

February 20, 2019

GARDEN CITY UPDATE - NEWS AND INFORMATION

Mayor@gardencityny.net

The Board of Trustees and staff continue to work on numerous projects, including plans for the upcoming budget, the LIRR Third Track and its impact on Garden City, the water tank replacement project, water quality issues, personnel matters, zoning matters, the concept plan for the former St. Paul's School building and the upcoming budget and other matters. We encourage you to attend Village Board of Trustees meetings and meetings of your Property Owners' Associations. Meetings of the Property Owners' Associations are held almost every month – please check their respective websites.

TAX CAP LEGISLATION ADOPTED

As a protective measure, the Garden City Board of Trustees adopted a Local Law on February 13, 2019 to allow the Board to override the limit on the amount of real property taxes that may be levied by the Village, as per General Municipal Law. This Local Law would permit the Village, if needed, to adopt a budget for the Fiscal Year commencing June 1, 2019 that would exceed the “tax levy limit.”

Board members emphasized that despite the unfounded rumors that are often circulated on Facebook pages, the tax legislation has nothing whatsoever to do with any possible St. Paul's project. Any potential project undertaken there is a long way from being finalized and funding has not yet been discussed and would not be part of any operating level budget.

“The Board has no intention to pierce the tax cap at this time – we have not even seen a draft budget yet. This is merely a proactive protection measure in case something comes up that might require a large expenditure,” Mayor Brian Daughney said. “For example, we as a Board are actively working with our consultants on contaminant issues in our water - issues that are impacting localities throughout the United States and especially Long Island. The EPA and State may enact limitations that will require us to spend tens of millions of dollars quickly and get funds into this upcoming budget.”

Village Counsel Peter Bee emphasized that this Local Law does not raise taxes nor does it direct the Board of Trustees to raise taxes. Rather, it allows the Board to raise taxes above the tax levy limit as defined by General Municipal Law if - and only if - the Board determined that it was appropriate to do so when enacting the budget. “It does not raise taxes by itself. It does not require the taxes to be raised now or in the future,” Mr. Bee emphasized. “It is a good insurance policy to have in place should some extraordinary, unforeseen circumstance come to pass. I do recommend its enactment.” Mr. Bee further recommended that the legislation be reintroduced and voted upon annually.

The Tax Levy Limit Formula consists of three components that contribute to the calculation of what we refer to as the tax cap, according to Village Treasurer Irene Woo. The first of the three

components is the Allowable Levy Growth Factor (Inflationary Factor), which is provided by the New York State Comptroller's Office. The law states that the Village can raise taxes 2 percent or the inflationary factor, whichever is lower. This is what most people refer to informally as the 2 percent tax cap. The inflationary factor for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 is 2.46 percent, which means that for this portion of the overall calculation, the Village is limited to 2.00 percent. In the past four years, the Village has been successful in maintaining the overall tax levy increases at or below the inflationary factor.

The second component is the Tax Base Growth Factor, which is provided by New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. This percentage takes into account any new developments and changes in taxable status of existing property in the Village. This factor is 1.37 percent for Fiscal Year 2019-20, Ms. Woo said. This combined with the 2.00 percent, allows the Village to raise taxes to 3.37 percent without piercing the tax cap.

The third component is the Allowable Carryover from previous fiscal years. "If you do not raise taxes to the full Tax Levy Limit amount in prior years, a portion carries over into the next year and can be applied to the current year," Ms. Woo said.

"When you think about the tax cap, it's not just limited to two percent. The Village is allowed to raise taxes based on all of these factors. That being said," Ms. Woo added, "as in the past, I do not foresee the Village needing to exceed all those factors to pierce the tax cap in the 2019-20 fiscal year."

VILLAGE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

During a work session at the February 13, 2019 Board meeting, Trustees set a date for a celebration to mark two momentous occasions in the Village this year - the 150th anniversary of Mr. Stewart's land purchase and the 100th anniversary of the Community Agreement.

As currently contemplated, the Village envisions a celebration will be held Saturday, May 18, 2019 on the fields at St. Paul's and may include a fireworks display, food trucks, live music and more. The date is tied to the signing of the Community Agreement (May 19, 1919). Deputy Mayor Theresa Trouvé shared ideas too for additional potential events, and will come back to the Board after meeting with volunteers who offered their assistance in the planning process.

IMPROVED PLAYING ENVIRONMENT AT TENNIS CENTER

The new heating system is fully operational at the Tennis Center, with just a few minor adjustments still needed. "Our tennis players are now playing in 60 plus degree temperatures when it's 30 degrees outside," said Kevin Ocker, chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Cultural and Recreational Affairs. "We appreciate the efforts of our Public Works Engineering Division who researched and designed a much improved heating system and playing environment for our customers."

The Village, through the Board of Cultural and Recreational Affairs and the Board of Trustees, approved the new system to improve the interior atmosphere during winter play. Additionally,

the new system is expected to save the Village approximately \$18,000 annually in utilities. The Board of Trustees wishes to emphasize that this latest recreation-related benefit is part of the Board's emphasis that Village facilities be brought up to date and improved.

FIELD 2 WORK

Work on Field 2 at Community Park is progressing well. This field is a baseball field primarily used by players ages 9 to 11 and also some softball. To date, excavation of the infield is nearly complete and upgrades to field lighting will begin next week. This baseball/softball field will be fully renovated, including a new artificial turf infield, new dugouts, natural outfield grass and new lighting. Weather permitting, we still anticipate completion by Little League Opening Day in April. The artificial infield will allow for more playing time, especially after inclement weather, and less maintenance.

When completed, the Village will have substantially completed renovations of all of the fields at Community Park, renovations we commenced approximately three years ago. The Board believes that these facilities rival any facilities on Long Island and we invite our residents to visit these facilities and utilize them.

ROAD EXCAVATIONS LOCAL LAW - PROTECTING OUR ROADS

A public hearing was held to consider a proposed Local Law to amend the Village Code in relation to street openings, clarifying the application of the same and adding provisions. Trustees adopted the law, which limits the ability of anyone, including utilities such as PSEG and National Grid, to dig up recently paved roads in the Village. The law now requires the repaving of the road, curb to curb, not just the portions dug up. Specifically, the amendment prohibits, short of an emergency, permits being issued for street openings for streets that were repaved in the last three years or newly paved in the last five years. Board members sought to protect taxpayers' investments in road repaving and hope that the new law will force utilities to do a better job of planning ahead with their projects and coordinating with the Village.

ST. PAUL'S COMFORT STATION

Upgrades to the St. Paul's comfort station are underway. According to Kevin Ocker, chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Cultural and Recreational Affairs, said additional remediation work is necessary but no major delay is expected.

Projected in the Strategic Plan, the comfort station is being completely upgraded. The contractor, B&B Contracting Group, LLC, is expected to finish the project in March. The facility, which is heavily used, is a support facility for the St. Paul's fields and playground area. Funds are available in the Recreation, Cluett Hall and Field House rehabilitation account.

The scope of work includes the installation of new quarry tile floors and walls up to four feet, electric upgrades, new partitions and vandal resistant fixtures and accessories. In addition, under the operating maintenance plan, the exterior of this comfort station will be stained and painted.

ST. PAUL'S PROJECT UPDATE

The Board of Trustees has planned for several meetings between various community groups (GCAA, seniors, POAs, dance, school system and more) during the week of March 13th with the Village's outside expert, Sports Facility Advisory. Meetings have been moved from the week of February 25th so that more participation can be scheduled. We expect our consultant to be in the Village March 13-15. Please visit the Village website for updates and schedules.

The Village's Administrator is also speaking with experts regarding stained glass windows (recommended by the Cathedral of the Incarnation and the Village's architects) to obtain advice and commence work to protect the stained glass windows inside the St. Paul's Main Building. The Village is also considering various undertakings to board up other windows and further prevent access to the building.

ST. ANNE'S MINISTRY BUILDING PROJECT APPROVED

The Board of Trustees granted the Church of St. Anne final site plan approval to construct a two-story, 10,000 square foot ministry building at 26 Fairmount Boulevard to accommodate the existing St. Anne's ministries. A representative who attended the meeting said work is slated to begin in two months. The Site Plan was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in November 2018 and the Architectural Design Review Board in January 2019.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

The next scheduled Board of Trustees meeting will be held *Tuesday*, February 26, 2019 beginning at 7:15 p.m. in the Village Hall Board Room. Please note the time change. This day also marks annual Grievance Day in which hearings will be held between 5:30 and 9:30 p.m. Please also check the Village website for upcoming budget meeting dates.