

## Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – February 2018

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@twcnny.rr.com) the Village Office.

**Public Hearing – Local Law #1 of 2018 – Zone Change** – the purpose of the public hearing was to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding a proposed change to the zoning law – to change the zoning of a parcel from Commercial to Open Land and to add municipal solar as a permitted use in Open Land (OL) districts. The background information on the need for this proposed zone change has come about as a result of the demolition of the lower mill at 71 North Street. At one time the major employer in the Village, the property at 71 North Street has been zoned as a Commercial District. With the demolition of the mill by the Village, because it was an unsafe and dangerous structure, the site is now vacant land, clear of any environmental hazards. In addition, this vacant land now, as it has in the past, borders Nine Mile Creek, the most heavily fished trout stream in the State of New York. In order to promote the public interest, as envisioned by the Village Comprehensive Plan, which involves land use planning, such plan calls for significant goals, particularly:

(1) To protect and enhance the natural, scenic and other environmental features of the Village by creating zoning standards that permanently protect environmental corridor features such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands and similar environmentally sensitive features

(2) To protect areas within the 100-year floodplain and more detailed surveys from development to avoid damage to private and public property and the health, safety and welfare of the community

(3) To use design guidelines to ensure that future developments and redevelopments do not detract from and help to promote the natural beauty of the Village

(4) To continue to highlight this, an important gateway to the Village, with special treatments including landscaping and appropriate signage

In order to ensure that this vacant land will be thoughtfully developed, all development on this property will be subject to site plan review by the Village Planning Board and the Village Board of Trustees. The Village owns two adjacent properties to the south and because the Village wishes to acquire this additional property for municipal use, and to promote the public interest, as envisioned by the Village Comprehensive Plan, the Village Board proposed this zoning change.

**SEQR Resolution for Adopting Local Law #1 of 2018** – a resolution was approved determining that the adoption of Local Law #1 of 2018 would not result in any significant adverse impact on the environment, and required 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.

**Vote on Local Law #1 of 2018 – to Amend Chapter 250 (Zoning)** – Local Law #1 of 2018 approving a change in the zoning code so as to promote the public interest, as envisioned by the Village Comprehensive Plan was approved. This motion is contingent on the approval of the Onondaga County Planning Board.

**Election Resolution** – a motion was approved to publish an election resolution designating the following:

- a. The polling place for the Village election is the Village Hall, located at 6 Slocombe Avenue, Marcellus, NY
- b. The election will take place on March 20, 2018. Polls will open at 12:00 o'clock noon and close at 9:00 p.m.
- c. The names and addresses of the candidates nominated for the office of Mayor, a four-year term, are:

- 1.) John P. Curtin – 12 First Street, Marcellus, NY
- d. The names and addresses of the candidates nominated for the office of Trustee, a four-year term, are:
  - 1.) Kevin J. O'Hara – 11 Reed Parkway, Marcellus, NY
- e. There will be no propositions to be voted upon at this election

**Community Development Grant for 2018** – a motion to forgo completion of the 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application by our engineering group was approved. It should be noted that the reason for this is that no part of the Village of Marcellus is now eligible for any funding from Community Development grants, according to HUD income standards. This is unfortunate because it has been through this grant program that many streets, sidewalks and other public infrastructure have been funded for many years in the past. Now, the Village of Marcellus does not meet income standards.

**Extension of IMA With Onondaga County Dept. of Water Environment Protection** – a motion was approved authorizing the Mayor to sign the Intermunicipal Wastewater Agreements (IMAs) with Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection whereby the current 2017 fee schedule would remain in effect until the latter of June 1, 2018 or each IMA's expiration date, unless otherwise notified. This moratorium will provide an opportunity for the parties to discuss and evaluate a new fee schedule.

**Approve Contract with Kenyon Pipeline for Sewer Trunk Repair at WPCP** – the Mayor was authorized to sign a contract with Kenyon Pipeline Inspection, LLC to clean and reline the 15" sanitary sewer pipeline leading to the treatment plant. The cost to complete this emergency work, including bypass pumping is not to exceed \$52,520.

**Spectrum Communications Cable Franchise Agreement** – a motion to table the Spectrum Communications Cable Franchise Agreement until the Village Attorney has been able to negotiate successfully, the terms of the agreement, with Charter Communications was again approved.

**Police Updates** – Chief Wicks would like to make sure that all residents continue to lock their autos and houses. Last year around this time, both in the Village, but also on the outside, on the periphery of the Village in particular, there have been burglaries – particularly into unlocked automobiles, and property (GPS, other electronics and pocketbooks) has been stolen. Virtually all of these thefts have taken place because autos have been left outdoors and unlocked. If the cars are locked, the thieves usually move on.

**Clean Energy Communities** – we have recently been notified that the Village of Marcellus has been awarded a \$100,000 grant to implement additional clean energy projects. The monies granted have been earmarked for clean energy projects this spring, and will include a retrofitting of existing Village lights, including the historic lights on Main, North and South Streets as well as the coach lights on Kinderwood Drive to direct wire LED type fixtures. Other LED lighting retrofits will occur in the Village Hall, the Village Garage and the Water Pollution Control Plant. The Village is delighted not only with this award but also most appreciative of the tireless efforts of former employee, Ryan Riefler, and others who helped to secure this grant.

**Village Banners** – through the efforts of former Trustee Bob Wilson and his committee, as well as our Office Staff and Highway Department, funding has been secured to refresh the welcome banners that grace our Village streets. It is hoped that the banners, which have been delivered, will soon be installed, by mid-April.

**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. If ticketed by Village Police, the fee will be \$35.00. We urge residents to use the Village parking lots for any overnight parking situations.

**Snow Plowing** – the plowing of Village streets and sidewalks by our D.P.W. has again been exemplary. The Board would like to commend members of the department for all of their dedicated work, often in miserable conditions, often while the rest of the Village sleeps. Their dedication to task is truly excellent.

**Snow Plowing by Independent Snow Plow Operators** – as in the past, we would like to alert independent snow plow 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 CAN 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. The Village is not responsible for snow that accumulates on a resident's property and the Village is not responsible for removing snow that has been plowed onto the Village right-of-way. We ask that independent snowplow drivers take this into consideration when they are plowing residential properties in the village. No snow should be plowed onto a village street or sidewalk, and any that has been, must be removed.

**Creek Walk** – has been completed and reimbursement has been made by NYSDOT. Final paperwork needs to be resolved, and this will probably be concluded by mid-April, 2018.

**Budget** – the Village Board has begun to work on its 2018-2019 Budget and at first glance, it appears that things remain somewhat stagnant at the Village level. In January, Village and Town residents received their County tax bill and that bill reflected, as it did last year, a slight tax reduction for Village and Town residents. The County, similar to last year, has been able to drop that tax because the County, which having slashed by more than half, the sales tax revenue that used to go to the Village, has then able to pass on those tax savings to Village and Town property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. Ever since, the Village has had to make up for the revenue taken by the County and then passed onto Village property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. The County has not added some VIP monies to the Villages this year as it has in the recent past, and these might have helped to offset an increase in Village taxes this year.

**Property Tax Cap** – our Budget continues to be complicated by the property tax cap of 2%, another State mandate, and at our March Board meeting, the Board might have to vote to override the tax cap. Having learned from the experience of several towns, it is sometimes best to override, if only to protect the Village from penalty. Should the adopted budget vary from the actual budget, resulting in a tax hike of more than 2 percent, the Village would be responsible for a host of penalties for violating the governor's tax cap. The Governor has also proposed a property tax freeze if the Village stayed under the tax cap and moved towards consolidation. Last year, the Village was able to stay under the cap, and residents received a rebate check in January. However, the Village might not be able to stay under the tax limit this year, despite having moved towards consolidation, particularly with our sewer project with the Town. There are just too many variables in the Governor's tax proposal, and the savings, according to NYCOM, would be minimal.

**Waste Water Treatment Plant** – at its January 23, 2018 Meeting, the Board authorized the Mayor to sign the following contract agreements, subject to a permissive referendum, for construction projects at the Waste Water Treatment Plant:

- 1) The General Contract price, base bid only, of Five Million Three Hundred Ninety Five Thousand Six Hundred Eleven Dollars (\$5,395,611.00) to Blue Heron Construction Company of Jordan, New York.
- 2) The Electrical Contract price, base bid only, of Seven Hundred Thirty Nine Thousand Dollars (\$739,000.00) to Myriad Construction of Syracuse, New York.

3) The HVAC Contract price, base bid only, of Seventy Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Three Dollars (\$79,263) to King & King Mechanical, Inc. of Auburn, New York.

The awarding of these bids remains contingent on the permissive referendum and bonding timeline. The new maximum authorized cost of the Project, and the maximum amount of obligations authorized to be issued, is \$7,700,000. The period of probable usefulness is forty years (40), computed from the date of the first bond anticipation note, and the bonds are payable from amounts to be annually levied on all the taxable real property in the Village. Bids received on December 5, 2017 for the WWTP Phosphorus Removal and Upgrade Project were very disappointing and much in excess of that anticipated when the original bond resolution of \$6,000,000 was approved in 2013. Because the Village can no longer delay and because the DEC expects the Village to complete the project sooner rather than later, and also because the Village wants to take advantage of the zero (0%) percent interest rate offered by EFC, it has been the decision of the Board to move ahead with the construction of the project. While the Board, with the assistance of the DEC, will continue to look for more funding, so as to offset the cost of the project, the Board feels that any further delay will result in even higher costs as well as possible fines for lack of action.

**Increase in the sewer rates** – in an attempt to offset excessive sewer rates, the Village has been successful in its endeavors to secure some funding, including several WQIP awards of \$80,000 and \$1,000,000, and a EPG grant of \$30,000, as well as zero (0%) percent financing from the Environmental Financing Corporation, and it is hopeful that the additional funding can be secured to help meet the DEC mandate to upgrade the treatment plant. A potential SAM grant of \$250,000 is pending, as is a WIIA grant estimated in excess of \$1,000,000. However, the plant upgrade of now over \$7 million, if no additional funding can be found, can only come from sewer rate increases and was hoped that the increases that are already in place will be sufficient to meet the expense involved. Coupled with the disappointing bids that were received in early December, it is probable that if no additional funding is received, we will have raise sewer rates once again, this time in excess of 30%. At present, Village sewer users pay, on average \$413.13 annually. A 31% increase would bring that average rate up to \$541.39 – a quarterly increase of about \$32.00, or an annual increase of about \$128.00. Keep in mind that this is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village. For Town sewer users the increase would be even more astronomical, given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user - the average town sewer user would pay approximately \$676.74 annually, an increase of about \$160.00 per year, beginning in 2019.

**Highland Drive Drainage Study** – as was mentioned at previous meetings, the Board, in the fall of 2017, hired the MRB Engineering Firm to conduct a drainage study for the area of Highland Drive - which basically affects most, if not all of the neighboring properties on Second Street, Meadow Street, Reed Street, Reed Parkway and First Street. The firm will build off a drainage study conducted back in 1997, consider changes in the areas upland of Highland Drive and develop potential improvements for the Village to consider, including a topographical survey of the storm system, a base map of the Village's storm sewer system, a hydrologic analysis of the contributing watershed area to determine the peak flow rate during the 2-, 5-, 10- and 50 year storm events at various inflow points into the Highland-Reed drainage system, and create a hydraulic model of the Highland-Reed drainage systems, and determine the impacts to the system under the peak flow rates. The study will also develop alternatives to control the flow to and along Highland Drive and elsewhere in the drainage system along Reed Parkway and mitigate the overflowing during heavy storms that causes drainage issues for residents. MRB will also estimate probable material and construction costs for each of the potential improvements. It should be noted that this is just a study, a necessary first step, which will lead, hopefully, to the development of long term operation and maintenance requirements for all property owners in the area. This is a problem that has affected many Village residents for a number of years – Marcellus lies in a valley and all storm water when it leaves the surrounding hills greatly affects those who live at the bottom of the valley.

In addition, the storm water damages private property, not public rights of way. The Board expects a completion of the drainage study by the spring of 2018, at which time residents will be notified, costs will have been determined and options provided.

**Planning Board** – has not met in recent weeks.

**Code Enforcement** – mostly 3-year rental inspections and fire inspections this month. We would also remind residents that all garbage must be contained in a proper receptacle, not left at the curb in plastic bags.

**Sewer Repairs** – the cold winter weather has not been kind to some of our older sanitary sewers lines and it has been necessary to make emergency repairs to several. These included a break near what is to become the new parking lot at the Marcellus Library (repaired in early February), and the sewer trunk line at the entrance to the treatment plant (repaired over the February school break).

**Village Meetings for March 2018** – a list of those meetings scheduled for March 2018 was provided for those so interested, including the third meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2018, on Thursday, March 1, 2018 in the Village Board Room, but with a change in time from 7 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. There are also several budget meetings planned for March, including one on March 9th, and one on March 20th both at 10 a.m. in the Board Room. Additional meetings will be held as needed. Also, Daylight Savings Time will begin on March 11, 2018. Finally, the Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing will take place on Monday, April 2, 2018 in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m.