



Supervisor Chris Burdick's Report – March 31, 2017



NEW POSTS

SEWER PROJECT MOVES AHEAD

As you may have read, the property owners in the Bedford Hills-Katonah Business Sewer District overwhelmingly voted in favor of the proposal to create a sewer district and approve issuance of \$1.2 million in bonds to finance in part the \$20.5 million construction cost of the sewer system. Following the overwhelming victory of the referendum, one long-time resident and Katonah business district property owner remarked, “I never thought I’d see it in my lifetime.” And for those uncertain about the financial impact of the proposed Bedford Hills-Katonah Business Sewer District, *only* property owners in the proposed district will pay sewer rents which would include the debt service on the \$1.2 million bonds to be issued. The balance of the estimated \$20.5 million project cost will be provided by New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the Westchester County Water Quality Improvement Program funds. The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has agreed to convey its wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) after a period of the Town’s demonstrated successful operation of the WWTP without charge to the Town or the District.

So what are the next steps? Developing engineering plans for the sewer system is a major undertaking, anticipated to take up to 18 months. It is anticipated that at the April 4 meeting the Town Board will authorize a request for proposal and then make an award in May. The actual construction of the system will take about one year. So in all, 2 ½ years to go – though we will attempt to expedite the process, without sacrificing quality or increasing cost. All of this does not begin to describe the myriad details of agreements with and approvals from state and local agencies, working with each and every property owner on the connections to the sewer main, adoption of a sewer law encompassing the detail of sewer rents, property owner requirements, to cite a few matters.

We will keep you posted.

UPDATE ON THE SEPTIC SYSTEM REPAIR & REPLACEMENT PROGRAM – We are pleased that not only is the sewer project going forward, but Westchester County approved the \$3.5 million funding level for our Septic System Repair and Replacement Program, launched in October 2015. This funding is from the Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) under which Bedford has a \$10 million “earmark”, with the balance for the sewer project. The County also approved my request that as long as we draw at least \$5,750,000 for the sewer project from the WQIP funds (a NYC DEP requirement), we may apply the balance of our \$10 million earmark, that is, as much as \$4,250,000 million to our Septic System Repair and Replacement Program. So with this special financial help available for those in the NYC Watershed (about 80% of the land area) with failing septic systems, we have the ability not only to provide sewers to the areas most needing it, but also help to property owners with failing systems. Under Bedford’s Septic System Repair and Replacement Program, the Town now has reimbursed \$162,436 in eligible cost to 37 property owners. Septic inspections once every five years are required by New York State law as incorporated in town law. If you have a failing septic system, help is here for reimbursement up to 50% of approved eligible expenses for repair or replacement of a septic system, as well as design engineering costs not to exceed 20% of total construction costs. Almost all the properties in Bedford Hills and Katonah and many in Bedford Village are in the watershed. We have a number of items posted on our website at <http://www.bedfordny.gov/departments/planning/septic/>. If your septic collector or contractor reports that your system is in failure, and you wish to benefit from the reimbursement program, go onto the website and download the application form which provides the simple steps you should take. Still have questions? Please call me at 666-6530 or e-mail me at supervisor@bedfordny.gov

OVERHAUL OF HISTORIC BUILDING PRESERVATION LAW

The Historic Building Preservation Commission (HBPC) is recommending to the Town Board the adoption of an overhaul of the Historic Building Preservation Law (HBPL). The HBPC and the Board have been working on this project for nearly five years. The Town hired outside consultants to prepare a survey of properties within the Town that were worthy of historic designation. Working with this survey as a guide, the HBPC established a Tier system of historic properties prioritizing their significance. Over several years the HBPC held five public Information Sessions, and also four Work Sessions with the Town Board. The results are the creation of a recommendations to overhaul the HBPC and adopt a new survey of historic buildings in the Town of Bedford. The HBPC feels that the results of these efforts are significant. The Board will consider on April 4 whether to move forward with the recommendations which would achieve the objectives of reducing the number of properties regulated, scaling back the authority of the Commission, increasing the “as of right” activities, providing an administrative permit procedure to cut time and expense, and clarifying several provisions of the Law. The HBPC also supports the Planning Director’s recommendations for an easily administered reduction in building permit fees associated with historic work. The HBPC examined the possibility of a tax abatement plan, but concluded that the difficulty of administering such a law would be significant. In summary, the HBPL is recommending that the Town Board at its April 4 meeting schedule a public hearing to adopt the overhaul revisions to the HBPL together with the proposed reduction in building permit fees for historic work.

POLICE STATION RENOVATION If you drive by the Police Station, you’ll see that the demolition phase of the project is underway with the gut rehabilitation of the station building

and the demolition of a portion of the adjacent Recreation and Parks Department building. As previously reported, the bids were highly competitive and it is anticipated that the project will be within \$7 million. It should be noted that the project costs include the significant renovations carried out to the lower level of the Town Offices at 321 Bedford Road, which now are the temporary headquarters for the Police Department. The project is a complete renovation of the existing police station with two additions. It is significantly less expensive than alternative plans for a two story building or an entirely new building estimates which would have exceeded \$12 million. The project is on scheduled to be completed in January 2018.

S&P GLOBAL RATINGS - REAFFIRMS BEDFORD'S HIGHEST CREDIT RATING

We were delighted to learn that S&P Global Ratings assigned a AAA Bond Rating to the Town continuing this highest rating. Fewer than 3% of municipalities are awarded this coveted rating which has a direct impact on taxpayers by providing a lower rate of interest than those municipalities whose ratings are not as high. In fact, this came into play with our bond issuance this month. We received on our \$10 million bond issue to finance 2016 and 2017 Capital Projects a 3.08% interest rate, well below the 3.5% which Comptroller Abe Zambrano used for budgeting purposes.

ANTIOCH AFFORDABLE HOUSING MOVES AHEAD

As reported in my March 17 weekly newsletter, the financing and the property conveyances for this project closed that day. As a more complete explanation, this entailed the conveyance of the Town's vacant lot for use for septic facilities, conveyance of all parcels into the not-for-profit housing development fund corporation which will construct the housing and the closing of the construction loan and the County's funding. It was a complicated transaction which took great teamwork among representatives of Antioch Baptist Church, Westchester County, CPC (the mortgage lender), Blue Mountain Housing Development Corp (the Town's affordable housing affiliate) and the Town itself. This now enables the project to move forward and we are on schedule to complete before year end the construction of the twelve affordable housing units on Railroad Avenue in Bedford Hills.

TOWN BOARD ADOPTS RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING BEDFORD AS AN OPEN AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

The Town Board at its March 7 meeting, with encouragement and support from most members of the community in attendance, unanimously adopted a resolution which I proposed setting forth the Town's Moral Stance on Recent Events and Related Town Policies. I proposed the resolution in response to the spate of acts of antisemitism, racism, bigotry, Xenophobia, hatred and divisiveness; and to President Trump's recent Executive Order regarding immigration that raises questions on the coordination between federal authorities and local police departments. As I mentioned at the meeting, I certainly understand and recognize that sentiments about such a resolution range from those opposed to those who advocate a stronger statement. I proposed the action in response to calls that the Town Board advise the community of its stance on recent acts including swastikas in the schools and reports of bullying Latino students. There also is concern and unease among Latino residents regarding the Trump Administration's immigration policies. I listened carefully and dispassionately to all views and came to the conclusion that it was the moral obligation of the Town Board to adopt a statement and assure the community regarding the policies of the Town both in being an open and welcoming community as well as to carrying out our primary responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of those whom we serve. As I mentioned at the meeting, the resolution is a reaffirmation of our policies and practices of our Town government to serve our public safety responsibilities. Some questioned the necessity, suggesting that if nothing has changed, there is

no purpose or need for the resolution. I would submit that such assurances and reaffirmation is valid and needed given concerns among our community. The resolution is intended to respond, but also to reach a balance. The resolution was developed based on one on one conversations with each of my Town Board colleagues, the views of members of the community, including those of religious leaders and discussions with our Town attorney and with our Police Chief. [Click here](#) for the final version

IMPROVING PARKING AVAILABILITY

The Town Board held a meeting on March 27 to discuss Town parking facilities at the commuter lots and in Bedford Village. The Town Board's primary concern is to provide sufficient parking to its residents and businesses. Comptroller Abe Zambrano, who also runs the Town's Parking Bureau, reported on his plan to increase the number of parking spaces. The Town also is examining ways to expand parking availability in Bedford Village with the creation of a municipal parking lot off of Court Road and is in discussions with the Bedford Presbyterian Church to acquire property to construct the lot. We also are reviewing ways to provide greater utilization of the 20 spaces the Town leases from the Church for use by Village businesses (only 11 of the spaces currently are being utilized).

To help reduce the waiting list (see below), the Board authorized Comptroller Zambrano to use his discretion in offering additional permits for sale in the "prime lots": Lot 1 in Katonah (adjacent to the train station) and Lot 4 in Bedford Hills (also adjacent to the train station). To help gauge usage, he will be surveying permit holders on the frequency with which they utilize their permits. He also will be asking Parking Enforcement to keep a log of unused spaces at various times in the prime lots.

We currently have 407 names on the wait list.

1. Lot 4 –Bedford Hills – 236
2. Lot 1 – Katonah - 117
3. In addition 44 residents are interested in a permit for either Lot 4 or Lot 1, whichever first becomes available.
4. There are 10 businesses waiting for a space in Lot 1 in Katonah,

Currently, 23 residents on the waiting list for Katonah Lot 1 hold a permit for lot 3 and approximately 50 residents that hold permits in Katonah Lot 2 are also on the wait list for lot 1.

The Board took the following actions:

1. Resident Parking Fee increased from \$475 to \$500 (there had been no increase since 2011, and the action was taken to help offset increases in operating costs).
2. Established late renewal fees:
 - a. \$50 late fee for renewal between June 1 and June 30;
 - b. \$100 late fee for renewal between July 1 and July 15 and confirmed present Town policy that after July 15, residents who let their permits lapse without renewal will no longer be entitled to renewal for Lot 1 or Lot 4, but a permit will be sold for other lots to the extent then available.
3. Increased the administrative fee from \$10 to \$15 for replacement of a lost permit and for recording changes to permit account.
4. Established a \$10 administrative fee for Returned Permits which would be deducted from any refund of unused parking fee.

The Town Board has asked the Comptroller to further review other areas for improvement:

1. Continue to monitor the number of vehicles with out of state plates parking in the commuter lots (1, 1A, 2, 4,5,7 & Railroad Avenue)
2. Update the survey of parking rates in other communities.

3. Recommend a daily parking rate for businesses in Bedford Village to better utilize the spaces leased from the Bedford Presbyterian church. .
4. Contact ParkPro (which manages valet parking for a number of other municipal commuter lots) and schedule a work session with the Town Board to consider a pilot valet parking program.
5. Compile information about the cost to conduct a feasibility study to build a parking structure at the Bedford Hills train station.
6. Survey other municipalities regarding existence/formation of a “Commuter Council”.
7. Will consider opening the rarely utilized north end of lots 1 and 4 to non-residents at a rate to be approved by the Board.

The Board will seek input from the community, especially those holding permits and those on waiting lists.

KEEPING OUR RESIDENTS SAFE – UPDATE ON ENFORCING THE LANDLORD REGISTRY LAW

As I previously reported, the Town Board approved my recommendation to hire on a four-month basis two part-time Assistant Building Inspectors to accelerate property owner compliance with the Town’s Landlord Registry law which requires the registration with the Building Department of two-family and multifamily buildings. The Town is among the few of its size with a law of this nature to protect the residents. Building Inspector Alberto Ciraco reported at the March 21 Town Board meeting that 148 of the 208 properties under the registry now have been inspected in the two-year inspection cycle under the law. Good news is that the great majority passed the inspections (which are of every unit in each building) and the infractions for those that did not were relatively minor. We wish to thank the property owners who have cooperated in our efforts to ensure the safety of the community.

BEDFORD HILLS TRAIN STATION RENOVATION PROJECT NEARLY COMPLETE – APRIL 6 GRAND RE-OPENING

I am pleased to report that we are on schedule to complete the repair and renovation of the main room of the train station. The \$80,000 project overseen by Superintendent of Recreation & Parks Bill Heidepriem is outstanding. The interior repairs address safety concerns, concerns of the property manager for the MTA (which is the Town’s landlord) and complaints from user groups regarding the condition of the space. But there’s more. With the able assistance of our Town Historian, John Stockbridge, and consultation with the NYS Historic Preservation Office, the work includes restoration of the main room to its previous glory from the early 1900s with its vaulted ceiling and beautiful wainscoting. Drop by for the April 6 re-opening of the station from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Here’s a recap of the work:

- Ceiling Removal of the old suspended ceiling, which is in poor condition. This will open up the ceiling to the original wainscoting and allowing installation of new lighting fixtures replicating, as best as possible, the period lighting from the early 1900s which had been removed decades ago. The ceiling was patched and painted.
- Rooms, Hallway – Remove the existing non-bearing closet walls and overhang separating the two rooms. Remove the partition room allowing access between the main room of the station and the public bathrooms in the lobby area at the north end of the station..
- Wood Floor A new pre finished oak floor was installed over the old floor
- Other Work Addition work includes painting, cleaning, general carpentry (including installation of missing trim) and substantial electrical work. HVAC vents were relocated in

the ceiling. The fire alarm system was upgraded in the main room. Privacy shutter will be added to the lower sections of the windows.

A 2014 bond issuance included approximately \$80,000 in capital funds for train station work. The Town, through the Recreation and Parks Department, bid out the work resulting in very favorable excellent pricing from the low bidder (and local contractor), Wayne Fazzinga, Inc., and J.C. Beach, Inc., the Town's electrician. We are very grateful for their excellent workmanship.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT – NOW AVAILABLE

I thank our Town Justices, Town Clerk, Historian and department heads for providing their reports. Since becoming Supervisor, I have issued weekly, monthly and annual reports to provide transparency to the community on how your tax dollars are spent, how the Town government affects you and to provide the basis and information on which you can provide me and my colleagues on the Town Board with your views.

The Town continues to provide substantial support to property owners with failing septic systems, as we are continuing the Septic System Repair and Replacement Program with the \$3.5 million funds (and potentially more) from the County. See below "And Don't Forget the Septic System Program."

MARCH REPORT AND ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS;

Public Works Commissioner Kevin Winn reported on March 16 on the work of his Department during February:

Highway

Work during the month included snow and ice removal, pothole patching, maintenance of drainage systems, and dirt road grading.

Construction of the Adams Street salt shed building was completed in December. Site work is ongoing.

We are very pleased that the passage of the sewer referendum opens up new possibilities not only for our central business district in Bedford Hills and Katonah, but also for the Adams Street highway garage upgrade and operations. The facility now will be connected to the sewer main running along Adams Street (at Town expense, and not at the expense of the sewer district) reducing anticipated operating costs. This positive development may also allow for improvements to and reconfiguration of the upgrade project. As noted earlier, while not an entirely new facility, the project cost is substantially less than the \$14 to \$15 million estimated under earlier plans (at a time when the economy was healthier and the Town's budget might have been able to accommodate it) with Town forces performing good portions of the work, reducing project costs.

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

The Town's Comptroller, Abe Zambrano, reported on March 12 as follows:

REVENUE AREAS OF NOTE

Mortgage Tax. Based on information obtained from the Westchester County Clerk's office, we have been able to project that the first installment of the Mortgage Recording

tax due in April will be in the \$475,000 range. Projections for the rest of the year indicate that we will meet or slightly exceed the budgeted amount.

Sales Tax. According to the County's Department of Finance, January 2017 sales tax increased by just over 5% over the same period in 2016. Based on that information, at this point, we are optimistic that the same trend will continue for the rest of the year. Our calculations indicate that we will exceed the \$2,480,000 revenue budgeted for the year.

Parking. As the result of the increase in the daily parking fees approved by the Town Board effective January 1, 2017, we are seeing a boost in parking revenue. Annualizing the increase in daily parking fees collected in January and February will generate an additional \$80,000 in revenue for the year.

Fines and Forfeited Bail. Collection of Justice Court fines are recorded a month in arrears due to the timing of the processing by the NYS Office of Court Administration. Fines collected in January were 20% higher than a year ago in 2016.

Safety Inspections. Fees collected in January and February are 50% lower than in 2016. At this time, if the trend continues, we will have a shortfall of approximately \$290,000 for the year. However, we need to keep in mind that the warmer months historically bring more activity in this area.

CONTINUING POSTS

The Town's 2015 Financial Statements and Supplementary Information – PKF O'Brien Davies, LLP (the Town's auditors) is available [Click here](#)

REPAVING OF 684 – PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION

We're not there yet! While it was good news as reported previously that working collaboratively with the community and Assemblyman David Buchwald, we've secured a \$6 million appropriation for paving *a portion* of the Bedford stretch of I-684, we need to get the *entire* stretch paved including the portion from Harris Road through the Exit 5/6 interchange. I ask your help again. **Please sign the petition to Stop the 684 Noise which you'll find at <https://www.change.org/search?q=Cuomo%20684> . You also might write or call:**

- Governor Cuomo: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/contact>; also try <http://www.writethegovernorofnewyork.com/>; also 1-518-474-8390
- DOT Albany office: 518-457-6195
- DOT Region 8 Acting Regional Director Todd Westhuis: 845-431-5750
- If you send an e-mail, please consider copying me and our legislators:
- State Senator Latimer: latimer@nysenate.gov, 914-934-5350
- State Assemblyman Buchwald: buchwaldd@assembly.state.ny.us, 914-244-4450

NYSEG TREE TRIMMING ALONG A FEW STREETS IN BEDFORD VILLAGE

Several residents have contacted me regarding proposed tree cutting and trimming being carried out by contractors engaged by NYSEG. The tree cutting is part of NYSEG's routine vegetation management work within our community shortly (see list of streets below). Residents impacted by the upcoming work should have received a postcard from NYSEG in the mail followed up by door to door notification closer to the actual work date. Trees are one of the leading causes of

power interruptions. It's extremely important that there is proper clearance established and maintained between vegetation and the power lines to minimize power interruptions as well as reduce lengthy restoration times. Safety is the top priority; please slow down when approaching the tree crews and remember to never enter an established work zone.

- Brook Farm Lane
- Brook Farm Road
- Deep Wood Road
- East Brook Farm Road
- Loop Road
- Millertown Road
- Old Corner Road
- Peters Lane
- Plateau Lane
- Pound Ridge Road
- Stone Hill Road
- Trudy Lane

We recognize that property owners understandably are concerned about the impact that the tree trimming may have aesthetically as well as to provide shade and privacy. NYSEG tries to be sensitive as well, however, please be sure to contact NYSEG with any concerns and, of course, feel free to contact me.

Please note that due to winter weather, any tree trimming and cutting will resume when weather permits, so please do not assume that if you received the postcard and the NYSEG contractor hasn't carried out work at your address, they won't be coming around.

COMMUNICATIONS

Here is a brief recap of what has been accomplished in our communication efforts with our residents. In our weekly e-news "What's New" not only do I share what has been going on in the Town but whenever possible I also share links to new services available to NY State residents such as signing up for text and/or email alerts letting you know that your car registration is about to expire <http://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/get-email-andor-text-reminders> ; Providing a link to Metro North for the purchase of e-tickets [click here](#) using your smart phone; Providing links to receive text alerts from NYSEG <http://www.nyseg.com/youraccount/aboutalerts.html> and Con Ed <http://www.coned.com/mobileapp/>. I have also shared some excellent suggestions from our residents and as always invite them to participate in this partnership. The videos to the Supervisor's show as well as other videos are available by accessing the video library by [clicking here](#). My monthly reports are also archived and can be accessed by [clicking here](#). We continue with our efforts to make the Town's website more user friendly, adding topic specific pages (such as for the sewer plan), other new pages such as for the Traffic Safety Working Group, the Veterans Affairs Advisory committee and the Committee on Seniors, and providing greater transparency (for example, we post all union contracts). Also in 2017 we intend to provide more interactive capability to make it easier for residents and businesses to work with the Town.

I ask you to please send me an e-mail at supervisor@bedfordny.gov should you have any questions or comments on this report or any of our work on the Town Board.


Chris Burdick

Town Supervisor