

MAYOR'S COLUMN

I want to share with you our activities as a government since the September Board of Trustees' meeting.

Just this week we had a public meeting regarding the results of our vibration study. In essence, the current readings are considerably higher than what were promised by Metro North in their 2000 Environmental Impact Study. As a result, we plan a three pronged approach to help residents along the train corridor. First, I contacted Metro North and have scheduled a meeting for next week to discuss possible mitigation measures with the desire that we solve this in a spirit of good neighbors. If this is not possible, we will reach out for assistance from our State and Federal elected officials who helped us a great deal in the past with Metro North issues. Finally, if no relief is granted, we will invoke our legal remedies. After listening to the experiences of many neighbors who live along the rail corridor at the meeting, this is a quality of life issue that cannot be ignored.

The Trustees also met with members of the School Board to review the findings of the recent flood mitigation study we commissioned jointly. The engineers' remedy includes retention basins and a pumping system requiring environmental agency approvals. We are currently reaching out to the DEC if such an option is even feasible before continuing discussions. Village Administrator, Harry Porr, also recently attended a State summit on flooding in Kingston to see what remedies/monies may be available to the Village going forward.

Many residents have asked about the public access channels being deleted from the Cablevision package if you have Analog Broadcast Basic and Family Basic service. You should have received postcards in August alerting subscribers that a digital box is now needed to access these channels. It will only convert the PEG channels, not any others lost. To receive the one free box allotted, you need to call 1-800-353-9821 and choose option 3. Cablevision will provide and install one converter box for free if ordered before December 31, 2008.

Thanks to the efforts of Eastchester Town Councilman Fred Salinitro, we are partnering with Eastchester and Tuckahoe in a Utility Audit. The purpose of this review is to identify, correct, and secure refunds on any overcharges on utility accounts during the prior six year period by reviewing our telephone, electric, gas, basic and cable franchise agreements. Scarsdale recently completed an audit and received some sizable refunds. It is certainly an opportune time to review our utility costs.

The BAMS gas station on Kraft Avenue has opted to close earlier than their lease term and will be closing shop at year's end. We are sad to see a valued merchant leave the Village, but we are glad Tony is leaving on his own terms and time table.

As part of the closing, gas tanks must be removed – which is going on currently. The property is owned by the Village so at year's end we will be demolishing the building and creating some 45 new parking spaces in that area. At the same time, in response to residents' concerns, we engaged a traffic engineer and will implement his recommendations and reconfigure the corner near St. Joseph's to create a safer intersection.

Continuing on the parking subject, per the Board's promise to Parkway Road residents at last month's meeting, we have placed the appropriate signage in the Avalon/Mobil lot. We formally hired a towing company at the October Board meeting to remove cars that have been illegally parking in that lot in recent weeks. Our parking office is also working to reconfigure the lot to accommodate resident commuters as well as west side residents. We are making great strides in increasing our parking inventory with the Avalon lot eventually adding 40 – 50 additional spaces.

Members of the Board also met last week with residents of Garden Avenue to discuss solutions to the frequent flooding in that area. The first phase of our efforts was to videotape all the pipes in that area. We have found silt in some of the pipes so our next step will be to clean the pipes which will certainly improve water flow.

The Village has made some improvements in the business district this Fall. We have refurbished Bicentennial Park and added the new enhanced crosswalk pattern near Starbucks which is actually stenciled blacktop made to resemble brick. Thanks to all our garden groups, especially the Bronxville Beautification Council and our own Department of Public Works staff, the plantings this fall in the Village are particularly beautiful.

The Trustees continue to discuss and evaluate various procedure to keep our tax role equitable going forward. We are looking at a variety of options including tying any revaluation to the coefficient of dispersion or ratio of inequity, rather than revaluing in a fixed number of years regardless of whether the roll needs rebalancing or not. We are extremely pleased to say that thanks to the efforts of the whole Village team, we have the lowest ratio of inequity in the County – 7.75. To put it in perspective, 10% is considered the gold standard and most Westchester communities are currently near 20%.

Finally, in an effort to communicate the initiatives of our government, we recently sent out our quarterly newsletter and completed taping a fall segment of our cable tv show.

You can always reach the Trustees by e-mailing us at bronxvillemayor@optonline.net. We welcome your suggestions.