



Kenneth C. Riscica
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Message from the Mayor



March 15 - I'm pleased to report news of events, activities, progress and plans in our Village. It has been a very busy and consequential time.

In my "State of the Village" video in April 2016, I expressed concern that (a) our budget was stressed by an unrealistic tax cap (0.12%), (b) our cost cutting had matured and (c) we had major contracts for snow, sanitation, and our lease, coming up for bid. As this newsletter discusses, all of these items have moved in a very positive direction in 2016-17 so our Village remains on solid footing.



Mayor Riscica with workers pouring concrete on Plandome Court

In the Fall we moved ahead with **Stage 1** of nearly \$300,000 of work under our Capital Plan. This decision reflected: (1) the better competitive climate this year, (2) our capital reserves being ahead of schedule and (3) delay in our pending grant. Because our contract bid has an "accordion feature," and our finances

permit, the Trustees approved expansions to the scope of Stage 1 work, and **we completed nearly \$200,000** of projects by December 2016.

Stage 2 of the Capital Plan is to repave Cove Drive. We expect to **expand that work** to include work on other areas including Willow Court and to include additional concrete & curb repairs on Plandome Court and elsewhere. Still, however, we do not have final approval of our \$100,000 road grant from NY State. So, we will make final Stage 2 scope-of-work decisions after our work with Senator Elaine Phillips brings our grant to closure. This newsletter includes a full and transparent report on our Capital Plan activities and spend.

In other news, Senator Jack Martins put our Village in for a **new NYS grant** for \$100,000.

In finance, we published our **Tentative Budget** on March 6 for review at our Public Hearing on April 3. The Tentative Budget is described in this newsletter and continues the significant cost advantage we enjoy. Specifically, our taxes are, on average, about \$500 per home below the taxes outside our Village for the same services. Details are on our website and in this newsletter.

These are all consequential activities and positive outcomes. The next big item on our agenda is space. More on that inside.

It is a privilege to serve as your Mayor. You can reach me at Mayor@PlandomeHeights-NY.Gov

Kenneth C. Riscica, Mayor

Stage 1 of Current Capital Plan is Successful

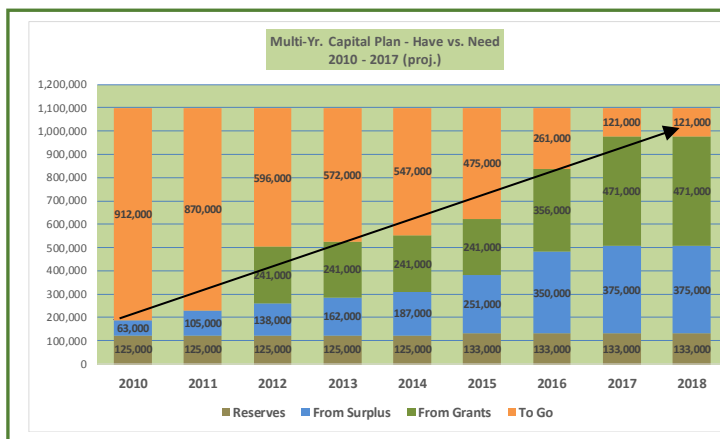


Left: Clerk Arlene with our "milling" engineer on Waterway/Neck, **Middle:** new swales on the Neck. **Right:** Flat concrete road work on Grandview Circle

Capital Plan – Actions and Status

Overview - The current stage of our 10-year, \$1.1 million Capital Plan includes \$300,000 of work on Waterway, Neck and Cove (primarily paving) as well as flat concrete and curb work on Grandview, Summit and Plandome Court. Thanks to NY State Senator Jack Martins, we have state grants *in hand* for Waterway/Neck for \$50,000 and *pending* for Cove (and other roads) for \$100,000. In the Fall we completed \$200,000 of work on Waterway/Neck, Grandview, Summit and Plandome Court. In the Spring, we expect to spend \$100,000 on Cove Drive and other areas. The contract we have is 20% lower than the prior year bid and contains an “accordion” feature that lets us expand the scope-of-work to do more.

Capital Resources & Great News About a New Grant – In December 2016, before Sen. Jack Martins retired from the NY State Senate, he recommended Plandome Heights for a new \$100,000 road grant which we earmarked for the Bournedales. If this grant is approved, and assuming modest ongoing surplus in our operations, our 10-year Capital Plan will be nearly fully funded as shown.



road (roughly \$55,000). Additionally, we made improvements to concrete curbs and roadway on Summit Drive, Grandview Circle and Plandome Court (roughly \$75,000). Because our bid was \$35,000 lower than last year’s rejected bid, we increased our budget for replacement of swales at Waterway/Neck to 1,600 feet from 600 feet, a 150% increase. It would have been nice if we could replace the remaining 2,000 linear feet of swales, but it was not necessary. To do that would divert roughly \$68,000 away from other projects on Willow, Shore, Plandome Court, Grandview, Bournedales and other areas; so, we did not do it. There is a small “Punch List” of items the contractor will complete in the Spring. You can check with Clerk Arlene if you have questions.

Work Planned for Stage 2 – Stage 2 of the current portion of our Capital Plan includes \$100,000 primarily for paving Cove Drive. Since the contract pricing is good, we may extend the work to include Willow Court, some remediation on Shore and perhaps other work. We plan to do this in the Spring, however, we still don’t have final clearance on our \$100,000 road grant from NY State. We are working with Senator Elaine Phillips to resolve that.

Capital resources and plan – To give you a sense of our capital resources, the chart at left shows that in 2017 we have \$121,000 “to go” to fulfill our ten-year, \$1.1 million capital plan (assuming receipt of \$100,000 pending Cove grant). So, if all continues to go well, our new grant for the Bournedales should add funds our 10-year Capital Plan. Importantly, by building reserves & grants over time to fund our Capital Plan we expect to need no debt or tax increase to fund the Plan.

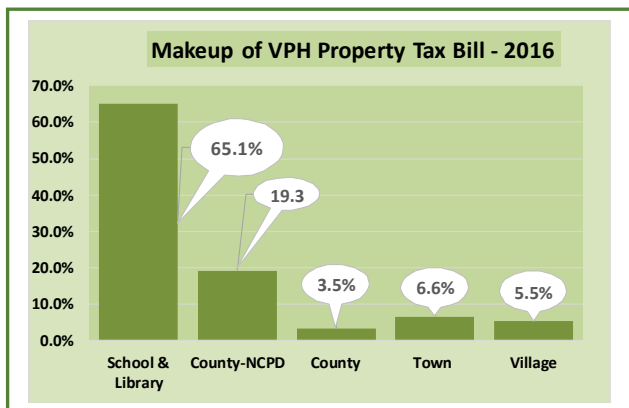
So, we can summarize our \$1.1 million capital plan as follows:

- Work <u>completed/spent</u> (Bay, Bayview)	\$ 265,000
- Work <u>completed/spent</u> – (Stage 1, above)	200,000
- Work to be done – (Stage 2, above)	100,000
- Assigned for <u>future</u> work	<u>535,000</u>
o Total capital plan	<u>\$ 1,100,000</u>

Action Taken on Stage 1 – In December we completed \$200,000 of the current \$300,000 phase of our 10-year Capital Plan. The work completed includes the paving of The Waterway/The Neck (roughly \$70,000), replacement of 1,600 of the 3,600 linear feet (44%) of the swales on that

Property Tax Relief

We support Governor Cuomo’s efforts to address high property taxes in New York. We encourage, however, the



focus to be on the money. You will hear about new efforts

in Albany to address local and municipal taxes, but **not** school taxes. However, when you look at the property taxes we pay in Plandome Heights (left), the data tells us the following:

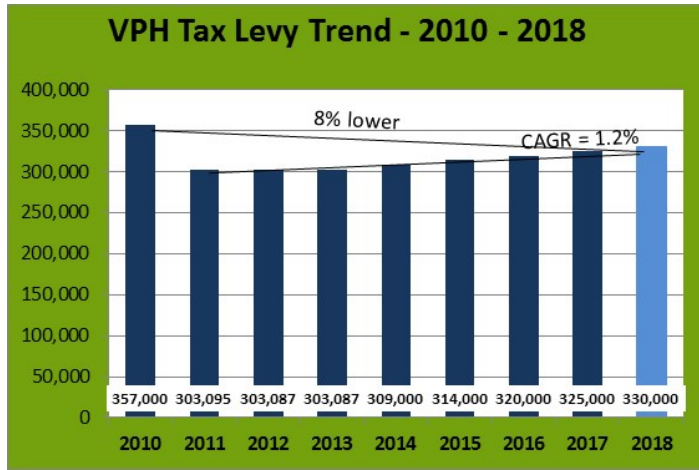
- Schools and Police represent **84.4%** of our tax bill,
- County, Town and Village, combined, is only **15.6%**

Further, in 9 years, the School tax takes a **3% larger share** of the total tax bill & the Village takes a **2% less share** (County, Town, Village have taken a **3% less share**). So municipalities and police are holding down costs. Let’s face it, if you want real Property Tax Relief, you have to (a) go where the money is and (b) reform State mandates that affect costs.

Finance – Budget – Trends

Overview - In finance, we use “Best Practices” for municipal governments including our budgeting, financial controls, ‘performance vs. budget,’ multi-year planning and ten-year Capital Plan. Results include: (1) moderate, stable taxes that are *1/3 lower than outside the Village*. (about \$500 less per household, year-after-year), (2) systematically building our capital reserves to support our 10-year Capital Plan (3) seven years of operating surplus. In 2017, NY State awarded us the best score on its Fiscal Stress Test; zero on a scale of 0 -100.

The Financial Environment and Trends -When we made the “State of the Village” video back in April 2016, we had concerns. Our concerns were that our budget was being stressed by: (a) the continuation of a very low tax cap (0.12% last year), (b) maturing costs that are escalating more than the tax cap and (c) the need to renegotiate/bid major contracts for snow removal and sanitation. Having achieved favorable outcomes on the snow removal bid in 2016 and the sanitation bid in 2017 (see below), much of that budget stress has been relaxed for now and we can maintain our trend of moderation.



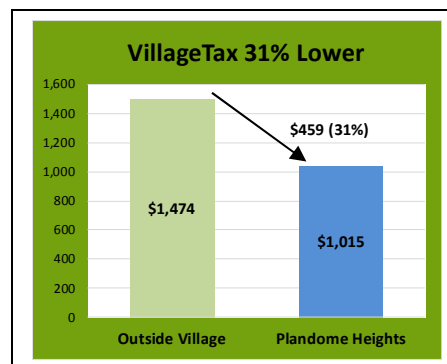
- Tentative Budget** - On March 6, the Trustees approved our 2017 – 18 Tentative Budget. The Tentative Budget:
- Raises our property taxes 1.5%; to you that’s approximately \$15 per year, per household,
 - Benchmarks our taxes at about 1/3 less than the taxes you would pay outside the Village for the same services, or nearly \$500 less per household,
 - Complies with the NY State Property Tax Cap for 2017 -18,
 - Is nearly 8% lower than our property tax 8 years ago,
 - Will be subject of a Public Hearing on April 3, 2017.

Snow & Sanitation Bids are Successful; Space is Next

Contracted services represent approximately \$180,000 or about 43% of our expenditures. This includes (a) sanitation, (b) snow removal and (c) our Village Hall lease. In February 2017, we received new bids for sanitation. Our current provider, Dejana, was awarded the bid at a reduction in cost of about 2%. We achieved this by extending the term of our proposed sanitation contract from 5 to 7 years (plus 3, one-year options) and receiving competitive bids. The bids ranged from \$1.4 million to \$3.8 million and Dejana was 0.8% lower than the next bid. This provides us with (i) help to our budget challenges, (ii) certainty that supports our “Planning Beyond

	<u>Tentative</u> <u>2017 – 18</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Adopted</u> <u>2016 – 17</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>2016 -17</u> <u>Actual</u>	
Tentative Budget:				
Income:				
Real Property Taxes	330,000	325,000	325,000	
Building related fees	56,000	54,000	92,000	a
Other earnings	39,000	39,000	34,000	
Grants and aid	30,000	30,000	27,000	
Total Revenue	455,000	448,000	478,000	a
Expense:				
General Gov. Support	198,000	189,000	198,000	
Public Safety	42,000	41,000	51,000	
Transportation	55,000	55,000	36,000	b
Parks	12,000	12,000	12,000	
Community Service	148,000	151,000	157,000	a
Total Expense	455,000	448,000	453,000	
Surplus(Deficit)	-	-	25,000	
Notes:				
a. Zoning = \$18k of increase in revenue and \$16k of cost.				
b. Transportation = Lower snow removal in mild winter				

Volunteers Bring Lower Costs - While it is counterintuitive that our small government operates with lower costs than larger governments with benefits of scale, the facts are actually simple. More than 30 residents volunteer their time to do the



business of the Village at no cost. Further the services of our contractors are periodically bid for competitive pricing. The result is about \$500 in your pocket, year-after-year, compared to services outside the Village.

A complete and transparent presentation (10 pages) of our financial Budget is at www.plandomeheights-ny.gov/finance .

One Year” initiative and (iii) service continuity with a reliable provider.

Previously, in August, we completed the competitive bid for snow removal. Again, we asked for a bid for a 10-year period. Cow Bay won the bid which will freeze our normal snow removal costs at 2015-16 levels for the next five years and then include modest increases every two years for the remaining five years. This is an outstanding outcome. The next challenge will be the *Village Hall lease*. We have an issue of space with new requirements straining our facility and storage. We will report more as news develops.

Winter Shorts

“Galleries de Plandome Heights” –

We have a handful of street name signs available in our “Galleries” including Beachway, Chester, Bournedale South, Shore, Tideway, Willow and Winthrope. This makes great Garage or Dormitory Art. Please call Clerk Arlene Drucker.

Right: “Art” from “Galleries de VPH”



you want notification on your home phone, cell phone, work phone, email and/or text. And you can add family members to the system.

Vote in the Village Election, Tues., March 21, 2017.

Please Curb Your Dog – We are receiving complaints about the failure of pet owners to pick up their dog waste. Please follow the law and pick up and dispose of your dog waste.

Sign up for North Shore Alerts – Our emergency notification system is www.NorthShoreAlert.org. We use it for emergency notifications such as power outage status and street closings. The system is “user driven” so you decide if

\$250 Tag Sale Signs Available – When residents tape “tag sale” signs to our white decorative street name signs, the glue from the tape leaves a residue that becomes an unsightly black streak. The fine is \$250 fine per offense. Please, don’t do this.

Clerk’s Corner

As a reminder, we pay for side yard pick-up so it is not necessary to put your trash at the curb.

In the Spring, we do a review of needed sidewalk repairs. If you have needs, let us know and we can offer you our cost.

We remind residents that overnight parking on Village streets is prohibited. Contact us if you need to park overnight.

Village code restricts contractor work to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. No work is permitted on Sundays or Federal holidays.

Please curb and clean up after your dog.

Trustee Solomon reminds you to sign up for Village notifications at www.NorthShoreAlert.org.



**Incorporated Village of
PLANDOME HEIGHTS**

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NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2017

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Sign up for **Village Emergency Notifications** at www.northshorealert.org