

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – January 2016

Since the minutes from our regular monthly Board meeting are not formally approved and posted on the Village website until the following month, it seems that our residents might be more fully informed of Village affairs by having regular updates posted on our website sooner, rather than later. To that end, it has been decided to provide our readers with some monthly updates, and if there are any concerns or a need for more information, please call (673-3112) or email (marboard@twcny.rr.com) the Village Office.

Public Hearing – on Local Law No. 1 of 2016 – the Village Board held a public hearing to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding Local Law #1 of 2016, which would identify and register vacant residential and vacant commercial buildings, to determine payment of registration fees; to determine the responsibilities of owners of vacant buildings and structures, and to speed the rehabilitation of vacant properties. The Village Board finds that the proliferation of vacant and abandoned buildings, structures and dwellings in the Village of Marcellus causes a deterioration of neighborhoods and areas within the Village of Marcellus and has a negative impact on the value of property in close proximity to the vacant and abandoned buildings, structures and dwellings. Furthermore, the Village Board finds that vacant and abandoned buildings, structures and dwellings have caused a serious threat to the safety and welfare of the residents of the Village and eroded the quality of life of all who live and work in the Village. Abandoned and vacant buildings, structures and dwellings are places of infestation of rodents, vermin, insects, wild animals and other health-threatening creatures and diseases, provide shelter to criminals and vagrants who use such places to evade the police and to conduct illicit activities, and are an attractive nuisance to children and adults alike.

Local Law #1 of 2016 – proposes that any owner of any building or structure, which has been vacant for more than 120 consecutive days, shall file with the Code enforcement Officer a vacant building registration. Said registration shall be in a form prescribed by the Code Enforcement Officer and shall be notarized. The law also calls for the owner to submit a vacant building plan which must meet the approval of the Code Enforcement Officer and must contain information from one of three proposals for the property: if the building is to be demolished, if the building is to remain vacant, or if the building is to be returned to appropriate occupancy or use. The owner(s) of the vacant property shall be responsible to register and pay the non-refundable registration annual fee as established by the Village Board. Thereafter, the owner shall be responsible to register the vacant property annually and pay the nonrefundable registration fee. Said fee shall increase each year, for each year that the property remains vacant, and shall be billed by the Village Clerk annually on March 1st of each year. The fee shall be charged to the owner(s) as long as the building remains vacant.

Appeal – the owner shall have the right to appeal the imposition of the registration fees to the Village Board of Trustees, upon filing an application, in writing, to the Village Clerk no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the billing statement. On appeal, the owner shall bear the burden of providing proof that the building is occupied.

Waiver of Registration Fee – a waiver of the fee for up to 90 days may be granted by the Code Enforcement Officer upon application by the owner and upon review and advice of the Village Attorney. This waiver may be given provided that the owner provides information that indicates the owner is actively pursuing mitigation/ rehabilitation of the funding. The waiver can also be renewed, if the owner provides proper documentation to the Code Enforcement Officer. If denied by the CEO, the property owner can make an appeal to the Village Board of Trustees. If the owner of the vacant property fails to pay the registration amount due within 30 days, this obligation shall constitute a lien and a charge on the real property concerned until paid or otherwise satisfied and shall be collected by the Village Treasurer in the same manner provided by law for delinquent taxes. It shall be the duty of the property owner and any subsequent owner, to keep vacant buildings or structures secured and safe and the building and grounds property maintained as provided in the NYS Property Maintenance Code.

Approve SEQR Resolution for Adopting Local Law #1 of 2016 – the Board then approved a motion to approve a resolution determining that the Adoption of Local Law #1 of 2016 will not result in any significant adverse impact on the environment, and requires no further environmental review. The Village has assumed the role of lead agency, and has therefore prepared a negative declaration with respect to the local law.

Adopt Local Law #1 of 2016 – the Board then approved Local Law #1 of 2016 to identify and register vacant residential and commercial buildings and structures, to determine payment of registration fees, to determine the responsibilities of owners of vacant buildings and structures and to speed up rehabilitation of vacant properties, contingent on a review by the Onondaga County Planning Board.

Set Registration Fee for Vacant Buildings/Update Fee Schedule – following this, the Board voted to update the Village Fee Schedule, including that for Vacant Buildings, whereby the owner or owners of vacant property in the Village shall be responsible to register and pay the non-refundable registration annual fee of \$500. Thereafter, said fee shall increase by \$500 each year, for each year that the property remains vacant, and shall be billed by the Village Clerk annually on March 1st of each year. The fee shall be charged to the owner(s) as long as the building remains vacant.

Review of Employee Handbook – the Board voted to approve a review by the Village Board of the Village of Marcellus Employee Handbook, a copy of which is on file in the Village Office for public inspection. The Handbook went into effect on February 1, 2013, and it has been decided that the Board would conduct such a review each year upon its anniversary.

Time Warner Cable Franchise Agreement – was again tabled until legal details are negotiated successfully.

PERMA Revised Workers Comp Program Agreement – was also tabled until legal details are negotiated successfully

Police Department Appointment – Following the recommendation of Chief Wicks and subsequent interview with members of the Village Board, the Board appointed Peter Heise, a retired officer from the Syracuse City Police Department as a Marcellus Village Police Officer, effective January 5, 2016.

Message of regret, congratulations and thanks – Sgt. Robert Pitman of the Marcellus Village Police Department was recently appointed Police Chief of the Village of Homer and although we are sorry to have him leave our Department we also congratulate him on this outstanding promotion in his career. Sgt. Pitman has done an exemplary job for our Village, taking the lead in pursuing a number of investigatory cases and solving them. His expertise will be sorely missed, although it is understood that Officer Heise has a great deal of experience in detective work. We are fortunate in being able to hire an exceptional replacement for Sgt. Pitman.

Police Updates – Text a tip – Chief Wicks again announces that Onondaga County has a new way to reach your local police with a crime tip – without revealing who you are. You could be witnessing a violent crime or a suspicious person or something else that police should know about. There are several ways to do this. You can text TIP411, or you can download the County's TIP411 mobile app on iPhone or Android, or you can find the Onondaga County Crime Tips Facebook page (you do not need to log into Facebook to submit a tip). All police agencies countrywide can now be reached at any time with a TIP411 text. It's very important that you type the code for the appropriate police department in your text. For example, the code for Marcellus Police is TIPMAR. The TIP411 line offers a way for those who are afraid to get involved to provide information to police, and our local police agency will do its job by investigating tips. Chief Wicks urges residents to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Another Police Update – Prescription / Drug Drop-Off Box – Chief Wicks would again like to announce that a prescription/drug drop-off box, similar to a mailbox, is now located in the lobby of the Village Hall and is available for

use by any residents who would like to dispose of any prescription or other drugs anonymously. The County Health Department will stop by monthly to pick up and properly dispose of such items.

F.O.G. (Fats, Oils, Grease) – in the wastewater is a topic that had been much discussed and will continue to be on the WPCP's agenda in the months ahead. We continue to provide a flyer that emphasizes the need to keep Fats, Oils and Grease out of the sanitary sewer system. The Wastewater Department recently sent a letter to all businesses in the Village making them aware of the responsibilities that each of them have in dealing with fats, oils and grease. They will also be conducting inspections in the weeks ahead to make sure that there is full compliance with not only our local law, but also with that of Onondaga County.

No Parking – we continue to alert residents that there is no parking on any of the Village streets, from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., from November 1st to April 1st so that the highway crew can plow snow.

Snow Plowing – we continue to alert independent snowplow operators that it is illegal to plow or shovel snow or ice during snow removal operations upon a village sidewalk or other public way. While most of the independent snow plow operators in the Village comply as much as possible with the law, there are some who need to be reminded that if a driveway is being plowed, that snow MUST NOT be plowed into the street. NOR can the snow be plowed out of a driveway, across the street and into the village right-of-way across from the plowed driveway.

Waste Water Treatment Plant – we were pleased to receive notification in late December of a decision by the DEC to modify the compliance schedule in the Village's Waste Water Treatment Plant SPEDES permit, extending that permit by an additional year. This will provide the Village additional time to seek grant funding for a major upgrade to the Treatment plant, totaling approximately \$5.5 million, so as to treat the removal of phosphorus from the plant's effluent. We are grateful especially to our Village Attorney, Jeff Brown, for his efforts in this regard. The Village also intends to seek additional help from local legislators as well as travel to Albany to plead our case with the State DEC Commissioner.

Planning Board – the Planning Board and Village Board toured the construction work being performed at 3-7 North Street. It is hoped that the apartments and the diner might be opened in late March or early April.

Creek Walk Project – continues to move ahead. We have discussed the project with our engineers and with all Rights of Way having been acquired and all environmental concerns having been addressed, the bids for the project can be advertised in early February. In this way we will have bids in plenty of time for a spring start of construction.

Olde Home Days – June 3rd, 4th, and 5th – the first meeting was held on January 8, 2016, and the next meeting will be held on February 4, 2016 in the Village Board Room at 7 p.m.

Olde Home Days, 2016 – the first meeting of the 2015 OHD Committee will be held on Thursday, January 7, 2016 in the Village Hall, beginning at 7 p.m.

Time Warner Cable Rate Increases – residents may have already received a letter explaining the reasons for the rate increases, as well as a chart on what those increases will be, beginning January 1, 2016.

Village Meetings for February 2016 – please make note of the list of those meetings scheduled for February 2016, which is provided for those so interested – please note also that the Village Offices will be closed on Monday, February 15th for the Presidents' Day Holiday and that the second meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2014, will take place on Thursday, February 4, 2016 in the Village Board Room. There are also several handouts that are provided for residents if they wish to pick them up – on Water, Electronics (E-Waste) Disposal, Grease in the Waste Water, the 2016 rate increases from Time Warner Cable and Text-a-Tip.