to the unfamiliar driver and can result in increased accidents at that location.

Even after it is determined a speed bump would be helpful, a series of signs must be placed in both directions and the bump and the road markings leading up to it must be brightly painted. Speed bumps that you see without this signage and paint are incorrectly installed, thus exposing a municipality to additional liability.

As for rumble strips or roughing of the road, there is no study that has proven they are an effective traffic calming device. Also the noise made by the autos crossing these rough spots is extremely loud and incessant to neighboring dwellings.

As an alternative, residents have suggested the Village lower the 30 mph speed limit. Speed limits in New York are regulated by the State and 30 mph is the lowest permitted Village-wide, save for 20 mph in school zones.

That being said, we will undertake any study and initiate any corrective action when warranted.

In order to increase pedestrian safety, we remind homeowners that one is responsible for all sidewalks that abut their property including snow removal and re-pavement to facilitate pedestrian passage. If you notice a sidewalk needing attention contact the Village's Building Department and staff will issue a "notice to cure." No monetary penalties attach unless the notice is ignored.

I appreciate the residents in every corner of the Village who are enduring these disruptions with patience and grace.

