



INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF
Plandome Heights
NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2020

Message from the Mayor

Kenneth C. Riscica
Mayor

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February 15 – It's my pleasure to report to you on events, activities, progress and plans in our Village. Things are well!

Once again I acknowledge and welcome the many new families that have moved into the Village

recently. We encourage you to enjoy all that our Village has to offer including our fabulous Women's Club, our great Civic Association and the many volunteer opportunities to serve the Village. Our residents and volunteers make our Village a great place to live.

In October, we appointed Anil Wadhvani to membership on our Board of Zoning and Appeals. Anil served as an alternate since 2015.

We've been busy in Village Hall upgrading our Information Technology resources to meet the challenges of (a) the expiration of support for Windows 7 and (b) the increasing incidence of ransomware attacks on local governments. Trustee Dan Cataldo helped lead the effort. For the first time, we also brought in outside resources to assist us. The project was completed in December on-time and under-budget and our IT is now up to current standards.

The Village Map on our wall in Village Hall dates back to 1980! So it is time to add a finishing touch to the 2019 makeover of Village Hall by preparing a new Village Map. New "GIS" technology used by municipalities makes mapping much more vibrant and so we were able to add characteristics such as street lighting and wattage, road widths, storm sewers, fire hydrants, electric grid and other useful data. Our contractor for this work is H2M Engineering. The new map was completed in January and is being framed for display in Village Hall.

Our prior two newsletters gave updates on our NY State grants for our capital program. We have continued to follow up on the two pending

grants, which total \$175,000. Those grants are earmarked for roadwork in the Bournedales. My update on that is described in the Newsletter.

We are now more than halfway through our 2019 – 2020 budget year. We are "on-budget or better," with no significant known challenges at this time. Further, with few snow events this far into the winter we are hoping to spend less than our snow removal and road repair budgets. We continue to generate surplus that we need to fund our 10 Year Capital Plan and I expect this year will continue that trend for the 11th year.

We received notice in January 2020, that our 2020 - 21 tax cap will be less than the 2% cap and limited to the rate of inflation, 1.78%. I expect that we will comply with that lower cap.

LED street lighting is something that municipalities have been examining for 10 or more years. Many "early adopters" had disappointments over cost and performance. We have been carefully following this and believe that the opportunity is ripening to explore this as discussed inside the Newsletter.

You are surely reading a lot about ExteNet and small cell phone nodes. Lots of meetings, lots of opposition, and now lots of lawsuits. My report on how that affects our Village is inside.

You are also likely reading about the effects of the January 1, 2020 N.Y. State Criminal Justice Reforms that include elimination of cash bail and changes to evidence rules. While this is a State issue, the local impacts are significant and we are supporting our other municipalities, and law enforcement authorities, in calling for changes in the new law.

It is a privilege to serve as your Mayor. Questions, comments and complaints are cheerfully accepted at Mayor@PlandomeHeights-NY.Gov.

Kenneth C. Riscica,
Mayor

Update on our 10-Year Capital Plan and Grant Resources

Our 10-Year Capital Plan calls for \$1.15 million in spending on infrastructure over 10 years with \$625,000 of that spent so far and \$525,000 to go. The largest piece of the remaining budget (nearly \$400,000) is road resurfacing in the Bournedales.

We have two grants pending to support this work. One grant was initiated by Sen. Phillips in August 2018 (\$125,000) and the second grant was initiated by Sen. Kaplan in 2019 (\$50,000). So, it has been a high priority for me to work with the Senator's staff to move our grants forward.

In January 2020 we exchanged information with Sen. Kaplan's office on the 2019 grant in order to clarify our grant application so that it can move forward. So, that \$50,000 grant is moving forward. When we asked about the \$125,000 grant from 2018 (a "Transportation and

Infrastructure" grant) we were told that all such grants are "under review." There is no particular definition of "under review." However, the review corresponds in time with a search to close a \$6.5 billion budget shortfall at the State. Some see that as connected; there is really no way to know. So that grant is "under review."

A road grant is not done until a contract is issued by the State; the State moves slowly. So, it will still be some time until we have certainty on these resources. So, we need to, and are, adjusting our plans accordingly. Two mild winters in a row, if it happens, can help extend the life of those roads until our grants mature. And each year of surplus adds our own resource availability.

We greatly appreciate Sen. Kaplan's, and her staff's, effort on our behalf.

2019 – 20 Operations – So Far...Better than Budget

We use "Best Practices" for governments in our budgeting, financial controls, performance vs. budget, "Planning Beyond One Year" and our 10-Year Capital Plan. Results include: (1) moderate, stable taxes that are *1/3 lower than outside the Village* (about \$535 less per household each year) and (2) building capital reserves to support our 10-Year Capital Plan.

Surplus Indicated at Seven Months Ended December 31, 2019 – We have a solid budget for 2019 – 20 and so far our operations are on or better-than budget. Expenses are largely in line with budget through December 31, 2019 with various small, better-than and worse-than items netting to about \$3,000 better-than budget. Revenues are about \$20,000 better than budget with the largest item being building fees on a large building job on Summit. I expect, however, a lower level of building activity will have building fees lower than the budget for the next few months. Offsetting this, I expect the mild winter will result in lower costs for snow removal, road repairs and contingencies. All told, I am expecting a surplus for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2020, which would be our 11th consecutive year of surplus. We need surplus to set aside the funds to do our 10-year Capital Plan. More information on our finances is on the Finance page of our website.

<u>Budget for year ended</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<u>May 31, 2020:</u>	<u>May 31,</u>	<u>May 31,</u>
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Income:		
Real Property Taxes	349,000	337,000
Building related fees	56,000	84,000
Other earnings	39,000	47,000
Grants and aid	34,000	35,000
Total Revenue	478,000	503,000
Expense:		
General Gov. Support	208,000	180,000 a
Public Safety	44,000	46,000
Transportation	55,000	35,000 b
Parks	16,000	12,000
Community Service	151,000	157,000
Total Expense	474,000	430,000
Surplus (Deficit)	4,000	73,000

Notes:

- Budget includes \$12,000 contingency, none used in 2019 actual and none may be used in 2020.
- 2019 actual reflects mild winter effect on snow plowing and road repair and this may recur in 2020.

Safety Improvement on Plandome Rd

After two years of discussion with Nassau County DPW about safety on Plandome Road, in October 2019 we received word that no meaningful actions or suggestions would come from the County. As such in November, working with personnel from the Town of North Hempstead Sign Shop we installed reflective, yellow "Chevron Left" signs at Summit Drive to highlight the bend in the road where various accidents have occurred in the past. The goal is to attract attention to the bend in the road that may be ignored by distracted drivers.



Wadhvani Appointed to Zoning Board

In October 2019, Anil Wadhvani was appointed to the Plandome Heights Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Wadhvani and his wife Brooke have lived, and raised two children, in our community. The Wadhvani's built their Plandome Heights home in 1995 and that experience informs Anil in Village Building and Zoning procedures, people and the needs of the applicants. Mr. Wadhvani is a mechanical engineer by training and profession. He has served as an

alternate on the BZA for four years since September 2015. Commenting on his appointment, Wadhvani said, "Now is a good time in my life to 'give back' and make a contribution of my skills and time to the Village." We appreciate all our volunteers who serve.



Technology Update Completed

In December, we completed the upgrade of our Information Technology resources with new Dell workstations, with new generation Intel processors running on the Windows 10 operating system with Office 2019, as well as new uninterruptable power supplies, a new "shared drive" and new router. Our personnel now have access to Dell Pro Support which will help reduce the burden on our tech volunteers. In addition, we upgraded our backup procedures and established



an improved disaster recovery program. We did all this in response to the expiration of support for our Windows 7 computers, scheduled for January 14, 2020 as well as the increased incidence of municipal ransomware and hacking.

Trustee Dan Cataldo led the effort with our volunteer Tech Team. We concluded to add an outside consultant to assist in implementation and provide us guidance going forward.

Our project budget was \$10,000 and was funded from capital funds set aside over the years. We came in on-time and under-budget. These moves have brought our IT systems & software up to the latest standards. We are more resistant to threats & enhanced the productivity of, and support for, our staff.

What's Up with Small Cell Nodes?

You are surely reading about ExteNet's plans to install small cell nodes and the community opposition. ExteNet is suing Plandome and Flower Hill Villages for failure to site, and the Town for failure to act on, ExteNet small cell node requests. Many believe the new nodes will be the precursor to 5G.



Cell nodes are controlled by Federal law that provides a Town or Village very little room to object. For example, health concerns are not acceptable objections under federal law. Federal law also required that a municipality adopt a local law with

provisions consistent with federal law by April 2019 or a Village would have no say in the cell nodes installed in its jurisdiction. And Gov. Cuomo's 2020 - 21 Budget proposal will "further restrict local authority over siting decisions" and fees among other things.

In Plandome Heights, we adopted such a local law in April 2019 in order to provide us with maximum ability (weak as it is) to object. Further, we have received no requests from ExteNet for cell node placement in our Village. So, we are monitoring our neighboring Villages and Town with interest, but we have no requests. Will we be affected if our neighbor Villages win their suits? We can address that if it occurs.

Finishing Touch on our Village Hall Makeover

The largest item on the walls of our refurbished Village Hall is our Village Map. That map dates back to 1980. We figure 40 years is enough, so we commissioned, mounted, framed and installed a new map. With "GIS" technology widespread now,

we were able to plot our electric grid, our street lights including wattage, storm drains, fire hydrants, street widths, right-of-way and other data. We use that map every day and having a new one is helpful and it looks great!

Exploring LED Lighting

LED street lighting has been around for some years. Advantages include: lower cost of electricity and maintenance, a cleaner more focused light and lower energy use. Disadvantages have been very high installation costs and brightness that is too intense for neighborhood lighting.

Recently we have seen movement to LED lighting by other municipalities so we are exploring LED lighting. What we see are improvements in (a) cost of installation and (b) the quality of the lighting. We are finding that the cost has come down significantly, however, our threshold for cost would be lower

than what we are hearing so far. So we continue to explore options.

The lighting needs in our Village are twofold; (a) free standing lights in the neighborhoods and (b) lights on utility poles on Plandome Road.

On Plandome Road, our neighbor, Plandome, has updated their pole mounted lights to LED. Since there are only 9 pole mounted lights on Plandome Road in our Village, we are exploring doing these lights first. We are talking with Nassau County about this since they own that section of road.

N. Y. State Criminal Justice Reform

You are surely reading about the effects on public safety of NY. State Criminal Justice Reforms implemented by the new government in Albany. Changes to eliminate “cash bail” and to evidence and discovery rules have been made. These changes have significant effects



on municipalities and law enforcement. For example, in our own community, the Chilean burglars that were believed to be responsible for many burglaries were released without bail and I am told that they promptly left the country.

Our advocate, the NY Conference of Mayors is advocating in Albany for changes to the new law to address the concerns of municipalities and law enforcement. We have joined our member Villages, and law enforcement, in NYCOM’s effort. My letter to Governor Cuomo, Senator Kaplan and Assemblyman D’Urso is on our website home page.

Protection of Manhasset Bay – In December, we swept our streets and cleaned our storm drains. Our streets drain to the Bay, so this work helps protect and clean Manhasset Bay.

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.

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. We remind residents that overnight parking requires a permit from the Village.

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.



Incorporated Village of PLANDOME HEIGHTS
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