

MAYOR'S COLUMN

Palumbo Place

I want to address the entire Palumbo Place question in hopes of dispelling some misinformation that has reached residents.

As background, the Village government moved out of the trailers in May of 2007 and school administration has occupied them during the extensive flood mitigation and reconstruction project undertaken at the school. School staffers just recently moved back to their refurbished offices and the trailers are in the process of being dismantled and utilities and sanitary systems re-routed, etc. The Village will clean up the road and open it “one way” on a trial basis from Gramatan Avenue to Midland Avenue. The rationale for this plan has no relation to the need for, or convenience of, DPW staff parking. We have the same number of staff we had prior to the road closing and they will park in their former spaces. The one way option is an attempt at balancing two very legitimate interests – the convenience and alleviation of congestion for resident and many non-resident motorists and providing the safest possible workplace for our DPW employees.

Our DPW garage has not been updated since 1942 so the garage bays can neither house nor accommodate repairs of most of our modern equipment indoors. By necessity, we also have more vehicles and larger vehicles to house and our workers are often required to repair vehicles adjacent to two way traffic. I can think of no other community that has its public works complex in the midst of a busy two way street. We want to reduce the possibility of danger to our workers and motorists alike. We will also vigilantly enforce near the Alden Place driveways so they are not used as a cut through and issue tickets accordingly.

In an effort to balance interests with awareness of mandated safety requirements, the Board is amenable to try the one way compromise, mindful that if it does not work, we are willing to change course. We feel a duty to provide the safest possible environment for all of our very dedicated employees and this is an attempt to upgrade their working conditions.

Unrelated but a serendipitous result of the success of the one way option would be the addition of 15 to 20 new parking spaces for use by all the schools, library and churches nearby.

Cable TV

There still seems to be some confusion for subscribers to both Cablevision and Verizon in accessing the Village and School public access channels.

We all only recently learned that the Verizon school channel has not been installed. Verizon activated the library connection labeling it “educational” since most school meetings are broadcast from there. The Village has since clarified the arrangement and Verizon promises to move quickly to schedule the necessary installation in the school building. Village meetings are broadcast on Verizon Cable Channel 47.

As for Cablevision, they are currently going through a “digitalization” program, resulting in variations in programming. All customers with a cable box should be able to receive local programming without a problem on the same channels we have had for years. Those few without a box should get one (for free) from Cablevision before the end of 2008 or else they will experience static where they once had programs. Those customers who have a “QAM Tuner” in their TV set will find the public access channels in the Channel 99 range. I am told 90% or more of Bronxville customers have boxes and will not have a problem with local service. If you have problems with local programming call Cablevision at 1-800-353-9821 for a direct answer to individual questions.

Police Department

A great deal of positive activity has occurred in our police department in recent weeks. Most importantly, I want to congratulate our officers on the arrests in the burglary incidents in the Village as well as the recovery of the car and apprehension of a suspect in a recent car theft. The car theft was an opportunistic crime. A resident was warming a car in the driveway with the keys in the ignition. Remember to be very vigilant and do not leave a running car unattended at this time of year.

This past week, Officer Joseph Murray was promoted to a vacant sergeant’s position and Officer Bart Sandicero as a new detective.

We also came to agreement with our PBA on a contract offering a modest pay raise, increase in educational incentives and a contributory health insurance plan. Given these difficult economic times, both parties believe this to be a fair and beneficial compromise.

Property Tax Information

As an important reminder, all residents who are eligible for any type of tax exemptions – Veteran, Senior or STAR – must file their applications by January 1st.

Our tax assessing department is in the final phase of completing inspections on capital improvements made in 2008 in time for the official New York State property valuation date of January 2009. The tentative tax roll will be published February 1st and residents receiving any kind of change will be notified the first week in February. Grievance night will take place on February 24th so as not to conflict with the Bronxville School winter vacation.

Public Works

The Trustees and our Department of Public Works have become increasingly frustrated with the speed and quality of repairs done on our streets by United Water and Con Edison. Too many metal plates and poor paving repairs are appearing throughout the Village so in the coming months we will be bringing forward legislation and fines to address the problem. The Village spends too much money caring for our roads to accept shoddy and delayed repairs by our utilities.

Metro North Update

Metro North has also recently sent out an inspection team looking for track anomalies that could be adding to the noise and vibration levels, including a thorough review of the ballast mat installation.

Finally, I want to congratulate the Bronxville High School girls' cross country team and the Bronxville High School varsity boys' soccer team on winning

State championships. This is no small feat for a school district of our size and I am particularly proud that they are also truly scholar athletes.