

Message from the Mayor



August 5 – It's my pleasure to report to you on events, activities, progress and plans in our Village. Things are well!

First, our thanks go out to our medical professionals, and first responders for their courage and service.

Thanks also to our emergency workers who kept our food and critical household goods and services flowing while we sheltered-in-place. And finally, thank you all for following the guidelines so that we could "flatten-the-curve" and drive the virus from our community. Special thanks to our parents doing triple duty educating, and engaging, their children at home.

Recent information (July 10) from our Nassau Presiding Legislator Rich Nicoletto shows that from the virus peak in April to July 10 your efforts resulted in the following:

- Hospitalizations; Peak of 2,500 down to 45
- ICU patients: Peak of 592 down to 1
- Daily death: Peak of 219 down to 0
- Positive tests: Peak of 50% down to 0.6% (with much more testing now, of course)

And we now know that about 80% of the deaths in the state are people over 65.

We can take comfort that this results from your efforts and sacrifice. However, it is not time to declare success. COVID-19 remains a highly contagious virus and, if I understand correctly, is often respiratory initiated. I also understand it is a very vicious virus, with treatment uncertainties and vaccines that are weeks or months away.

So, we must remain vigilant and follow the guidance provided by medical professionals.

During this time, the Village maintained close communication with State, County and NCPD officials and with our local Mayors. The control by the state embodied in the Governor's Emergency declaration was complete and guidance was slow in coming and often conflicting or incomplete. Yet such total control exercised authority over our elections, our tax bills, building, meetings, appointments and other

matters. As such, our Mayor's coalition worked to clarify the issues and amplify our voices. For example, in May as residents expressed concerns over various matters, the Peninsula Mayors had multiple meetings with County Executive Laura Curran to advocate, on your behalf, to:

- Re-open wellness medical care,
- Open up outdoor building and small stores,
- Open up outdoor dining at existing venues,
- Open up pools and other recreation,
- Permit outdoor graduations.

Executive Curran was very responsive to our collective outreach and at one point she called me personally to discuss outdoor dining.

It took time for our Village to get a consistent understanding and application of the building rules and to communicate that to residents. For weeks, I was, basically, the only person in Village Hall. It took time, thought and money to convert Village Hall into a place that would be comfortable for our staff, residents, volunteers and constituents to return. We did that and, as required, published our Pandemic Operations Plan which is on our website. This month, we are adding a medical grade air sanitizer to Village Hall for an additional layer of protection.

Many are anxious....afraid, some are angry. Practice patience....be.tolerant...help others.

Enough about COVID-19. The Village exists to serve the residents and we have not lost sight of that mission. As such, the Village has accomplished much during this period. So, inside the Newsletter I am pleased to share the good news that:

- In April we filed our Budget for 2021,
- In May we installed our first LED Lights,
- May 31, 2020 fiscal year is again in surplus,
- In June, Pandemic Operations Plan published,
- In July we saw progress on our Road Grants,
- Continuous Improvement...continues.

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

Kenneth C. Riscica,

Mayor

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 Mayor

Daniel Cataldo
Silva Ferman
Gus Panopoulos
Dianne Sheehan
Alvin Solomon
Norman Taylor
 Trustees

Arlene Drucker
 Clerk - Treasurer

Lisa Fanuka
 Deputy Clerk

Lenore "Lee" Regan
 Court Clerk

Cye E. Ross, Esq.
 Village Justice

Mary Breen Corrigan
 Village Prosecutor

Edward P. Buff, AIA
 Building Inspector
 Stormwater Mgmt.
 Officer

Bart Giusto
 Emergency Mgmt.
 Coordinator

Maryann Grieco
 Architectural Review
 Board, Chair

Eugene O'Connor
 Zoning and Appeals
 Board, Chair

James Madison
 Planning Board, Chair

Trey Harragan
 Technology Advisory
 Board, Chair

GOOD NEWS: 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. And the plan is extending into a 12-year plan.

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). But for nearly two years we have heard nothing on the progress of these grants. With our persistence and advocacy on our behalf from Senator Anna Kaplan and her staff, I was notified in July by each of the two different grant agencies directly. These two grants have now been acknowledged by the grant agencies and the process toward closure has begun. What does that mean?

It means that now we need to respond to a variety of requests to satisfy environmental, legal, administrative and

construction requirements of the two grant agencies. My guess is that the paperwork and approval process ahead is somewhere between six months and 2 years (perhaps more). Since there are two different agencies involved, it may be sooner for one grant agency and longer for another. But a road grant is not done until a contract is issued by the State; and the State moves slowly. But at least it is moving.

We plan to use the grant funds to pave the Bournedales. Due to the delays, we have made significant repairs in 2019 to extend the life of those roads, so we are prepared to wait. We will not proceed if it would jeopardize the funding. That means we will not work in 2020 and while the Spring of 2021 is possible, it is probably optimistic.

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

2021 Budget Completed; 2020 Ends in 11th Year of Surplus; Village Finances Remain Strong

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.

Strong 2021 Budget filed on time in April 2020 – Our Budget for next year, 2020 – 21 calls for \$1,300 (0.2%) increase in spending from \$474,300 to \$475,600 owing to \$3,000 increase in sanitation costs offset by budget cuts in other areas. Our tax increase of \$6,500 (1.8%) is well below our tax cap of \$12,000 (3%). This 1.8% increase is needed to offset the projected loss of \$8,000 of interest income due to financial market changes due to COVID-19 as well as the increased operating cost of \$1,300 above. With the loss of interest offset with higher taxes, our total revenues grow by only 0.2%. The tax increase is \$20/year/home.

Importantly, our Village taxes remain approximately 33% lower than taxes outside the Village for the same services.

A multi-page detailed Budget Presentation and Analysis is on the Finance Page of our website.

COVID-19 has many State and Local governments projecting dire financial conditions in 2020 – 21 and begging Washington for bail-outs. Some of that will trickle down to us through reduced interest income (already budgeted) and reduced State aid or reduced fees (such as building). However, since we plan "Beyond One Year," and because we already adjusted for lost interest by cutting expenses and making a small tax

	<u>Actual</u> <u>May 31,</u> <u>2020</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>May 31,</u> <u>2020</u>	
<u>Year ended May 31, 2020:</u>			
<u>Income:</u>			
Real Property Taxes	349,000	349,000	
Building related fees	61,000	56,000	a
Other earnings	50,000	39,000	a
Grants and aid	30,000	34,000	
Total Revenue	490,000	478,000	
<u>Expense:</u>			
General Gov. Support	200,000	208,000	
Public Safety	38,000	44,000	c
Transportation	28,000	55,000	b
Parks	12,000	16,000	
Community Service	145,000	151,000	
Total Expense	423,000	474,000	
Surplus (Deficit)	67,000	4,000	
<u>Notes:</u>			
a. Building includes subdivision home 2, non-recurring + higher interest and other income, also non-recurring			
b. Reflects mild winter effect reduced expense for snow plowing and road repair.			
c. Pandemic related.			

increase, we believe that any further impacts could be absorbed by our strong financial planning and preparation.

Year Ended May 31, 2020 for 11th Year in a Row – Higher non-recurring income and building fees (approximately \$20,000), together with lower costs for snow removal and road repair (approximately \$28,000) are the major drivers of our \$67,000 surplus for the fiscal year ended May 31, 2020. Our

results, audited by our independent public accountants, were reported to N.Y. State on time on July 31, 2020. The Trustees voted in July to set aside \$60,000 of the surplus for future capital projects under our Capital Plan and other.

And speaking of our Capital Fund, we spent approximately \$15,000 from Capital Funds in the fiscal year in order to fund:

(a) the IT upgrade previously reported (\$8,600) and (b) \$6,600 to fund the LED lighting program on Plandome Road. A more complete presentation of our final results for the year ended May 31, 2020 will be posted on the finance page of our website and will similarly be available from the State Comptroller's website.

LED Lights - Safety Improvement on Plandome Rd

LED street lighting has been around for years. Advantages are: lower cost to operate and maintain, a cleaner more focused light and lower energy use. Disadvantages have been very high costs and brightness that is too intense for neighborhood lighting. Recently we see improvements in (a) cost of installation and (b) the quality of the lighting. The lighting needs in our Village are twofold; (a) free standing lights in the neighborhoods and (b) lights on utility poles on Plandome Road. So we continue to explore options in moving to LED.

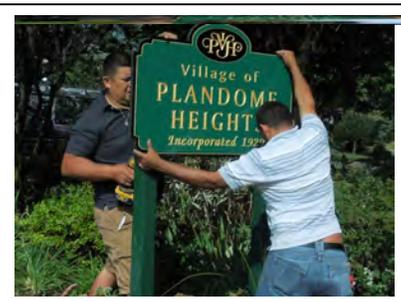
In May, we replaced our existing black extension arms and light fixtures on Plandome Road with new stainless steel extension arms and LED lights. The old lights scattered a yellow incandescent light down and laterally resulting in glare.

The new LED lights focus a white light downward toward the road with less glare. The new lights are an improvement in safety and energy efficiency. Further, the new lights are similar to the lights used on that road in neighboring Plandome and Plandome Manor villages.



Continuous Improvement

While some resources have not been available to us due to the Town shut down, we retained a college student to do special projects. Part of the effort has been identifying tree work needed to remove branches from encroaching on our signs, street lights and roads. In addition, we replaced our four Village flags on Plandome Road and at the Plandome Preserve that were faded, worn and tattered, reflecting, as they did, some of our COVID feelings. But it was time to mount new, fresh, brightly colored flags on our mastheads, so we did.



In addition, we worked on improving the appearance and durability of our Village entrance signs and street name signs.

We did that by cleaning and polyurethane-ing our Village entrance signs and by scrubbing our white Village sign posts.

In May also, we swept our streets and cleaned out our storm drains.



Because our streets drain to the bay, these efforts are a significant part of our joint effort with our members of the Bay Protection Committee to help clean up Manhasset Bay.

On the horizon, we are looking into some clean up and improvement at the Preserve and the possibility of LED street lights in our neighborhoods. Stay tuned.

Maintaining our Trees; For Beauty and For Safety

Our trees provide a wonderful canopy that defines our neighborhoods and provide cooling shade. We are fortunate to have such a wonderfully treed community.



Our trees require regular maintenance by residents to remove dead limbs, trim away from streets, signs and

street lights and to "thin" their crown to reduce "windage" and "sail." A properly trimmed tree will have sufficient room all around to grow and thrive, it will have space within the tree for air to flow through and it will not obstruct streets, lights or signs.

Since Super Storm Sandy took out 42 trees in 2012, and a microburst took out another 11 trees in 2016, residents have been doing an increasingly vigilant job of maintaining our

trees. This work becomes particularly important during storms. When storm winds reach 40 – 60 mph, the risk of downed trees increases. When storm winds reach 60 mph and higher, trees come down, particularly in wet ground.

We are in hurricane season and it is projected to be an active season. If you haven't maintained your trees in a while, you should consider doing so. The Clerk can help if you need it.

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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NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2020

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