

The State of the Village

Continued from page 1

may soon be able to flush the system just once a year instead of twice, eliminating that inconvenience for our residents.

And the increased water flow through the larger pipes means that there is more water available to the fire department should a fire occur.

For 2005, the Board has already authorized the engineering work for streets that we may work on next summer, continuing our ongoing roadway and water system infrastructure improvements.

The preliminary engineering work has been approved for more than two and one-third miles on eight streets.

This preliminary engineering work also includes plans for replacing the old 4-inch mains beneath these roadways with new 6- or 8-inch mains.

We are also improving our athletic infrastructure — thanks to a creative financing agreement with Molloy College — by installing state-of-the-art artificial surfaces to the two soccer/lacrosse fields at the Skelos Sports Complex on Peninsula Boulevard, our newest, best, and most beautiful park and recreation facility.

The artificial turf will be much easier to maintain than natural grass and will allow much greater utilization of this premier facility. We will no longer have to “rest” natural grass or worry about replacing and regrowing worn areas.

These improvements are costly, but we are able to afford them because we work a little at a time, because we have long-range plans for our infrastructure, and because we prepare sound, prudent budgets that are approved of in the financial community where we must go for financing.

Our budgeting has been difficult over the past few years because we have been forced to pay huge increases in our health insurance and pension premiums. Just three years ago, Rockville Centre contributed about \$130,000 to the state pension plan for our municipal employees. This year, our contribution has increased more than 15 times that amount to \$2.1 million.

But despite these skyrocketing costs, Rockville Centre has been able to balance its budget without steep tax increases.

Actually, we have done much better than balance our budget. We closed out the last fiscal year with a \$1.8 million unreserved fund balance, a cushion for any unanticipated financial reversals and a key reason for our very high credit rating.

The Village recently concluded its first audit under new, stricter national standards for municipalities and passed with flying colors. For the eighth year in a row, Rockville

Centre has received an award for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the non-profit Government Financial Officers Association.

Our independent auditor confirmed this fall what the rating agencies reported last summer: that Rockville Centre operates on a very solid financial footing.

Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's, citing the Village's “sound financial management,” have again assigned very high ratings to \$8.7 million of Rockville Centre general obligation bonds. Our ratings are among the very highest that these agencies have assigned to Long Island municipalities.

Both Moody's and Standard & Poor's also based their ratings on the Village's high wealth and income levels, on our rapid retirement of modest levels of debt, and on our self-supporting electric and water utilities.

The Moody's analysis cited the Village's “track record of timely tax rate increases, strong budgetary control, and management's commitment to maintain adequate reserves.”

Moody's also predicted a good financial future for the Village based on its “low direct debt burden and rapid payout of debt.”

The proceeds of these bonds will finance various capital projects, including future street paving and water main replacement and the new electric substation, another way we are preparing for Rockville Centre's future.

Rockville Centre was granted its first electric rate increase in 10 years last year and still our electric rates are at least 30 percent lower than most of the rest of Long Island.

We needed this increase to cover the normal growth in operating expenses over

that 10-year period and to help pay for a planned \$5 million upgrade to our power system. The project includes installing a new substation at the Electric Department on Maple Avenue and making technical improvements to the distribution system that will improve reliability.

These are also expensive investments in our infrastructure, but they are necessary to insure an adequate supply of electricity into the foreseeable future. And again we can afford them because we have planned for them, because your Village government is dedicated to serving the needs of our residents and our business community.

There is nowhere you might go to get better service and better attention from a mayor or from a board of trustees.

Our high credit rating, our low taxes, our low utility rates, and our efficient administration continue to attract new businesses and new development and to produce higher home values. We have a thriving business district with a very high occupancy rate. Office space for medical, legal and financial professionals continues to grow. Our restaurants and movie theaters continue to bring crowds into the downtown areas where the foot traffic benefits our many retail shops.

The Village is a partner with our very active Chamber of Commerce on events and projects that make our downtown inviting to shoppers.

Your Village government continues to be good government, at the closest level to the people, dedicated to keeping Rockville Centre such a desirable community in which to work, live, and raise a family. And the Board and I will continue to work to keep it that way.



This Month in Rockville Centre

One College Place, P.O. Box 950
Rockville Centre, New York 11571

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Dates & Events

Wednesday, February 2, 8 P.M.
BOARD OF APPEALS

Monday, February 14, 8:15 P.M.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tuesday, February 15, 7:30 P.M.
PLANNING BOARD

Wednesday, February 16, 8 P.M.
BOARD OF APPEALS

Monday, February 21
PRESIDENTS' DAY
Village Offices Closed

Events are at Village Hall unless otherwise indicated.

Videotapes of Board of Trustees meetings are broadcast on Cable Channel 18 on Wednesdays (8:15 p.m.) and Saturdays (1:30 p.m.) following each meeting.

For general information
Call 678-9300

Emergency Numbers

Fire **911**
Police **911**
Ambulance **911**
Electric 766-5800
Water 678-9252
Nights & Weekends 766-5800

A complete Calendar of Events, is available on the Village's website
www.rvcny.us

This Month in Rockville Centre

FEBRUARY, 2005

VOL. 54, NO. 1

The State of the Village

By Mayor Eugene J. Murray

I am happy once again to report to our residents and business owners that the Village of Rockville Centre remains a premier place to live, work, and raise a family.

Every year I have the pleasure to remind you of our high quality services, of our efficient administration, and of our low taxes. Our water and electricity cost less because we operate our own utilities. Our police, fire, and emergency responses are faster and more reliable because they are part of our Village government.

Our recreational and senior services are responsive to the needs of our residents; our streets are cleared of trash, leaves, and snow quickly and efficiently. And we do these things so well and so consistently because we run our own departments.

These departments are overseen by a conscientious professional administration dedicated to providing — as our Mission Statement says — reliable, high-quality, cost-efficient services in a courteous and professional manner.

Our building department, our zoning board, and our planning board operate openly, right in front of the public. Information, documents, and explanations of our laws and codes are readily provided to all interested parties.

We are a municipality that pays attention to the needs of our residents and businesses and that takes seriously our duty to be the stewards of our extensive infrastructure.

Much of our attention is focused on conscientious planning for Rockville Centre's future. And some of our biggest accomplishments are not easy to see. You may see that we consistently repave about two miles of roadway each year, repairing and improving our residential streets.

Over the past 10 years, we have repaved nearly 22 miles of our 52 miles of roadway, an investment that has cost just over \$10 million.

In 2004 we paved more than a quarter



Mayor Murray delivers his State of Village Address at the Village Board of Trustee meeting on January 10.

of a mile on Grand Avenue, on Powell Avenue, and on Fountain Avenue and almost as much on Reid Avenue. We also repaved substantial portions of Seaman Avenue and all of Forest Place, Irving Place, Shelton Court, Whitby, Albany, Kirkwall, and Bradford.

But what you don't see is that beneath the surface we are also improving drainage and enhancing our water system. On every street we work on, we are replacing old 4-inch water mains with new 6- or 8-inch mains.

These improvements continue our aggressive approach to our water infrastructure that began with the installation of the iron filtration plant in 2001. That plant removes nearly 98 percent of the iron dissolved in the water as it comes out of the ground from our East Side wells. (Water from the Village's eight other wells contains much lower iron concentrations and is not in need of iron filtration.)

The combination of filtration, larger mains, and loops instead of dead ends has virtually eliminated our old problems. And these measures have improved the system in other ways. We used to have to flush the system by opening the hydrants twice a year and letting the water run until it was clear, which often took half an hour.

But now the water runs clear in a matter of minutes, meaning that there is very little build-up in the system anymore. We

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Village Hall Comments

By Trustee Jim Sutton



RVC vs. Queens

*or Are We Becoming the Mets
(The Neighborhood, Not The Team)?*



Over the past year or so I've heard the cry "We're becoming just like Queens" from a small number of the residents of our Fair Village. Now frankly, this puzzled me greatly, as I happen to be quite familiar with that wonderful borough.

To wit: I was born in Flushing, was young in the Metropolitan (the Mets) section of Woodside (or St. Teresa's Parish, as the Irish horde in the area would identify it by), spent summers in Whitestone, lived in Middle Village, worked briefly in Long Island City, Kew Gardens, and Jackson Heights, played tennis in Forest Hills (though not in that big tournament!), then worked for many years in both Bayside and Fresh Meadows.

So to hear the comparison above gave me great pause for thought. I steadfastly determined that I would revisit my former haunts to see if we were indeed becoming like Queens. So I hopped into my trusty four-wheel drive—a sign of suburbia right there—and following the advice of Horace Greeley, this young man headed west. My first stop was Bayside, home of Bell Boulevard, and generally regarded as one of the premier communities in Queens. I have always enjoyed Bayside for the constant level of activity you find there. I drove through the streets and found new development galore. But interestingly, there was neither rhyme nor reason behind the development.

Apartment houses rose in the middle of residential streets; attached row houses shared quarters with

detached structures; and finally, tremendous homes were built on lots no wider than 50 feet. Much the same could be seen in Whitestone, though to a far lesser extent, as this community is very mature, with minimal development space available.

I immediately thought of our Village. I see no attached housing being built in the middle of our single-family districts. Our frontage requirement of 80 feet, which is even now being considered for expansion to 96 feet, is far greater than the small areas of development I noted.

And where in Queens there is virtually no parking, in Rockville Centre on multifamily dwellings we have a strict parking guideline of 1.5 spots per residential unit. Even now I am proposing further increases, to 1.75 spaces for a one-bedroom unit, 2 spaces for a two-bedroom unit, and 2.25 spaces for a three-bedroom unit, plus an overflow space requirement of one space per every five units in a development. This will further minimize the impact any new developments may have on our Village.

So I now headed deeper into Queens. This 20-mile (give or take a few) journey took almost three hours, as I was stuck under the El in Woodside and I got caught behind a caravan of 18-wheelers on Metropolitan Avenue. I passed major industry next door to homes. Once I thought I saw grass, but it turned out it was an optical illusion.

But by now I had seen what I had set out to see. The evidence was clear: though we are a scant eight miles from the Queens border, and even though that very proximity is one of the many reasons we are a highly sought-after community, we have clearly not nor are we in danger of becoming like Queens.

This Month In Rockville Centre

Published by the Village of Rockville Centre
Eugene J. Murray, Mayor

Trustees
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Wayne H. Lipton
Gregory F. Rimm
James C. Sutton

For information concerning Village facilities, residents are invited to telephone Ronald J. Wasson, Village Administrator, Clerk-Treasurer, 678-9300

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My sojourn into Queens was not to minimize the concerns our residents have regarding our Village and development. Frankly, we work hard in our Village to assure that we maintain that suburban feel.

Our Planning and Zoning boards, two groups consisting of dedicated volunteers, give endless hours of their own time working to aid and preserve our community. The Village Board, after years of work, created the Little Town zone, creating a buffer zone between the business and residential districts.

In fact, the Maple Avenue Task Force was delighted that this change gave rise to a new condominium development on Maple Avenue, where previously heavy commercial or strip mall development might have occurred. This type of development also helps our Village sports groups in a way that non-residential development cannot, as the law allows us to impose fees in lieu of parkland, which is money specifically allocated toward the improvement of our parkland.

Further, in 2005 we will commence a review of other areas in our Village where such zones might make sense and we will continue to review potential restrictions on development density. We will continue to protect our residents and our business owners for, as we all understand, it is the successful union of the two that has given RVC its special character.

We will continue to advance our recreation facilities and programs, improve our roads and infrastructure, and revitalize our aging fleets of vehicles. And we will continue to serve in the best interests of our Village and its residents.

February at the Recreation Center

Winter Recess Events

Monday, February 21

Presidents' Day Relays for grades K - 1 from 10:15 to 11:45 A.M. and grades 2 to 5, from 12 Noon to 1:30 P.M. No fee, but pre-register.

Tuesday, February 22

Trip to Fun Zone in Farmingdale for grades 1 to 8. Fee of \$22 includes 35 game tokens, unlimited rides, and transportation. 12:30 - 4:30 P.M.

Wednesday, February 23

Ice Skating Trip to the Long Beach Recreation Complex for grades 1 through 8. The \$12 fee includes skate rental and transportation. 2:15 - 5:30 P.M.

Thursday, February 24

February Craft Activity (and a little hot chocolate) for kindergarten and grade 1 and grades 2 to 4: from 10 to 11:15 A.M. or 11:45 A.M. to 1 P.M. Fee \$7. Specify time when registering.

Thursday, February 24, 2 P.M.

Annual Cherry Pie Eating Contest for grades 1 to 6. Celebrate George Washington's Birthday by seeing if you can down cherry or apple pie faster than other contestants in your age group. Register before Friday, February 17. Fee \$1.

Friday, February 25

Bowling at RVC Lanes Bumper Bowling for grades 1 & 2: 12 Noon to 2:30 P.M.; for grades 3 to 8, 12:30 to 3 P.M. Fee \$12.

All trip participants must be registered members of the RVC Parks and Recreation Department for the 2004-2005 year. To register, a parental permission slip and the appropriate fee must be submitted to the Rec Center office **PRIOR** to the day of the event.

Middle School Dances

The Recreation Department is sponsoring monthly dances on Fridays from 7:30 to 10 P.M. Sixth graders only dance February 4 and seventh and eighth graders only dance February 18.

The dances are open to teenagers who live in Rockville Centre or who attend Rockville Centre schools. A school ID is required for admission.

Nursery School Registration

Registrations are now being accepted for the RVC Recreation Center's nursery school programs for the 2005-2006 school year.

Pre-K classes for those entering kindergarten in September 2006 are offered five days a week from 9 to 11:30 A.M.

February Fun at the Senior Center

The Sandel Center is open to all RVC residents 60 and older. For information on joining, call 678-9350.

Special Events

The annual Valentine's Dance is Friday, February 11 at 1 P.M. Dance to the D.J., wear red and pink, and bring a home-baked dessert for the Viennese table \$3 per person.

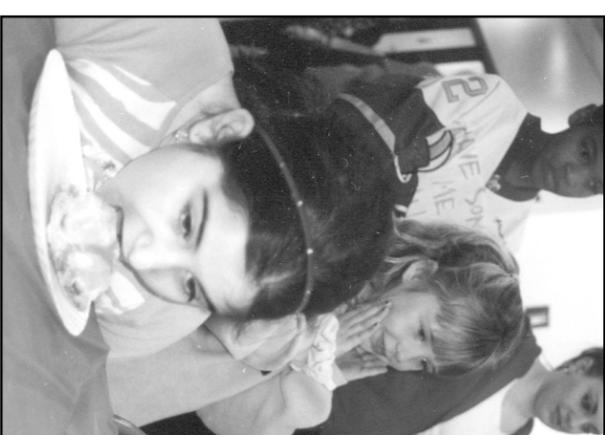
Sandel Sunday February 13 from 2 - 4 P.M. features dancing to Linda Ipanema and music from the 20s to the 60s. Free and open to the public.

The Black History Luncheon is Wednesday, February 16 at 12 Noon featuring traditional dishes. A special tribute to singer Ray Charles by United We Sing. \$5.00 per person.

AARP tax assistance is available by appointment every Monday morning through April 18. Call 678-9350.



The annual Valentine's Day Dance at the Sandel Center is Friday, February 11 at 1 P.M.



Register before Thursday, February 17 for the annual Winter Recess pie-eating contest for grades 1 to 6.

or Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 12:15 to 2:45 P.M.

Pre-Pre-K for those entering kindergarten in September 2007 are offered Monday through Thursday from 9 to 11:30 A.M. or Tuesday and Thursday from 12:15 to 2:45 P.M.

To schedule an appointment to visit the school, call the Recreation Office at 678-9338.

Arts and Leisure Activities

Artist's reception for Bernard James, whose photo art is on display throughout the month of February, is Tuesday, February 15 at 11 AM.

The L.I. Harmonica Club performs Friday, February 25 at 1 P.M. \$3.00 per person.

A Chinese auction Friday, February 18 at 1 P.M. includes egg rolls and Chinese tea for \$3.00 per person.

Backgammon and mah jongg instruction is available every Thursday at 2 P.M. Call Kathie at 678-9350 for more information.

Travel and Dining

A Washington, D.C. trip April 8 to 10 includes deluxe accommodations, sightseeing, two breakfast buffets, dinner and one evening dinner theater event for \$555 single, \$399 double, \$347 triple.