

Mayor's Newsletter - December 2015



Dear Residents,

" Runners ... On Your Mark ... Get Set ... Go !"

The 3rd Annual Dobbs Ferry **Holiday Hustle** was a *huge* success with over 600 runners participating in the 5K run. There were also over 100 kids who ran in the 1K *Reindeer Run*. The money raised will be used to purchase gifts and holiday dinners for 30 families and over 60 children in the Dobbs Ferry Community who are in need of help. The community event also helped to assist the **Children's Village Toy Drive** by donating Under Armour apparel to 50 residential students who will be residing on campus for the winter holidays.

This event would not have been successful without the support of great volunteers and groups throughout the community, including:

The Dobbs Ferry Youth Services Council, Mercy College, including the Softball Team and Spirit Squad; the Dobbs Ferry Boys and Girls basketball teams, Students from the Dobbs Ferry Middle and High School, The Masters School, Dobbs Ferry PBA and the Dobbs Ferry Ambulance Corps; also the Dobbs Ferry Recreation Department, Fire Department, and Police Department.

In particular we also want to recognize the efforts of Dobbs Ferry Police Officer **Justin Kampke**, who does such great work helping to support positive youth programs; and **Lisa Bai**, Chair of the Youth Service Council ('YSC'), who has brought so much positive energy and passion to the group's activities. Also **Matt**

Arone, Head of the Recreation Department; and Trustee **Vinny Rossillo**, who has served as BOT Liaison to the Council during the past several years. These people are really doing a great job helping to support this important program.

Also **Thank You** to the Sponsors: **Long Lake Camp for the Arts**, **CCI Group**, **Spindcredible**, and **Mercy College**



Above: Trustees Vinny Rossillo and Bill Flynn at the Starting Line of the 2015 Holiday Hustle



Above: Lisa Bai, Officer Kampke, Matt Arone, Trustee Rosillo, and other Volunteer Members of the Youth Service Council at the Finish Line. Thank You All!

... and **Thank You** to all the runners and families who came out for this great community event.

High Street View shed Project



Work on this exciting view shed project got underway this week as the Tree and Landscape Contractor began work to remove many of the dead trees and invasive growth which for many decades had overtaken over this pocket of village property inside High Street, Station Plaza, and Palisade Street.

This work is being done to create a beautiful new vista with a clearer view of the village's new Waterfront Park and the views of the Hudson River and Palisades beyond. It will be a breath taking new view that we will all be proud of and cherish as residents - and another reason why visitors will want to come back and enjoy the amazing beauty of Dobbs Ferry.

Here are pictures of some of the clearing work done this week on
The High Street View Shed Project





We would like to thank the **Conservation Advisory Board** - and especially **Neil Depasquale** - for their involvement in the project; assessing the condition of the area and helping to identify the dead, unhealthy, unsafe trees to eliminate, and those to save. Also the **Parks & Recreation Commission** who approved of the project to enhance and bring back this piece of village property, as a place of passive recreation for the enjoyment of residents, commuters, walkers and visitors.

Funding for the project is from the village's segregated recreation fund account, which is **paid for by developers**, (i.e. non- tax payer dollars).

Auditors Report for Fiscal Year Ending May 2015



At the most recent Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees, auditing firm O'Conner Davies presented the final *audited* **Financial Statements and Supplementary Information** for the village's fiscal budget for the year ended May 31, 2015. This report is available for review on the village's website, or copies can be requested of the village clerk. The Auditors gave **high marks to the Treasury Department and interim Village Administrator** for their work preparing the audit, managing the village's balance sheet, and improving certain items cited in the management report from previous years.

Since the new Treasurer and interim Administrator have been in place, the finance office has been reorganized to improve processes and internal controls. Going forward, the Treasury Department will also present a regular monthly *Treasury Report* and quarterly reviews of expenditure versus actual budgets; these and other improvements will greatly enhance communication to the board and the public on how the village is doing financially, which is a good thing.

Here are some highlights of the Auditor's presentation report:

- Conservative budgeting resulted in a *positive variance* of ~ \$650,000 for revenues and ~\$75,000 for expenditures.
- Revenue and permit lines showed significant positive increases year-on-year owing to redevelopment projects completed and ongoing. (*This is expected to continue into the next fiscal year*)
- Issuance of advance refunding bonds replaced older higher interest rate bonds that will save the Village approximately \$465,000 over the life of the refunding bonds.
- In a tough financial and tax cap limitation environment, the village has successfully kept unassigned **fund balance** at a minimum of 10% of the preceding budget in accordance with the village's fund balance policy.
- Old capital projects were reviewed and closed out, enabling the village to use the remaining funds from those projects to offset future debt service costs, saving taxpayer monies.
- Reporting and procedural deficiencies cited in previous years have been corrected, and this year's report was completed 5 months ahead compared to the prior years.

- Deficient property tax rolls (people who have not paid their taxes) have been reduced by ~ 25%, and the department has an ongoing plan to continue collecting tax bills past due.

The Bottom Line: The audited report showed the village's financial condition is on solid footing. Importantly, it also demonstrated significant improvements initiated by the Treasurer and interim Village Administrator, working together to improve the Treasury Department, its functions and process.

As a continuing priority, the Village Board, Treasury Department, Department Heads and Staff - and with the help of the **Citizens Budget Committee** - will continue their work to diligently review budgets and expenses to save tax payer's money. We will continue our strong commitment to provide residents the highest level of services while keeping tax rates as low as possible. We will also continue a thoughtful redevelopment approach to enhance the revenue lines. A balanced approach will help to make Dobbs Ferry an affordable and sustainable community into the future.



Let's Solarize Dobbs Ferry-Hastings!

www.SolarizeWestchester.com/DobbsFerry-Hastings

SOLARIZE WESTCHESTER

Supported by **nyserda** Energy Innovation Solutions

Seals of the Village of Dobbs Ferry and the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson.

Solarize Hastings-Dobbs Ferry Hits Tier 2 Pricing

Greater solar discount now available to Hastings and Dobbs Ferry residents

Hastings-on-Hudson and Dobbs Ferry, NY, December 14, 2015 – The Solarize Hastings-Dobbs Ferry initiative, which launched in late October, has already reached the program's second pricing tier with 14 contracts for solar electric systems signed so far through the campaign. In the Solarize tiered pricing structure, the greater the number of people signing contracts for solar installations, the lower the price falls. All system purchasers receive the better pricing as soon as a new tier is reached, regardless of when they signed a contract.

"Dobbs Ferry is pleased to bring the benefits of solar energy – cost savings and clean power – to our residents and businesses through Solarize Hastings-Dobbs Ferry. With installations on our own municipal facilities, we know how well it works!" Dobbs Ferry Mayor, Hartley Connett.

Since the campaign launched, over 360 residents from the two villages have signed up to learn if their property is a good candidate for solar power. Dozens have attended free educational workshops to learn how solar works and to get their questions answered by the installer partner's solar experts.

"The response to the Solarize effort has been excellent - not surprising given our community's dedication to sustainability - and so we now enjoy cheaper pricing, having passed a tier. Tax incentives change in February, so now is the time" Hastings-on-Hudson mayor, Peter Swiderski.

Solarize Hastings-Dobbs Ferry is one of four campaigns of Solarize Westchester, a program supported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). The program leverages group discounts through a competitively selected installer, in this case Sunrise Solar Solutions, who reduces the cost of solar. Community leaders and volunteers provide outreach and education to create awareness and drive solar adoption during the 18-week campaigns, which ends February 29, 2016.

However, there are compelling reasons for homeowners not to delay exploring this program. Rebates from New York State are decreasing soon, and the below-market interest rates for financing currently subsidized by New York State will begin to rise after January 31, 2016 for customers whose income is above 80% of Westchester's median income.

Homeowners and commercial property owners in Hastings and Dobbs Ferry are encouraged to learn more and enroll on the Solarize Hastings-Dobbs Ferry site (www.SolarizeWestchester.com/Hastings-DobbsFerry) to find out if solar is right for their property.

New Contract Settlement with Dobbs Ferry Police PBA



The Village has agreed to a new contract with the Police Officer's Union.

Features of the new contract include:

- Average yearly base salary increase of 2.35% through fiscal year 2016-17.
- A modified 'step' program which will improve the village's expenditure budget as newer officers move up in rank.
- A contribution from all new hires equal to 15% of the premium costs for health care during employment and into retirement.

The agreement struck a balance between providing a competitive financial package for Dobbs Ferry's Police Officers while also sharing in health care costs to relieve the burden on tax payers; this will help assure a more affordable operation into the future, and a more sustainable community long-term. The village appreciates the efforts of the PBA representatives helping to achieve a deal that was fair for all parties - the Officers, the Village, and the Tax Payers. It was a Win-Win-Win.

We are proud of the Dobbs Ferry Police Department, and thankful to all of the Police Officers for everything they do to keep us safe, all the time.

Downtown Redevelopment Projects in Process

Two exciting new downtown redevelopment projects are now in process as work has begun at 78 Main Street, and also 66-68 Main Street. Here are current and future pictures:



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(Above) 78 Main has been an empty ugly lot for as long as anyone can remember (left picture). The right picture depicts what the approved building will look like once completed.



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(Above) 66-68 Main street has been demolished (left picture). The old dilapidated building will be replaced with a new up-to-code building which will be a big enhancement to the residents and to the look of the downtown street-scape.

These projects are examples of the continued revitalization of Dobbs Ferry's downtown district. More people want to invest in the village, and attractive new residential projects fitting the Village's Master Vision Plan will help to bring new residents and families into the downtown area; helping bring more economic support to the business community, and creating a **more vibrant downtown**.

Dobbs Ferry's downtown is the place to be!

Update - Pilot On-Street Parking Permit Program



Four (4) Public hearings have been held to discuss with staff, and take input from residents, on the **Pilot On-Street Parking Permit Program**. The Board of Trustees is now working to finalize the language to be put into law. The main purpose of the new law/permit program is to help reduce the number of non-resident cars that use up parking spaces on specific streets in the village (mostly concentrated in or near the downtown area). Specifically, the law will provide residents of these streets a special permit to park at all

times while limiting the hours of parking for non-permit holders. By NY State rule, the law cannot be designed to *completely* eliminate parking to non residents on the designated streets, but it can allow some reasonable limitations which will serve to benefit the residents.

With the time having been spent to discuss and review, and input received, we anticipate to be in a position at the next BOT meeting on January 12, 2016 to consider a resolution to adopt the new local parking permit law. The review process has involved the input of residents, including those who will most be impacted/benefited by the new law. The board will not take any action before it presents to - and takes input from - the residents on the final draft language of the law.

In conjunction with this new permit program, the village is at the same time also taking action and considering other strategies to increase parking resources to serve the downtown area, as well commuters.

- Utilizing the upper parking lot at 145 Palisade, additional parking spaces have been secured for residents of Palisade Street.
- The property around the old DPW facility is being surveyed with the intent to determine how and where new municipal parking spaces can be created.
- A full engineering survey is being conducted - including discussions with the MTA - on the feasibility to extend the train station parking lot to the north parallel to the northwest side tracks, all the way to the 145 Palisade property line.
- The owners of Half Moon (Angelo and Bruce) have agreed to make available informally the northwest annex of their parking lot for commuter permit holders. They are fantastic neighbors and this is a great gesture on their part. Commuters you use this lot must be out by 7 PM.

These days parking is an issue no matter where you go, or live. Dobbs Ferry is no different. But the village is taking real *action* - and considering more - to help make the situation a little bit better.

*Quick Update on **Rivertowns Square** - Obviously this is a big construction project now in process, and it will remain so for a while. Please take care when driving through the area; there is a lot of heavy equipment and hundreds of workers moving around. While the Ogden Avenue Extension has now been opened, the new roadway system will take time until it is fully completed along with the rest of the project. Con Edison has work to remove a lot of above ground wires and poles but it is going to take some time - so please be careful as some poles are going to remain for a while in odd locations a bit close to the road.*

Weekly updates on construction schedules and information are being sent to the Rivertowns Square e-mail distribution list - if you are not already on this list but would like to be added please contact the Village Clerk at ldreaper@dobbsferry.com. Here are some upcoming Holiday Events in the Village:

Seniors Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 22, 2015

11 AM - 1 PM

Embassy Community Center

For information call 693-7792

Egg Nog Party at The Mead House

Sunday, January 10, 2016

The Meade House - Dobbs Ferry Historical Society



THE DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS OUR
ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S CLARA MEAD

*Egg Nog
Party*

COME VISIT WITH FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
WELCOME IN THE NEW YEAR

THE MEAD HOUSE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016
2-4 PM

A FREE EVENT OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY
WWW.DOBBSFERRYHISTORY.ORG
914-674-1007

This will be the final Newsletter Update for 2015.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Village, We wish everyone a very

Safe and Happy Holiday Season. *We have a lot to be thankful for in Dobbs Ferry*

And we wish everyone All the Best for a

Healthy and Prosperous New Year in 2016!Sincerely, Mayor Hartley Connett
December 19, 2015