

December 2, 2016

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE
Mayor@gardencityny.net

By: Nicholas P. Episcopia

MTA BILL FAVORING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS VETOED

In the current New York State budget, there is a clause that gives the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) authority to effectively go into the commercial real estate business. It allows the MTA to purchase commercial real estate, take the properties off the local tax rolls and "allegedly" use the money to improve transportation.

The real estate tax exemption not only further empowers the MTA, it gives them an unfair market advantage over private property owners who must pay the taxes to local municipalities. By a very wide margin, the New York State Legislature quickly passed a bill overturning this clause, preventing the MTA from going into the local real estate business and removing valuable properties from the local tax rolls which directly hurts Villages. It is interesting to note that New York City strongly supported the bill.

Governor Cuomo has vetoed the bill. New York State Conference of Mayors and the Nassau County Village Officials Association sources in Albany report that there probably aren't enough votes in the Legislature to override the veto. This is just another item on a long list of unfair New York State policies which unquestionably continue to further empower and grow the scope of state government while hurting local municipalities.

THIRD TRACK DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY "DEIS"

On November 22, members of the Board of Trustees met with Governor Cuomo's staff to discuss the proposed LIRR Third Track Project. On November 28, they released the 1,000 page Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) and have set January 17 and 19 for public hearings, and will close the public comment period by the end of the month, thereby allowing local elected officials, the general public and, if need be, our attorneys and/or engineers very little time to read, absorb and critique this massive technical document. Given the size and scope of the DEIS material, this time frame is even more unfair to the public than the extremely short time frame allowed earlier this year for review of the initial Scoping Document which was not nearly as extensive as the DEIS.

Meanwhile, the Governor's representatives have launched a massive media campaign and on their website, www.amodernli.com, tout the merits of the project, leaving the impression that there is no need to question any aspect of the plan – be it the necessity for this project and its

alleged benefits to the Main Line communities between Floral Park and Hicksville, the cost, projected time frame to completion and staging areas for the extremely massive and heavy construction equipment.

At our November 22 meeting, we discussed the projected cost for the 9.8 mile long Third Track Project which has now ballooned to \$2 billion - up from \$1.5 billion in about six months. Given the MTA's record on construction of the massive East Side Tunnel Project and the Second Avenue Subway, who knows what the LIRR Third Track Project will really cost.

Prior to this current Third Track Plan, the LIRR president firmly stated that the antiquated switching system both east and west of Jamaica Station is the main problem with train service. However, this much needed and critical switching system upgrade is not included in the \$2 billion cost for the Third Track. When questioned, the Governor's representatives vaguely answered that the switching system project is separate from the third track and is being funded "differently." They brushed off questions and had no answers as to what "different" means, nor did they say when the switching project would start or when it would be completed.

This type of off-handed response is typical of the Governor's representatives and is totally unacceptable when public funding, safety and your quality of life are at stake. Therefore, I am again contacting Senator Kemp Hannon and Assemblyman Ed Ra, as well as our Town of Hempstead and Nassau County representatives, and the Nassau County Village Officials Association. Just as they did regarding the initial scoping document earlier this year, I am hoping that they will again send effective strong letters protesting the very short time frame that has been given to our local municipalities and the public at large to effectively review and comment on the 1,000 page DEIS.

Time is of the essence. I am asking you to let your respective Village Trustees and Property Owners' Associations, as well as our elected State, County and Town of Hempstead representatives know that the terribly short time frame for review and comment on the DEIS is unacceptable.

It makes no difference whether or not your home is adjacent to or near the LIRR Main Line. We are a community. Despite the Governor's representatives' claim that there will be no deleterious effect on residential properties, the heavy construction of the Main Line Third Track will certainly impact homes in the Western and Estates sections. Additionally, we all will be burdened with the massive cost of this project. By way of the Governor's veto of the bill that would stop the MTA's ability to purchase and operate commercial real estate property for a profit, which may or may not be applied to offset the cost, not only will the properties be removed from our local tax rolls, the LIRR can also raise fares – which it has done six times since 2008.

A REMINDER FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The last day for placing leaves in the street for this season was December 10, 2016. Please advise your landscapers not to place the leaves into the street and to take them away. The Public Works Department will be starting its final pass through the Village next week. Equipment will then be

retrofitted for ice and snow removal. Your cooperation is appreciated.

TOYS FOR TOTS PROGRAM

With the holiday season upon us, it is the time to reflect upon how fortunate we are to have the opportunity to share these times with family and friends. As you may be aware, there are many displaced children and adults not so fortunate.

In an effort to bring some happiness to families who will not have the resources to provide a gift for their child this year, the Garden City Police Department has a gift depository for the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Toys for Tots Program.

In the spirit of giving, I ask that if you are able to do so, please drop off an unused, unwrapped gift into the collection box in the lobby of the Garden City Police Department. Your generous gift, no matter how small, could make a difference in the life of another. Thank you in advance for your support of this most worthwhile program.

WEST END CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

The West End Christmas tree lighting, sponsored by the Western Property Owners' Association, will be held Friday, December 2, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in front of the Village park on Plattsdale Avenue, located at the south end of the New Hyde Park Road business district. Holiday music will be provided by Sal Nastasi of "Ready in 10" and singing and dance entertainment will feature the talented performers from Broadway Bound. And as always, Santa will make an appearance! All are invited to kick-off the holiday season with neighbors and friends.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

On Sunday, December 4, the Garden City Chamber of Commerce will sponsor its Village Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony beginning promptly at 3:30 p.m. on the Village Green (corner of Stewart and Hilton Avenues).

This year's program once again is sponsored by Astoria Bank and will feature the Garden City High School Vocal Jazz Ensemble performing a medley of holiday music. Also featured will be the Fivestone Contemporary Rock Band well known for their performances at past spring Belmont Festivals and the summer Friday Night Promenades. They will be performing special renditions of familiar holiday tunes. The Garden City Volunteer Fire Department will deliver Santa Claus and hot chocolate will be provided to everyone. Please bring your entire family to welcome Santa and the holiday season. I look forward to seeing you all there!

PRE-VILLAGE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENT DECEMBER 4

On Sunday, December 4, beginning at 1:30 p.m., the Garden City Foundation invites members of the Garden City community and beyond to share the good cheer of the season. Usher in the Christmas holidays at the Garden City Foundation's first annual Pre-Village Christmas

Tree Lighting celebration to be held at the Cathedral of the Incarnation. Enjoy delicious refreshments, caroling by members of the Cathedral Choir, plus a chance to win a door prize. Adding to the spirit of the season, members of the choir will lead attendees in a procession heading over to the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, which begins at 3:30 p.m. at the Village Gazebo on the corner of Hilton and Stewart Avenues. While there will not be a charge for the Pre-Tree Lighting event, reservations are required. Please contact Kris at 746-2955 or kris@incarnationgc.org.

S.T.O.P. PROGRAM

The Town of Hempstead will conduct its next monthly S.T.O.P. (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants) program on Saturday, December 4, 2016. The program will make disposing of hazardous waste material accessible to as many residents as possible.

Saturday's program is being held at Eisenhower Park, Merrick Avenue and Park Boulevard Parking Field 3. The hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It literally takes minutes to drop off the materials. Workers are at the site and will remove the material directly from your car, free of charge.

When bringing items, please follow these simple guidelines:

- Wrap leaking containers in newspaper and place in a plastic bag or larger container.
- Make sure all caps and lids are tight.
- Place items securely in a box for transportation.
- Use newspaper or cardboard to keep items from tipping or hitting each other.
- Place chemicals that may react with each other in separate areas of the vehicle.
- Do not leave products in a hot, unventilated vehicle for an extended period of time.
- Do not smoke near chemical products.
- Wear rubber gloves when handling containers.

The facility will **NOT** accept the following materials: ammunition, explosives, fire extinguishers, fireworks, electronic recyclable waste, infectious or medical waste, propane tanks larger than 20 pounds, oxygen tanks, radioactive materials and unlabeled materials. For further information about S.T.O.P. call 378-4210 (Option 6) or visit www.TOH.LI.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE

The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting will be held December 15, 2016. I encourage all residents to attend Board of Trustees meetings so as to be thoroughly informed of Village issues from a first-hand perspective.