



# INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF **Plandome Heights** NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2022

## Message from the Mayor

**Kenneth C. Riscica**  
Mayor

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**Edward P. Butt, RA, AIA**  
Building Inspector  
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**Bart Giusto**  
Emergency Mgmt.  
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Architectural Review  
Board, Chair

**Eugene O'Connor**  
Zoning and Appeals  
Board, Chair

**Trey Harragan**  
Technology Advisory  
Board, Chair



**January 31, 2022**– I write to report to you on events, activities, progress and plans in our Village.

First let me acknowledge and welcome so many new residents and families to our Village. The “cycle of renewal” is quite active.

You will find your choice to live in Plandome Heights will be well rewarded.

In 2022, we are facing “consequential times” with enthusiasm, vision for the future, a strong foundation, hard work and steady hands.

In our “new starting line” capital plan, we have worked hard over these past six months to: (a) conclude existing NYS grants, (b) negotiate significant new sources of funding including and beyond NatGrid and (c) competitively bid the planned work. Then we employed a “shared services” strategy to lower our project cost even further. As a result, and with more funding and lower costs, we decided to expand the scope of work to “Do more work with less money.” This is a truly outstanding outcome for the Village.

The “new starting line” Capital Program is a very exciting time in the Village. If all goes according to plan, 85% of our paved roads would be freshly paved and 70% of our Village gas mains would be updated to current standard, replacing old steel mains that are past their useful life. The remaining 30% of gas mains do not need upgrade. This will give us a beautiful new look and impact our capital needs for years to come. This will be approximately \$600,000 of Village work (and about \$1.5 million of gas main work by NatGrid), all planned and funded over time with no current tax effect. It will be hard work that we look forward to doing and it will involve temporary inconvenience for most residents. Because of our lower costs and higher funding, the expanded program will include:

Essential work:

- Paving Bournadales, + half road on Waterway, Neck, Cove and Beachway –

Elective work:

- Paving, curb-to-curb, on Waterway, Neck, Cove and Beachway,
- Paving Shore in 2022 instead of 2023 and significant other work as described inside.

In addition to the Capital Program, we have recruited talented residents to our “Digital Records” effort. This effort, likely multi-year and requiring significant dollars, would bring our Village records into the digital future and help with our records management, archive/retention and storage needs. The program begins with applications for grant money from NY State to help us in the effort. Grants are available up to \$75,000 and the application period is Q1 2022. So, this will be another consequential effort.

In January, we’re finalizing the last extension of our lease. The space was expanded in 2008 and stretched in 2018. In 15 years, building activity alone has grown 200%. The space is only 717 sq. ft., Because we “Plan Beyond One-Year,” space is on our horizon and a permanent home needs to be explored to avoid a big rent increase.

It is hard to believe that the merger of the Planning Board with the Board of Trustees started a year ago in January when we called for a fully transparent Public Hearing. I am pleased to report that no matters came before this Board, now as merged, since 2018 (4 years) and no matters are on the horizon. Further, we strengthened the Zoning Board with three new or alternate members including “re-purposing” one of the former Planning Board Members.

Speaking of “land use” we continue to monitor developments on single family zoning.

These are consequential times in our Village and we are looking forward with enthusiasm, vision for the future, a strong foundation and steady hands. It is my great privilege to serve. Questions, comments and complaints are cheerfully accepted at Mayor@PlandomeHeights-NY.Gov.

*Kenneth C. Riscica*

Mayor

## The “New Starting Line” Capital Plan

In our July Newsletter, we outlined the remaining steps to complete the planning for our “New Starting Line” Capital Plan. We completed those steps over the last 6 months and work is now under way. Here is a summary of the program.

**Historical Context** – In 2011, we hired the Village Engineer to do an evaluation of the condition of our roads ranking them 1 – 10. From this ranking and the survey details (linear and square footage), the Village developed our \$1.1+ million, 10-Year Capital Plan; over 3 times our annual tax levy. We have been operating under, and saving to fund, that plan with spending (actual and plan) as follows:

- \$265,000 (24%) in 2012; Extensive roadwork, on Bay Driveway and Bayview Circle,
- \$360,000 (32%) in 2018; Extensive roadwork, on Waterway, Neck and Cove,
- \$343,000 (30%) in 2021 Planned extensive roadwork in Bournedales and finally,
- \$157,000 (14%) in 2023 Planned extensive roadwork on Shore and Beachway.

\$1,125,000 Total 10-Year Capital Plan

**Current Situation** – The need for NatGrid to install *new gas mains* has *disrupted our plans* such that:

- The 2021 roadwork on the Bournedales has been *delayed* to 2022 to allow for the gas main to be replaced,
- The 2018 roadwork on Waterway, Neck and Cove has to be partially or fully *redone* due to gas mains,

– The 2023 roadwork on Shore and Beachway will be *accelerated* to 2022 for economies of scale

**Resulting Scope of Work** – The scope of work that results from the current situation is:

**Essential work** –

- Paving Bournedales, + half road on Waterway, Neck, Cove and Beachway

**Elective work** –

- Paving, curb-to-curb, on Waterway, Neck, Cove, Beachway,
- Paving Shore in 2022 instead of 2023,
- Replace various broken curbs, and various worn-out swales
- Replace entrance to Plandome Court North
- Stormwater management improvement on Waterway/Cove
- Repairs on Grandview, Bay Driveway, elsewhere

**Projected Cost and Funding; Effect on Property Taxes** –

The projected cost of the project is approximately **\$600,000** (1.75 times our annual tax levy). Available funding includes (i) NYS Road Grants, (ii) NatGrid “half-road” road restoration funding, (iii) recently received COVID-19 funding (partially available), (iv) Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (“CHIPS”) funding and (v) Village Treasury. There will be ***no increase in your property taxes*** to do this work; all funding is in place. We currently expect to use less Treasury than originally planned which leaves the Village strong.

Visit our website [www.PlandomeHeights-NY.gov](http://www.PlandomeHeights-NY.gov) for details.



Milling operation on Cove Drive in 2018



NatGrid “Trenching” on Day #1



Paving



Curb repairs



Swale/Gutter repairs



## How We Communicate

In March 2021 we changed the way we communicate with residents. We added regular mail to our use of North Shore Alerts, email and our periodic Newsletter. We have sent 16 letters in 9 months on topics including: our LED light program, our budget, Cannabis, the NatGrid gas mains, our roadwork, the Planning Board, financial transparency and other matters. It takes a little longer and costs a little more, but no one is left out and one consistent, transparent message is received by all.

This change originated from the need to have complete communication with residents in connection with our *non-binding* review of a Village Hall opportunity. Instead of complete communications, the process *revealed inadequacies* in our communication resulting in the *spread of misinformation*. I described this at the time as *clumsy, at best*. Thank you to the residents & friends who complained about the *misinformation* and the *lack of information*. I take full responsibility for that and for making the changes to fix it.

## Continuous Improvement: LED Lights and Other Improvements

As I had planned all along, once we completed the installation of 60 LED street lamps in June 2021, I contacted Councilwoman Dalimonte about converting the lights on Webster Avenue to LED to “complete the look.” The Town had just completed other LED lights in downtown and related areas and this one street, with only 10 lights, stood out as a vestige of old technology.

Not surprisingly, Councilwoman Dalimonte agreed and enlisted her counterpart, Councilwoman Lurvey (who represents the Town side of Webster Avenue). In December, the Town made the change and the “look is now complete” thanks to our colleagues and friends at the Town. By the way,

our 60 LED lights were installed with existing Parkland Funds, not from your property taxes.

Other works completed includes: vibrant new flags on Plandome Road, painting the STOP lines on our roads to promote compliance, refurbishing our decorative street lamps and poles and sidewalk repairs. These small things improve the quality of life in our Village. We decided to defer replacing faded Street Name signs and the last of the old-style STOP signs as well as faded and worn traffic signs and posts until the “new starting line” program is complete.

## Land Use – Planning Board Update; One Year Later

It has been a full year since January 2021 when the Village called for an *open, transparent public hearing* on our plan to merge the Planning Board function into the Board of Trustees.

As a mature, fully developed community, in 20 years there were only four matters to come before that board and only one of those was a subdivision matter (in 2018). So, after five years of discussion by the Trustees and a Public Hearing for residents in June, the Trustees voted unanimously to merge the function of the Planning Board into the Board of Trustees.

Since then, we have added three strong members or alternates (one “re-purposed” from Planning Board) to the Zoning Board, a gatekeeper on matters destined for the Planning Board. Further, there have been *no matters* addressed by the Planning Board and there are *none contemplated* at this time.

That lack of activity is unlikely to change as there are very few “as of right” opportunities to subdivide in the village. Which is why one-third of the villages in the Town have a similar structure including Munsey Park and Flower Hill.

## Land Use – Single Family Zoning

In our Summer Newsletter, we reported on the continuing trend to eliminate single family zoning (Oregon, Minneapolis). And the NY Times ran two opinion pieces supporting the effort (June 26 and June 30, 2021). Now it seems that Governor Newsome has signed California law SB-9 which

allows, under certain circumstances, four units to be built on property zoned for single family. The city of Berkely has eliminated single family zoning altogether. If you are concerned about land-use, you might want to keep an eye on this trend to eliminate single-family zoning and local control.

## A Permanent Home

In January, we’re finalizing the existing extension of our lease. The space was expanded in 2008 and “stretched” in 2018. But we have outgrown that 717 sq. ft. of space. In 15 years, building activity alone has grown 200%. Because we “Plan Beyond One-Year,” space is on our horizon and a permanent home needs to be explored to avoid a big rent increase.

Early last year, we presented a unique opportunity to purchase a Village Hall *in the Village*. As an imperfect opportunity,

many objections were expressed; we listened and rejected that opportunity. Many residents have encouraged the Village to continue to pursue a permanent Village Hall like most municipalities have. Since we would pay no property tax and interest rates are remarkably low, the advantages are evident and substantial. So, we continue to welcome opportunities, mindful of the opinions that residents expressed, both for and against. This topic needs thoughtful attention and we welcome resident input.

## Finance and Budget

With inflation at 7% and a tax cap of 2% (or less) we are surely seeing some impact, particularly on our ability to hire. However, since our major costs are on multi-year programs, (snow, sanitation, lease), and we “Plan Beyond One Year” in

order to meet our goal of low and stable taxes, we do not currently expect significant effects in our 2022 – 23 budget. we will monitor closely and report to you timely. But our planning horizon, disciplines us to consider this and we will.

## American Rescue Plan (“ARP”)

Since “opting in” to the American Rescue Plan, we collected \$53,000 in July and expect to collect another \$53,000 in 2022. The use of these funds, \$106,000, is restricted and evolving. So far, we expect to use some for stormwater improvements

and some for road repairs in our “new starting line.” Some hope that the funds will become available for digital records. We are following closely in order to preserve maximum opportunity for residents. More as this develops.

## Limited “Opt-Out” on New Cannabis Law

On March 31, 2021, Governor Cuomo signed a new law to regulate the possession and sale of recreational marijuana for adults 21 and over. Municipalities were given a “limited opt-out” of certain provisions of the new law as they pertain to the

(i) retail sale and (ii) gathering for use, of marijuana. We cannot ban cannabis from use in our Village. We held a Public Hearing on our proposed law on July 12, 2021 and voted to “opt-out” at our September meeting.

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

receiving complaints about (a) dogs being allowed to walk, leashed, on resident’s property and (b) the failure of pet owners to pick up their dog waste. Please be courteous and follow the law, don’t allow your dog on others’ property and pick up and dispose of your dog waste.

Please Curb Your Dog and Don’t Trespass – We are

## 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.

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### Incorporated Village of PLANDOME HEIGHTS

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