

September 9, 2016

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor@gardencityny.net

By: Nicholas P. Episcopia

LIRR THIRD TRACK PROPOSAL

Police responded quickly to calls from residents of Greenridge Avenue concerning the removal of "No Third Track" signs from their lawns. Although I received a very complimentary email from one area resident about the prompt response and exemplary attitude of the responding officers, a few residents maintain that neither I nor my fellow Trustees are sufficiently concerned or informed about the LIRR Third Track proposed for the Main Line. These innuendos are simply untrue and completely unfair.

As you know, I have regularly been reporting on the Third Track situation, both in this column and at our Board meetings. My goal is not only to keep residents informed but also to heighten the public's awareness that if this massive project goes forward without detailed planning, it has the potential to irreparably adversely affect entire neighborhoods – not just the homes immediately adjacent to the Main Line tracks.

I want to emphasize that contrary to a few residents' assertions that we are not as interested in the Third Track proposal as they think we should be, this Board is extremely concerned with the nebulous "design-as-we-go" construction plan as it is described by the Governor's representatives and the LIRR, as well as the lack of any time frame to complete construction; the cost of the project; and the absence of concrete facts to justify the need for the project itself and how it will benefit the affected communities, one of which is ours.

Over the summer, there have been extremely disconcerting news reports of the horrific affect construction of an additional track in Ronkonkoma has had on adjacent properties and nearby neighborhoods. Although the Ronkonkoma project is unrelated to the proposed Main Line Third Track between Floral Park and Hicksville, the heavy duty equipment, excruciating noise and the steady pounding emanating from laying the rails has caused cracks to form in the foundations, walls and ceilings of area homes. Affected residents maintain that the LIRR denies any liability for the damage and has told them that they have to retain their own construction engineers to prove that the LIRR construction is causing the damage. The project will go on for at least another year or so.

Ever since the LIRR Main Line Third Track proposal for our area came from the Governor's office in Albany, I, along with members of your Board of Trustees, have spent innumerable hours attending meetings with his and the LIRR's representatives, as well as Mayors and Trustees from other Villages along the Main Line.

After the LIRR produced the initial Scoping Document we, along with officials from the

other affected villages, vigorously protested the extremely short comment period given to the public to make inquiries or statements about the contents – or lack thereof – in the document. We also attended public sessions held by the MTA and publicly voiced our protest about the lack of a specific plan as well as the unfairly short comment period. One of our Board members asked a representative to explain the overall lack of specifics for the project and was told because people objected to the Third Track that was initially proposed a number of years ago, they are not presenting their plans now. Yet the Governor and LIRR clearly want public approval now.

Additionally, Trustees Bolebruch and Makrinos and I attended three evening meetings at New Hyde Park Village Hall where LIRR design engineers presented sketchy plans for the New Hyde Park Road grade crossing. At those meetings, they appeared to accept suggestions on ways to reconfigure roadways in connection with elimination of the grade crossing.

This summer, Trustee Bolebruch and I attended a meeting at a resident's home on Greenridge Avenue where we discussed the Third Track project as proposed at this time, and asked for questions and suggestions which Trustee Bolebruch submitted to the LIRR representatives. They replied for the most part by saying these comments would be covered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is projected to be published by December 2016.

Quite some time ago, as your Mayor, I personally contacted every one of our elected representatives on the Town, County and State levels and urged them to write letters condemning the way this project was being rushed through with virtually no plan specifics. As a result, every one of them wrote a strong letter to the Governor and LIRR in support of our position and the rest of the Mayors of Villages along the Main Line. In addition, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Nassau County Village Officials Association, I obtained a similar letter from our organization.

Finally, in conjunction with the Village of Floral Park, we retained the firm of Beveridge & Diamond, acknowledged experts in Environmental Law, to review and critique the Draft Scoping Document. Their thorough review and critique of the document clearly laid out excellent points as to the deficiencies of the Third Track project as proposed. In conjunction with other Villages along the Main Line, we hope to retain this firm to review and critique the DEIS.

Any resident can see the documents and communications posted on the Village website , www.gardencityny.net, including the critique by Beveridge & Diamond. The website clearly shows the effort we have already made on this issue. I can only encourage all of you to join us, whether or not your home is adjacent to or across the street from the Main Line. This project will affect entire neighborhoods.

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS

Want to stay connected to the Village and its activities? Sign up for email alerts through an online portal on Garden City's homepage. The link is located on the bottom right side of the Village website, www.gardencityny.net.

All you'll need to do is provide your name and a valid email address to immediately begin receiving updates about local meetings and events, upcoming festivals, even Village Hall holiday hours, approved solicitations and road closures.

RAILROAD PARKING PERMITS

Annual resident parking permits for the railroad parking fields will be on sale at Village Hall beginning Monday, September 19. Permit cost is \$150 (payment by cash, check payable to the Incorporated Village of Garden City and/or Master Card/Visa/Discover). Renewal forms will be mailed on September 16. Forms returned via mail must be updated and contain a copy of a valid registration and check.

The Incorporated Village of Garden City will be selling a limited amount of non-resident railroad parking permits for the Stewart Manor Railroad Station. The sale date will be Thursday, September 29, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Garden City Village Hall located at 351 Stewart Avenue, Garden City. All sales will be first come, first serve. Details of the sale are listed below:

- Must show a valid vehicle registration
- Permit cost is \$300 (payment by cash, check payable to the Incorporated Village of Garden City and/or Master Card/Visa/Discover)
- Permits are valid only in Stewart Manor Railroad Station between Saturday, October 1, 2016 and Saturday, September 30, 2017
- Multiple permits may be sold if the household address is the same

For any questions, please call Garden City Village Hall at (516) 465-4000.

9/11 MEMORIAL PROGRAM SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

The Garden City Fire Department will commemorate the 15th anniversary of 9/11 by conducting a short service to remember those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. The program will be held on Sunday, September 11th at Noon (with assembly beginning at 11:45 a.m.) on the Village Green (corner of Stewart and Hilton Avenues).

WELCOME GARDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENTS AND ADELPHI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the students of the Garden City School District back to school and also welcome the first time preschool and kindergarten children to the Garden City School District. The Board of Trustees and I would like to wish Dr. Robert Feirsen, his faculty, staff and students a very good year.

Also at this time, I would like to welcome the students of Adelphi's freshmen class to the Garden City campus and to compliment them on choosing Adelphi. The Board of Trustees and I wish Dr. Christine Riordan, her faculty and staff as well as all students a most productive year.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MEETING SCHEDULE

Dates for the next regular Board meetings are Thursday, October 6 and Thursday, October 20, 2016 at 8 p.m. These meetings are held in the Board Room at Village Hall. I hope that you will be able to attend these meetings so that you can become involved with your Village.