

## Moving LED Lights Forward Cautiously

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 to install and brightness that is too intense for neighborhood lighting. Recently improvements have been made in (a) cost and (b) the quality of the lighting.

In May, we replaced our existing black extension arms and light fixtures on Plandome Road with new stainless steel extension arms and LED lights. Now we are exploring options

for LED in our neighborhood street lights. The time is right. Costs have come down, options have opened up and more residents are using LED so the change will be less noticeable.

There are two approaches, replacement and retrofit. In order to “test drive” each option for performance characteristics we have ordered one of each light installed. After observation, we would select one option and then decide how to move forward throughout the Village. More on that to come.

## Village Seeks Input on the Planning Board

A municipal Planning Board functions as a land-use body covering primarily subdivisions. Periodically, other matters come up such as “concurrent jurisdiction” on neighboring property (like a development in adjacent Plandome).

As a mature, fully developed community, few land use issues come up for the attention of the Planning Board. In 20 years, there were only four matters to come before that board and only one of those was a subdivision matter (in 2018). That situation is unlikely to change as there are very few “as of right” opportunities to subdivide in the village.

The Planning Board addresses legal issues and consumes a full

complement of volunteers (7; 5 members and 2 alternates) and those members are required to be regularly trained in law.

After discussion over many years, the Board of Trustees has decided to seek resident input, through a Public Hearing, on transferring the functions of Planning Board to the Board of Trustees.

There is robust further information on this matter on the homepage of our website at [www.plandomeheights-ny.gov](http://www.plandomeheights-ny.gov) where you can read the reasons for the change in the law and get information on how to participate or make your feelings known.

## Election

The 2020 Village election was a challenge. The Governor delayed the election several times ultimately settling on a date in September. Many governance items flow from the election, like appointments, budget, policies, etc. Some can wait (appointments) some can't wait (budget). So, with help from the Village Attorney we navigated a sea of governance items.

When it came to the voting, we noted that some of our most reliable voters were also our most vulnerable residents. So we

executed an absentee ballot program that went like this: Every registered voter was invited by mail to vote by absentee ballot by signing and returning a request for absentee ballot. Then a ballot and a secure envelope was sent to the voter. The voter returns the ballot in the secure envelope with a signature that was then compared by our election inspectors to the voter roll. It was well executed and we had a very high turnout for the vote, 140 voters. We will do this again in March.

## A Permanent Home?

Most/many municipalities own their own Village or Town Hall. For many years, we were housed in officials' homes. With increased and growing requirements and needs, for more than 25 years now, we rent.

There are many advantages to owning since governments pay no property tax and municipal interest rates are remarkably

low. A permanent home would permit the Village to make long term commitments it wouldn't make in a rental. So, we are exploring possible options for a permanent home. It is an exciting thought.

Will we be successful? Maybe not. But we surely won't be if we don't explore; so we are. If you want to help, let me know.

## County Reassessment Phase-in Begins

Once again, the property tax assessment system in Nassau County has been “Reassessed.” The last time was, I believe, 2008, and that one led to this one. 2020 – 21 begins the 5-year Phase-in of Reassessment. As a result, beginning with the School tax bills in October 2020, many of us saw significant increases in our taxes, 10% or more. And that's the good news. Legislator Nicoello advises, “Under the County Executive's plan, if your taxes are increasing as a result of Reassessment, your

taxes will incrementally increase each year for the next four years until your new assessed value is achieved.” Got that?

The Village uses the County assessment rolls to levy our property tax so we are evaluating the effect on the village. I do not expect a significant effect since disparities within our village, as opposed to North Shore vs South Shore for the total County, should be smaller. More on this as we go along.