

Mayor's Column
May 2, 2016

As the warm weather graces the Village, I bring to your attention issues particular to this time of year and seasonal questions that we have fielded for your fellow citizens at Village Hall of late.

When does the leaf blower ban take effect?

Our gas-powered leaf blower ban begins on June 1 and extends through September 30. In addition to the high intensity noise they produce, small gas-powered engines generate pollutants including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter in large quantities relative to the size of the engines. The particles emitted are respirable and inhalation of these airborne dusts can exacerbate asthma in children and aggravate respiratory diseases, especially in the elderly. The Village takes this ban very seriously and we plan a vigorous enforcement this season. Violators are subject to fines of up to \$250. Please help us monitor this regulation on your own property.

What can I throw out on garbage days and what do I do to dispose of other items?

Our garbage trucks only collect normal household waste. If you have other items that need to be disposed, call our Public Works Department at 337-7338 and arrange for a bulky waste pick-up. Items such as carpeting, furniture, mattresses and box springs are picked up on a weekly basis. Refrigerators (with Freon and doors removed), air conditioners (with Freon removed), washers, dryers, televisions and computer monitors are picked up during the second week of each month. The Village cannot accept car batteries, construction debris, stone and concrete, propane tanks, tires, bathtubs and water heaters for removal. The service costs \$20 and all items should be placed curbside by 7AM on the morning of the scheduled pick-up.

Why does the Village not install "Children at Play" and/or "Slow Children" signs in neighborhoods with many children?

State and Federal traffic standards reject these signs because they openly suggest that playing in the street is acceptable and they give parents and

especially children a false sense of security as the sign is assumed to provide protection when in reality it does not. Studies demonstrate no evidence that these signs result in reduced pedestrian collisions or lower vehicular speed.

If the Village placed these signs, it would suggest that the Village allows children to play in the streets which assumes a level of responsibility and liability that is not prudent. Since children live on every residential block in the Village, if used, these signs would be needed on every road. On the other hand, signs that alert drivers to playgrounds are encouraged because the parks are often located in places where a reasonable driver would not expect a large group of children. Sagamore Park is a prime example.

In the same vein of safety concerns, bicycles may only be ridden on Village sidewalks if the rider is under 11 years of age. No one is allowed to ride bicycles or skate boards on the sidewalks in our two Village business districts.

In addition, per New York State Law, when a pedestrian is in any of the Village's crosswalks, cars must yield in both directions. However, when crossing in mid-street, pedestrians must yield the right of way to all vehicles on the roadway.

Could the speed limit in the Village be lowered to increase safety?

The Village-wide speed limit is 30mph, the lowest allowed by New York State. The only exceptions are marked school zones. Any further reduction requires State legislation which would be predicated on documented data demonstrating accident rates, speeding data and great traffic volume, something the Village cannot demonstrate. Speed reduction where it is not warranted can unintentionally lead to increased traffic, congestion and pollution.

Can my family get their birth certificates or copies thereof at Village Hall?

Birth certificates can only be issued by the municipality in which an individual is born, so only residents born at Lawrence Hospital can receive theirs at Village Hall at a cost of \$10. If born in any other hospital in New York State, a certificate can be obtained from Albany by following instructions on the State's website. The cost is \$35 and takes several weeks. The Village has no authority to issue any other documents, save for death certificates. We can also only issue handicap driving permits/signage to residents of the village.

When are second half of property tax bills due?

Tax bills will be mailed out during the first week of June 2016, following the school budget vote on May 19, 2016.

Taxes may be paid without penalty if they are received in person at Village Hall or postmarked no later than June 30th. In an effort to save time, money and paper, you will notice that in this bill the second half stub and return envelope have been included. Please save for the December payment. We will be sending out an e-alert as a reminder as the June 30th deadline draws near. Our e-alert system relays important and topical civic information and I urge all residents to sign up. Simply go to the Village website and add your e-mail address at the prompt.

A property tax bill is determined by two factors: the property's taxable assessment and the tax rate of the taxing jurisdiction. The tax rate is determined by the amount of tax levy to be raised from the assessing unit and the unit's total taxable assessed value. The property tax rate is determined by dividing the total amount of money that has to be raised from property tax (the tax levy) by the taxable assessed value of taxable real property in a municipality. For example, if our levy is \$2,000,000 and we have a taxable assessed value (the sum of the assessment of all taxable properties) of \$40,000,000, then the tax rate would be \$50 for each 1,000 of taxable assessed property. An individual's share of the tax is calculated by multiplying the tax rate by your individual assessed value minus exemptions such as STAR. Property tax rates are set by the School Board and the Village Board. The assessor is responsible for determining your property's assessed value but he has no role in determining property taxes.