

# Mayor's Newsletter - 2/23/15



The picture above looks like it might be from Antarctica, or a frozen tundra somewhere far away. But it is not. It is a view of the Hudson River from the shores of Dobbs Ferry two days ago. *Amazing*. People who have lived in Dobbs Ferry a long time can remember when the river would freeze over; its been a long time since that happened, until now. February 2015 will go down as one of the coldest months ever recorded in New York; snow fall amounts will likely make the record books too. While the conditions have been very difficult outdoors, the village DPW Highway and Garbage Teams have done a tremendous job keeping the roads clear and the neighborhoods clean; and Police Officers and Public Safety are serving us 24/7 during these cold days and nights. We really appreciate the work they do on behalf of the residents, especially now. Thanks to all.

**Here is a quick update report on things in Dobbs Ferry, a few events, and some initiatives moving forward:**



## **Dobbs Ferry Scores *Best* on NY State Fiscal Stress Test**

Below is a graph from the NY State Comptroller's Fiscal Stress Monitoring System.

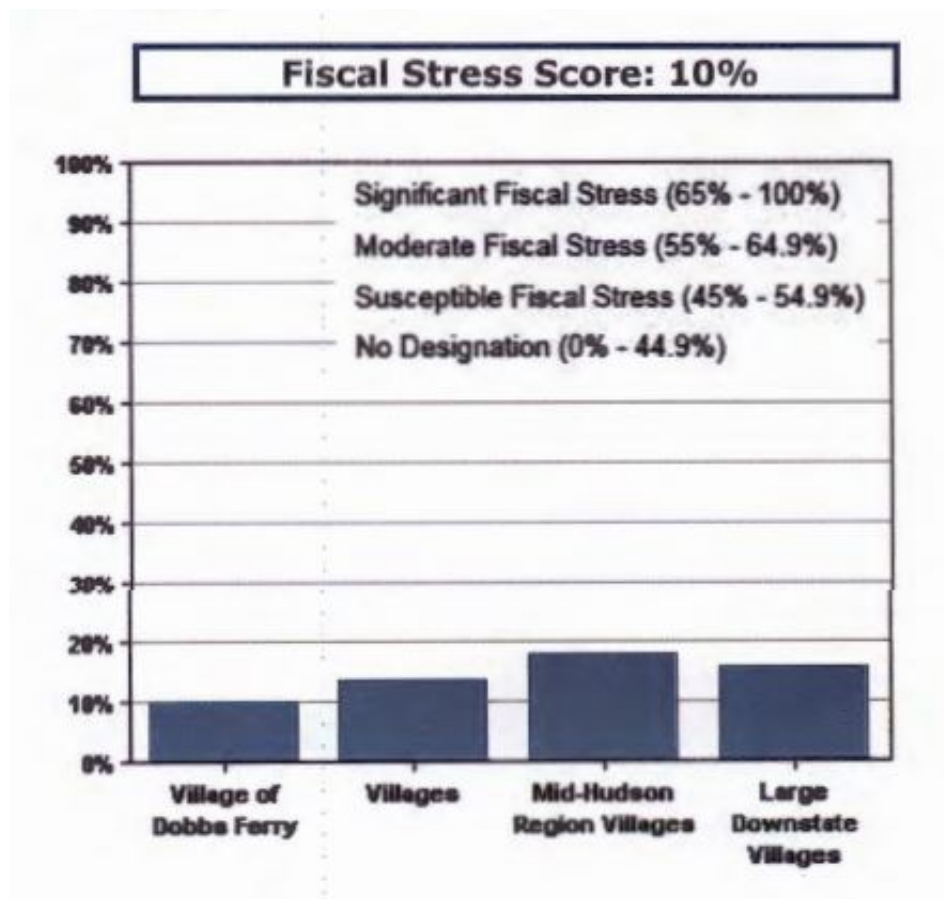
The stress monitoring system is conducted by the State Comptroller in an effort to assess the financial condition of New York's school districts, cities, municipalities, towns and villages; and it is an effort to help entities determine in advance if they have a deteriorating financial condition.

Stress scores are represented in percentage terms: The **HIGHER** the fiscal stress score percentage, the **higher** the probability the entity will have a poor or deteriorating financial condition. A **LOWER** fiscal stress score means the entity has a *lower* probability of a poor financial condition.

In other words, the **LOWER** the stress test score, the **BETTER** financial condition you are in. *You want to score a low percentage on this test.*

Based on villages in our region of comparable size ...

... **Dobbs Ferry** had the *lowest* - **BEST** - fiscal stress score.



This kind of positive score does not happen without a lot of effort and good planning - by a team of people - working together to make prudent decisions which are in the best long-term interests of the village, residents, and tax payers. These efforts involve the village's Department Heads and Staff; the Treasury Department and the Village Administrator; an all-volunteer Citizens Budget Committee; and a policy established by the current administration that approaches the budget and planning process in a serious

way; this includes a philosophy for **balanced re-development** as a means to increase revenues and increase the village's tax base.

**In fact**, the State's fiscal stress monitoring system's main components in evaluating the financial condition of a village explicitly include:

" ... *evaluate budgetary solvency, **the ability of a locality to generate enough revenue** to meet expenses, by measuring:* • Year-end fund balances • Operating deficits/surpluses • Cash position • Use of short-term debt for cash flow • Fixed costs (evaluated for local governments only) Environmental indicators capture trends that influence **revenue-raising capability** and demands for service: **Property values** • Age • Enrollment • Poverty • **Budget vote trends** • **Property values** • **Employment** • Dependence on revenue from other government units (which can be highly variable) • Constitutional tax limits • **Sales tax revenue** ...' .

It would be impossible to achieve a positive fiscal stress test score - or to ever have a village with a sustainable and affordable future - without taking such a balanced approach. **Dobbs Ferry residents and tax payers should feel very good about the current financial condition and direction of the village - and the efforts being made by many to ensure a financially sustainable path forward.**



## **Sustainable Dobbs**

### **Sustainable Dobbs Seeks Community Input on Climate Action Plan**

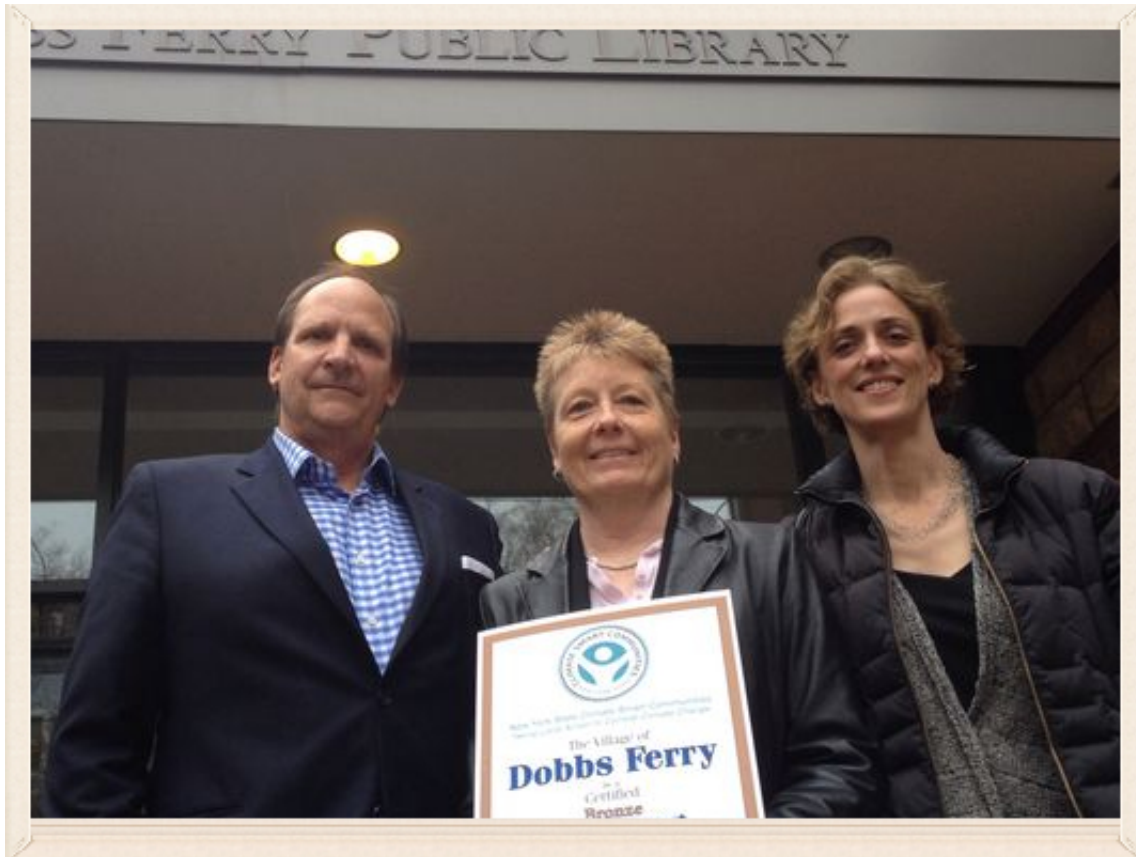
Sustainable Dobbs, an initiative of the Dobbs Ferry Energy Task Force, will sponsor a series of Community Conversations to solicit input on a Climate Action plan for the Village. The “Conversations” will start on **Sunday, March 1** and will run through the spring on **Sunday afternoons from 4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

Each session will be held at the Dobbs Ferry Public Library and will cover a specific issue. Anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the future of Dobbs Ferry is invited to attend one or more of the following Community Conversations:

- March 1:      Transportation
- March 22:    Waste
- April 12:     Energy
- May 3:        Gardens, Trees and Local Food

- May 31: Buildings and Land Use

The Energy Task Force ('ETF') is an ad hoc committee of the Village formed in 2008. Composed of citizen volunteers, the ETF, working in partnership with elected officials and municipal staff, has spearheaded and supported key projects to enhance the sustainability of the Village. **Dobbs Ferry's commitment to sustainability was recognized by New York State last year when the Village was awarded the highest level of Climate Smart Certification issued to date. A key accomplishment that supported this award was our village's dramatic reduction of greenhouse gases from municipal buildings and streetlights – over 40%.**



**[Mayor; Liz Dreaper, Village Clerk; Nina Orville, Chair ETF]**

The **Climate Action Plan**, which will be developed with input from a broad cross section of community members, will bring the Village closer to completing its commitments as a state-certified Climate Smart Community. More importantly, it will formalize the goals and priorities of Dobbs Ferry's residents and stakeholders, giving decision-makers a locally-grown plan for our future.

"We encourage our neighbors to lend their voices," remarked ETF member Cathy Bobenhausen. "With their input and with strong community leadership, these conversations promise to guide our actions in a way that is carefully considered, inclusive of diverse perspectives, and sensible for the long term health of the Village."



The Community Conversations are co-sponsored by: Cabrini of Westchester, Curious on Hudson, Eat Local NY, Endless Trail Bike Worx and The Garden Club of Dobbs Ferry (list in formation).

For more information, contact **Kathy Dean** at [kathydean64@gmail.com](mailto:kathydean64@gmail.com).

OR,

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**Dobbs Ferry Historical Society**

**Saturday, March 7 at 6:00 PM**

Wine and Cheese Reception and Lecture

***'Alexander Hamilton: Washington's Indispensable Partner'***

**Meade House | 12 Elm Street**

**Wine and cheese reception and lecture:**  
**"Alexander Hamilton: Washington's Indispensable Partner"**

**Saturday, March 7 at 6:00 PM**  
**Dobbs Ferry Historical Society | 12 Elm Street**

**Please** join us for an exciting presentation by Alexander Hamilton expert, Rand Scholet, who will discuss George Washington's public service from 1775 to 1799 and will show how Alexander Hamilton predominated among the key Founding Fathers who contributed to Washington's success.

**Before** Mr. Scholet's talk, Ian Connett, will speak about Alexander Hamilton as a Continental Army officer in Dobbs Ferry in 1781.



*Mr. Scholet, president of the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society, has been featured as a speaker on C-SPAN, at National Park sites, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, Museum of American Finance, Society of Mayflower Descendants, Washington's Headquarters, and other historical locations.*

*Mr. Connett is a Tarrytown attorney and native son of Dobbs Ferry.*

**Dobbs Ferry Historical Society**

**Admission is free, and all are welcome.**

**914.674.1007 | DFHISTORY@OPTIMUM.NET**

**Please support the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society by becoming a member.**

There are great programs and events through-out the year. The Hamilton Lecture promises to be very exciting; the Society has timed it perfectly coinciding with the world premier Broadway musical everyone is talking about, **'Hamilton'**.

"From the creative team behind the Tony Award-winning In *'The Heights'* comes a wildly inventive new musical about the scrappy young immigrant who forever changed America: *Alexander Hamilton*. Tony, Grammy, and Emmy Award winner Lin-Manuel Miranda wields his pen and takes the stage as the unlikely founding father determined to make his mark on a new nation as hungry and ambitious as he is." Check out the reviews:

<http://www.publictheater.org/en/Public-Theater-Season/Hamilton/>

**Great Activities at the Dobbs Ferry Senior Center | Embassy Club Every Monday**

Tai Chi

11 AM - 12 PM

Every Tuesday	Bridge	1 PM
Every Wednesday	Exercise Class	11 AM - 12 PM
Every Thursday	Mah Jong	1 PM
Every Friday	Yoga	11 AM - 12 PM

There is a bus available for senior transportation and shopping! For more information on Senior's programs and benefits, call **693-7792**. (Embassy photos courtesy T. Losee)

### **Highstreet View Shed Project**







Previously announced, this is an exciting initiative to create a new view shed and improve the environment. Since last reported, the Board of Trustees referred this project to the **Conservation Advisory Board** ('CAB') for review and commentary. The CAB has since submitted a report to the board with recommendations for a phased-in approach to the project; this will include the retention of a professional Arborist to help identify the 'good' healthy trees from the 'bad' invasive non-native growth that kills the good trees, and blocks-out the view; working with the village's landscaping expert to lay-out a ground cover plan to retain the soil and mitigate run-off. Over the coming 2 months, village staff will be coordinating with the CAB and landscaping experts to design a plan which the board will review and consider for implementation / action in the Spring. We will keep everyone posted on this project. **Planning Board Review of Village Code Sections**





The Planning Board is conducting a review to consider revisions to a small section of the village's Zoning Code. Generally, the code adopted some 5 years ago has worked well; however, as it has been applied over time there have been aspects that have not worked so well. In late 2013 members of the statutory review boards expressed a need to consider revisions to improve some areas of the code. In response – with full support of the trustees and statutory boards - the mayor created an independent Ad Hoc Review Committee, led by former Trustee Koenigsberg; and included chairs/members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board, and AHRB, as well the Building Department, Village Planner, Village Engineer, and the Village Attorney.

The Ad Hoc Committee met on a number of occasions beginning in March 2014 and unanimously recommended certain revisions to the Zoning Code, set forth in a memorandum from the committee to the Board of Trustees dated May 23, 2014 (the “Ad Hoc Committee’s Memorandum” available on the Village’s website). Upon receipt of these recommendations, the Trustees “referred” the Memorandum to the Planning Board – under NYS law, any revisions to the code must be “referred” to the Planning Board for report and recommendation. Since the “referral”, the Planning Board has conducted a series of public workshops to consider revisions as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee. The Planning Board has also requested and received written comment from the public.

During this review process it is important to note that neither the Mayor nor any member of the Board of Trustees has had any input on the committee’s recommendations or the draft memorandums being considered by the Planning Board; the BOT awaits the Planning Board’s recommendations. Once received, the Board of Trustees will hold the requisite public hearing to consider any potential revisions.

During these (or any) public hearings the Board of Trustees welcomes responsible and considerate public discourse and debate.

