

March 30, 2022

**THE MAYOR'S UPDATE**

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**PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED VILLAGE BUDGET**

The Board of Trustees will hold a budget hearing on the proposed 2022-23 Operating and Capital Budgets on Monday evening, April 4, 2022 during the annual Organizational meeting in person at Village Hall and via Zoom beginning at 7:30 p.m. To view the Tentative Budget as well as the work session presentations, visit the Village website, [www.gardencityny.net](http://www.gardencityny.net) and click on “Departments” and then “Finance.”

**CON-KEL LANDSCAPING**

Trustees renewed a grounds maintenance contract with Con-Kel Landscaping. Under the terms and conditions of the existing contract, the Village and contractor have two one-year extension options at the current bid amount. Costs associated with this contract span the current fiscal year and fiscal year 2022/23. This renewal is for two months of service (April and May) for Fiscal Year 2021/22 for a cost of \$56,168. The remaining six months of service at a cost of \$168,504, as well as two Village-wide pruning of shrubs at a cost of \$25,700 is pending approval of the 2022-23 budget.

Recreation and Parks Department staff met with Con-Kel Landscaping’s owner, John Power, to discuss a better way to supervise the work being done around the Village. “We anticipate getting a better job this coming summer,” Paul Blake, chairperson of the Board of Commissioners of Cultural and Recreational Affairs, said. Mr. Blake is expected to meet with Mr. Power and our nursery manager Steve Barnych to go over a work schedule. “Mr. Barnych is going to be shadowing them so that we can get immediate corrective action if something is not done up to our standards,” Mr. Blake added.

**CHAMBER TOLL HOUSE RENT AND EXTENSION AGREEMENT**

The Garden City Chamber of Commerce is seeking an extension agreement for the Toll House license between the Village of Garden City and the Chamber. This topic was deferred to the April 4, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting. By way of

background, in December 1988, the Board of Trustees agreed to have the Chamber of Commerce move the Vanderbilt Toll House and transfer ownership of the building to the Village. A fee (rent) of \$1,000 per month was charged to the Chamber, excluding utilities. The license agreement was for use by the Chamber for office purposes and a museum regarding the history of the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. The rental rate was determined to be \$17.14 per square foot for a gross floor area of 700 square feet. Current rents in Nassau County are in the range of \$25 to \$45 per square foot for office space. Based on the low end current market rate for office space of \$25 per square foot, the fee (rent) would be \$1,458.00 per month. With the prior rent of \$434 per month, the Chamber has enjoyed a substantial discount at Village expense. Prior to December 1, 2020 the fee (rent) was \$434.40 per month. On December 1, 2020 the Board of Trustees reduced the fee (rent) from \$434.40 per month to \$100 per month for reasons related to the COVID pandemic.

Tax returns indicate in 2019 and 2020 total revenues were \$369,706 and \$135,328 respectively with salaries paid out at about \$107,000 each year for 2019 and 2020. Salaries were not reduced when COVID hit in 2020. The Chamber profit and loss statement for 2021 indicates income from the Promenades was \$86,533, \$16,260 for the Street Fair and \$8,666 for special events. Membership dues included additional income of \$18,597. What does it cost the Village to support the Chamber, a non- governmental agency? The Village expends police, fire and sanitation costs to support the events the Chamber profits from. The Village incurs costs in the range of \$30,000 to \$35,000 per year. The Village is not a philanthropy and should no longer subsidize the Chamber. I recommend the fee (rent) be at least the \$1,000 per month as originally paid in 1988 by the Chamber, which in today's market is still a bargain. In light of my recommendation, I wish to remind the Trustees of their fiduciary responsibility to insure tax payer dollars are spent wisely. I take my responsibility seriously and ask you to seriously consider what is a fair market rent for the Chamber. This will be a topic of conversation at Monday's meeting.

### **ENHANCED LANDSCAPING OF VILLAGE AREAS AFFECTED BY THIRD TRACK**

I and members of the Third Track Committee have begun meetings for the enhanced landscaping of the Village areas affected by the new L.I.R.R. Third Track construction. I have enlisted the help of several resident landscape architects

as well as Village engineers to assist the Third Track Committee in the final details for the new landscaping. We will be conducting weekly and biweekly meetings with Third Track Constructors (3TC) to accomplish the proposed landscaping.

### **IDENTITY THEFT CASES**

Garden City Police are investigating the following identity theft cases in the Village during March. Between March 1-21, Officers investigated eight reports of victims' identities being stolen and used to open unauthorized accounts, file fraudulent tax returns, and make unauthorized transactions.

On March 1 a resident's identity was reportedly stolen and used to open an unauthorized bank account. The following day, on March 2, the Department investigated a report of a fraudulent \$1,300 charge against a person's mobile payment app. On March 9 the IRS advised a resident that someone used her identity without permission to file a fraudulent tax return. Two days later, on March 11, the Department investigated a report of an unauthorized transaction against a person's online bank account. On March 17 a business reported a fraudulent transfer of money from the company's bank account. Further, multiple unauthorized purchases were reportedly made against a victim's credit card account at a local store on the same day.

On March 18 an unknown person opened a fraudulent credit card account using the identity of a victim without permission. Two days later, on March 20, Garden City Detectives arrested a 21-year-old male for cashing a fraudulent check exceeding \$14,000 against a victim's bank account. He was charged with identity theft, grand larceny, and possession of a forged instrument. A second subject, a 20-year-old male, was arrested for this incident on March 21 and charged with two counts of grand larceny. That same day, an unauthorized credit card account was opened in a victim's name and was used to make unauthorized purchases.

If you believe you may be a victim of identity theft, contact the Garden City Detective Division at 516-465-4108.

### **NATIONAL GRID WORK**

Last week, the construction team continued preparation for gas main testing in Garden City and East Williston. Over the next week, neighbors can expect to see

the following activities during work hours:

- Gas main testing activities on Stewart Avenue and near the Roslyn Road - East Williston Avenue intersection.

### **Traffic Management Updates:**

- Westbound traffic on Stewart Avenue, between Arthur Street and Kellum Lane, will be reduced to one lane during work hours.
- The U-turn in the Stewart Avenue median between Arthur Street and Kellum Lane will be closed at all times for the duration of the project.
- Northbound traffic on Roslyn Road will be reduced to one lane near East Williston Avenue.
- Our crews will have flaggers present to redirect traffic as necessary.

### **CALL 8-1-1 BEFORE YOU DIG**

With Spring upon us, many homeowners will soon begin to landscape and make upgrades to their homes – whether that be planting or taking down trees or bushes, repaving their driveway, building walkways, or just general beautification of their property. As such, National Grid is ramping up our outreach efforts regarding the need for homeowners, contractors, and excavators to call 8-1-1 before paving or digging.

#### **Steps to Take:**

1. Call 8-1-1- at least 2 days (not including day you call) in advance of digging or paving
2. Wait for confirmation that ALL utilities to locate have been marked before you dig
3. Once all utilities have been located and marked, you can begin your project

#### **Risks if You Don't Call:**

- Significant property or personal damage/injury
- Damage to underground infrastructure - leaving the community without essential utilities resulting in costly property or environmental damage
- Fines and Penalties: failure to comply with any provision of this law shall be subject to a \$2,500 fine for the first violation and up to an additional \$10,000 for each succeeding violation that occurs within a 12-month period.