

Mayor's Column

June 20, 2016

All of our Village Schools are ending their academic years and that is traditionally the Village Government's signal for municipal projects to rev up. This year we are doing it on all cylinders.

The most conspicuous is the "unearthing" on the Village Hall lawn which elicits countless observations on my walk to work of, "Mayor, what are you doing?" It is finally the long awaited start to the FEMA funded flood mitigation project. Phase One is the installation of a force main and corresponding pipe work being installed initially on the Village Hall lawn. The 48 inch diameter pipes are testimony to the amount of water that affects/needs to be removed from school grounds in a major flooding event. To then follow is the connection across Palumbo Place and installation of conduits on the Library lawn. The final connection across Pondfield Road was purposely planned for mid-summer when school is out and traffic is at a minimum. The project is more intricate than it looks as we avoid the labyrinth of underground utilities and more importantly the roots of very mature municipal trees. In late summer, a "trenchless connection" will be made from the Library property across Midland Avenue to the Bronxville School teachers' parking lot. Without cutting the road, the conduit connection can be made by threading through the pipes. Something I want to see to believe! Then the pump house will be constructed in an August-September timeframe. The school field will be left intact to accommodate fall sports with holding tanks and French drains installed immediately following fall play. The end result will be flood mitigation for the school and surrounding neighborhoods at an unprecedented level of comfort going forward.

One has to only turn 90 degrees on the Village lawn to experience another monumental disruption on the front walk. Paved not so many decades ago with a unilock composite faux brick, the infrastructure did not stand the test of time. Their durability was in glaring contrast to the one hundred year old brick surrounding Village Hall. The unilock "heaved" during weather conditions, creating an uneven, potentially dangerous surface. The new configuration will be simpler, cleaner, with a raised planting bed, and a blue stone walkway accented with bricks that match those on Village Hall. In addition, benches will be added and a beautiful three foot Village seal was cast to lend history and gravitas.

The third major capital project is the refurbishing/replacement of street lights throughout the East Side Business District from Cedar Street and Pondfield Road to the corner of One Pondfield as well as on Park Place and Kraft Avenue. The dim level of lighting, (so much of it is lost skyward through the globe), has been the steadiest complaint to Village Hall in recent years. More residents are working later, walking solo or frequenting the many restaurants, gyms and the movie theatre late into the evening and have found the lighting inadequate. Long in the planning stages, we first sought to save our globe lights despite their enormous energy inefficiency. (Inside the globe is a highly inefficient 189 watt bulb now banned in Europe with limited manufacturing in the States) The delicate bulb filaments also break during the lightest wind and snow events, making replacement a daily job for a DPW staffer. The globe stantion itself presented many problems as the pole is no longer manufactured and the electrical system could not be retrofitted to house an LED bulb. After much historical research and consultation with experts in the field, we chose the new lights you see on Pondfield Road. Currently we are perfecting their wattage and angle of light so the streets are maximally and softly illuminated while second floor residences are shielded. We are saving all of the usable parts of the removed globe lights so we can repair the many lights in current disrepair that will remain.

On some of these same new poles you will see cameras being installed as well. The cameras -- nine to start -- will be placed at the main points of entry to the Village. They are to aid in criminal investigations only and will not be used for traffic enforcement or as a revenue generator. Cameras on Concordia College, Lawrence Hospital and St. Joseph's property as well as private residential homes have been instrumental in identification and apprehension in recent criminal activities. The police department chose the poles based on their locations as critical entry points to and from the Village.

Summer is also synonymous with road milling and repaving. The streets on this year's list include Pondfield Road West, Plateau Circle, Locust Lane, Hobart Street Beechwood Road, Pine Terrace, Lookout Avenue, Sunnybrae Place, Sycamore Street, McKinley Street, Wellington Circle, Alder Lane, Park Avenue at Tanglewylde and Sturgis Road. We keep a running list of our roads in various states of repair. More roads are on the list and will be addressed going forward. If you believe your street merits repair, call our DPW department at 337-7338 and request a review.

None of the above will be accomplished without some traffic disruptions and delays. We try to accomplish all during the quieter summer months, but we ask for your patience as the projects roll out.