

# Mayor's Newsletter - May 2016



**Dear Residents,** Here is a quick update on things going on in the village, with a special report on the new fiscal year 2016-17 budget and tax rates, projects in process, and some local events and information to share.



## **Final Fiscal 2016-17 Village Budget and Tax Rate Adopted**

At the board's regular meeting on April 26, the trustees adopted the new fiscal 2016-17 village budget and tax rate.

The tax rate change is the lowest in 14 years since 2002

*... and may be one of the lowest ever in the history of the village.*

Here are the details:

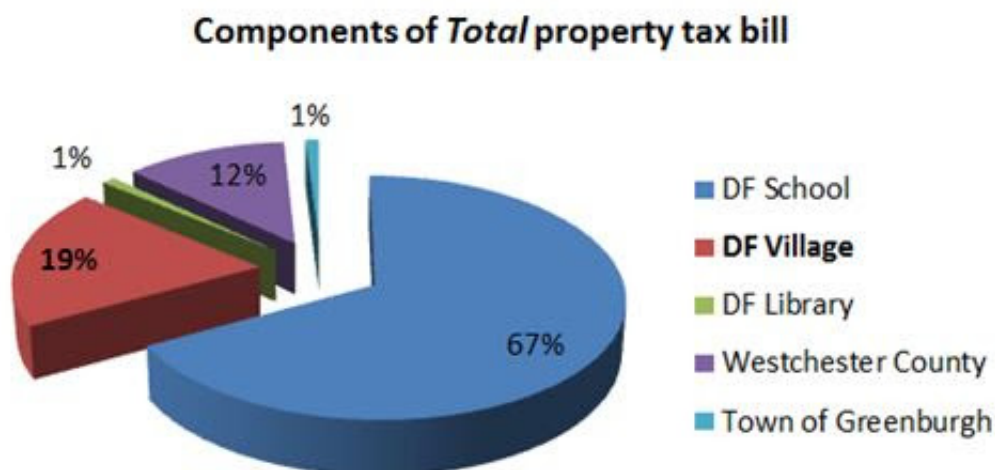
New 2016-17 tax rate: \$241.26

Tax rate change: .14%

Depending on your property's assessed valuation, **the new tax rate will have the following approximate \$ impact on the village portion of your total property tax bill:**

	<b>Tax rate <i>this year</i> (2016/17 adopted)</b>	<b>Tax rate <i>last year</i> (2015/16 adopted)</b>		
Assessed Valuation	<b>241.27</b>	240.92	\$ increase per year	% increase
\$15,000	\$3,619.05	\$3,613.80	\$5.25	.14%
\$20,000	\$4,825.40	\$4,818.40	\$7.00	.14%
\$25,000	\$6,031.75	\$6,023.00	\$8.75	.14%
\$35,000	\$8,444.45	\$8,432.20	\$12.25	.14%
\$40,000	\$9,650.80	\$9,636.80	\$14.00	.14%

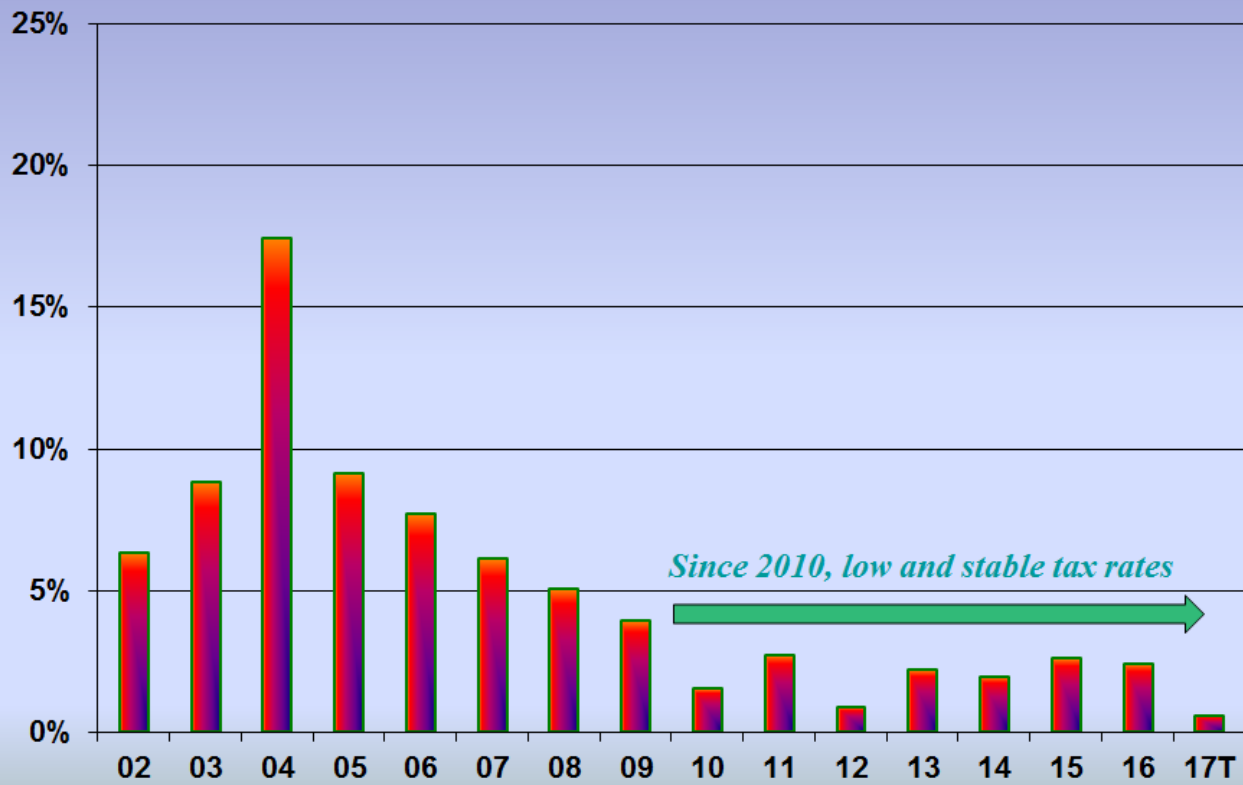
The pie chart below shows the Village Tax as a percentage of your Total Property Tax:



The ***Village portion*** of your total property tax bill is approximately **19 %**. Historical Village Tax Rates and Comparisons:

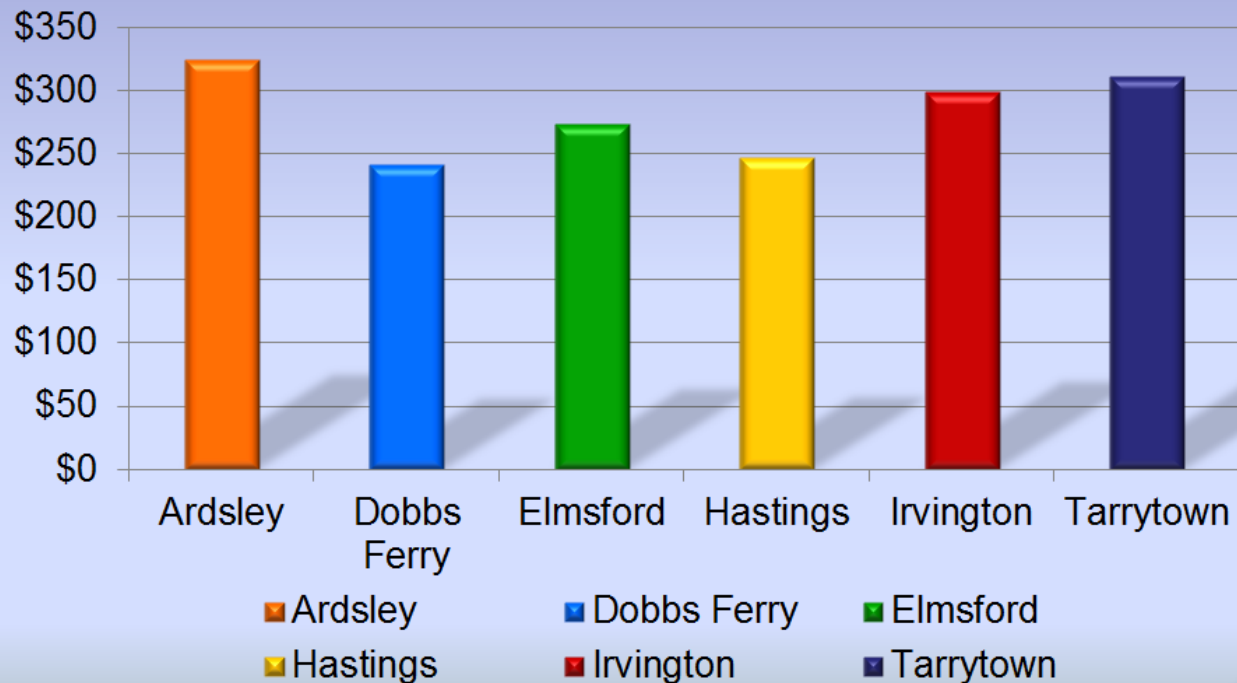
***Since 2010, your village tax rates have been stable and low ...***

## Village Property Tax Levy Year-on-Year % Change



***Tax rates have also been well below the state, regional and pier averages ...***

# Tentative Tax Rate Comparison



## NY State Tax Cap Law:

For the 5th consecutive year, the village tax levy will be under the New York State Tax Cap since the inception of the law.

*This means **Dobbs Ferry** tax payers will again receive property tax refund checks from New York State for the new fiscal tax year.*

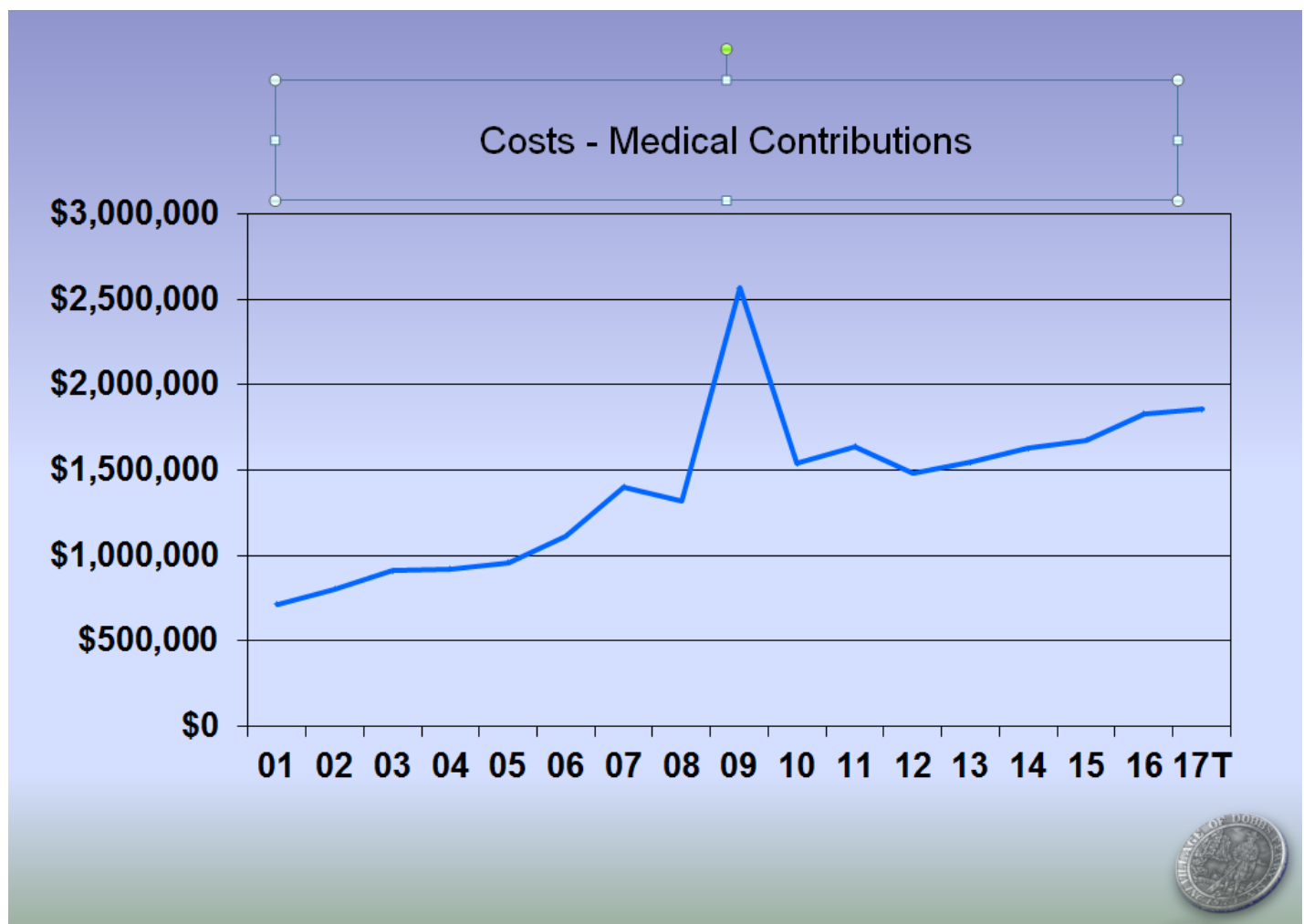
**A Word on Costs**  
There is also good news on costs. *Treasury, Department Heads and Staff all looked closely and took action in a number of areas to broadly reduce expenditures:*

- Reduction in insurance costs (dental, automobile, and liability) with a new Carrier and *improved* benefits for employees.
- Lower banking fees and enhanced interest rate returns through account consolidation.
- Reduced website management fees.
- Decrease in Legal and Special Council fees.
- Decrease in Treasury personnel services (attrition).
- Decrease in central garage and utilities ... ***Pay-off from Energy Savings Initiatives***
- Decrease in snow removal and fuel ... ***it was a warm winter and oil prices are low***

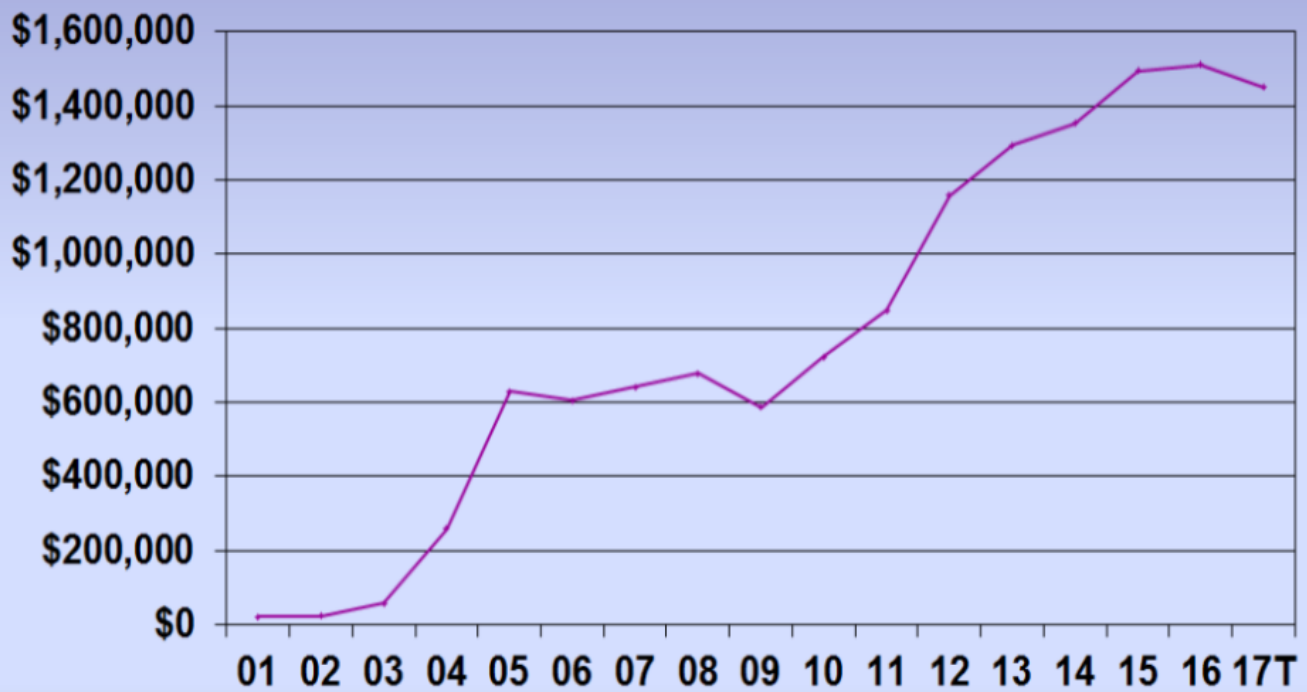
- Decrease in overall Village contribution to the NY State Retirement System
- Decrease in Debt Service Bond interest of \$72,866

While keeping tax rates low, the village also settled **a new contract with the Police and Teamsters Unions** through the 16/17 fiscal year. The new contracts provide an average annual pay increase of 2.35%. Importantly, the contracts also include **concessions from the unions to increase employee contribution for health insurance costs to 15% of premium *into retirement***. This will be a *huge* positive factor helping to control employee benefit costs into the future. The village is greatly appreciative of the union representatives and members working with the village to agree on a contract that is in the best interests of all parties, long-term.

The 2 graphs below show the beginning positive impact of the employee contribution changes for healthcare and retirement costs. With higher employee contributions, these costs should begin to smooth-out compared to the steep increases over the prior years, benefiting tax payers over the long-run.



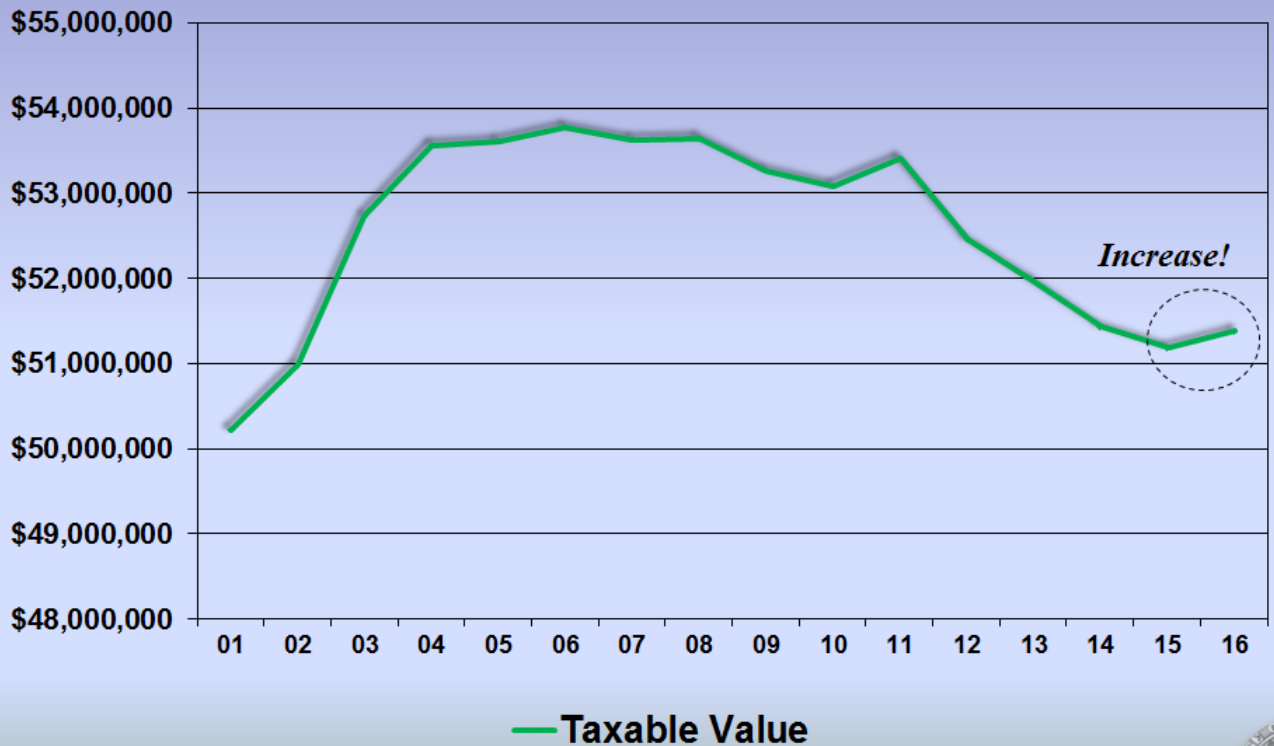
## Costs - Retirement Contributions



### Assessed Valuations Increased

*For the first time in 6 years, and for only the second time in 10 years, the village's assessed valuations increased.*

## Village Taxable Assessed Valuation



***It cannot be stressed enough how important higher valuations are for the health of the village and the benefit of tax payers.***

**Increased Valuations = Higher Revenues**

*leading to --> Lower Tax Rates*

*leading to --> Investment in Infrastructure and Improvements*

*leading to --> Higher Property Values and Investment Returns*

*leading to --> A Higher Quality of Life for All Residents !*

Year-on-year, assessed valuations **increased by \$214,422**, to \$51.4 million from \$ 51.19 million.

**Smart re-development is necessary for the village to grow, to balance the budget, and to keep tax rates low.**

Empty buildings and decrepit lots don't do anyone any good. They are ugly, they attract rats and weeds and other things (not good), they lower the value of surrounding properties, they reduce revenues, they bring down the whole image of the village, and they lower the quality of life for all residents ... and the longer they stay empty and decrepit, the longer it takes to improve them, or to get *anything* done.

While construction on *Rivertowns Square* has a way to go, the project has already contributed a significant

one-time recreation payment and additional permit fees; once completed, the property is also expected to generate meaningful long-term economic benefits to the village. Improvements completed and underway in the Gateway and Business Districts are supporting a revival of Dobbs Ferry's downtown. Six year's ago the area saw many empty store fronts and empty lots, **everywhere**. Now, there are **new store fronts, new restaurants thriving, building improvements, new investment, and new families and couples walking the streets**. A revitalized **Chamber of Commerce** is forming and seems serious to make a difference. *Important Historical Property* has been re-claimed, beautified and memorialized (**Little Church Cemetery**, Dobbs Ferry Revolutionary Memorial, **Meade House improvements**), and **spectacular new view sheds** are being re-created (Station Plaza/High Street/Palisade St). **Fields and Courts have been improved**. The **beautiful new Waterfront Park** has never looked better.

A balanced approach and smart re-development strategy is paying off for tax payers ... and in a higher quality of life for **all** residents.

The strategy followed also keeps the village in good standing with the Ratings Agencies. Due to its prudent and balanced approach, Dobbs Ferry maintains strong **A** level credit ratings with the agencies; in addition, the village again scored extremely well (LOW) on the New York State Comptroller's Fiscal Stress Test, due in large part to the village's balance of cost control and revenue intake.

**Recognition:** " *Thank you* " to ...

... **Village Treasurer Jeff Chuhta**. This is Jeff's second village budget, and the first he has done formally as Treasurer. He is at the top, and he has done an excellent job. The **Department Heads and Staff** worked hard (and smart) to reduce costs and find savings. **Betsy Gelardi** did an amazing job as interim Village Administrator, which included 9 months of intense budget work; **new Administrator Charlene Indelicato** made a strong contribution in the short time she has been on-board, and will no doubt be a major asset helping to shape future budgets. Thanks to the efforts the volunteers on the **Energy Task Force** and with strong support of the administration, meaningful savings have been achieved through investments in energy efficiency programs, systems upgrades, solar installations, and large LED replacements. The **Citizens Budget Committee** makes a big difference too - helping to analyze and challenge the way things are done. The volunteer members of this committee have made a *big* difference.

These are the people and the reasons why  
for the past 6 years

Dobbs Ferry has had some of the lowest tax rates in the history of the village, *ever*.

Dobbs Ferry residents should feel good about the constant work being done by good people to deliver all the essential services at the lowest possible cost, making the village more sustainable, improving the quality of life for all residents, and helping to make Dobbs Ferry a Better Place to Live.

**! They all deserve our Thanks for a Job Well Done !An important note on the town-wide**

## reassessment and Dobbs Ferry Village Tax.

The recent town-wide re-assessment is for fiscal tax year 2017-18, and has no impact on any village, school, or town tax for the new upcoming 16-17 tax year.

Dobbs Ferry maintains its own village tax assessment role. For Dobbs Ferry tax payers, this means the town assessment role is used for schools, county, and town tax, but **not** for village property tax assessment. That is set by Dobbs Ferry.

*Background: Dobbs Ferry has maintained its own village tax assessment role. This goes back a long time, where at some point the town and village assessment roles had disconnected; the longer this went on (for many years), and with no broad re-assessments ever being done, the discrepancy between the 2 roles grew over time. For that reason, and the many issues it would have created to reconcile the difference, past village officials and treasurers decided it would be too difficult to adopt the town's assessment role. So the town's roll was never adopted and instead Dobbs Ferry maintained its own. The village has a Board of Assessment Review (BAR') which provides property owners an opportunity to grieve their assessed values each year, in February. The town assessor also works directly with the village and the BAR to assist in the process.*

With the passage of time, and with a broader re-assessment having now been completed, the village and town assessment roles are now much closer aligned.

The Treasury and Administrator, with the board, will be looking more closely at the tax rolls, to determine if / when it makes sense in the overall best interests of the village to now adopt the town roll, and get everyone on the same page. **No final decisions will be made** until the village has met with the assessor's office and studied the issue in more detail, and not until a public hearing is held for the public to receive more information and have input.

The village will keep everyone posted on this issue.

## New Downtown Area Municipal Parking Spaces on the Way



Below is a picture of the current work being done to create approximately **25 new municipal parking spaces** at the far west end of Cedar Street (near the old DPW building). The fence has been relocated, and new asphalt and striping will be the next step. In a few weeks time these new spaces should be in

service bringing new parking resources to support downtown Business Merchants and Shoppers.



**A Great Meet-and Greet at The Mead House**



Mary Donovan, Charlene Indelicato, the Mayor, Trustee Donna Cassell, Frank Farrington, and County Legislator Mary Jane Shimsky hanging around 'the spread' Thank you to the ***Dobbs Ferry Historical Society*** for hosting such a great event this past Sunday. Members of the Society and many residents turned out to *meet and greet* new Village Administrator

Charlene Indelicato. ***Thank you*** to Mary Donovan and Frank Farrington, Co-Presidents of the Board, and all the members of the Society. It was a really fun event and nice to see so many people come out.

The village really appreciates all the work done by the Historical Society.



**Become a Member of the Society and help preserve Dobbs Ferry's History** Thank you to Matt Arone and the Recreation Department, Justin Kampke, Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry Youth and *Everyone* who came out in the rain on Sunday to participate in the *Community Clean-up Day*.





A few crazy adults having fun picking up trash in the rain down at the Waterfront Park

**Dobbs Ferry Recreation Department**  
**Presents:**

**Dobbs Ferry Senior Citizens**  
**12th Annual Senior Week**  
***(Get In The Loop -Join The Group)***

**May 9<sup>th</sup> - May 13<sup>th</sup>**

Dobbs Ferry invites all Senior Citizens to come to the  
Embassy Community Center 60 Palisade St.  
Dobbs Ferry all week for exciting events

FREE Lunches

FREE Transportation

FREE Parking

FREE Exercise Classes

Poker Academy

Beading Workshop

Live Entertainment, Photo Booth

Floral Arrangement

Local Business & Health Expo

**GRAND FINALE Friday Dinner Dance**  
**And Much Much More**

**For More Information Call,**  
**693-7792 or 693-0024**



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The next regular meeting of the board of trustees is this coming Tuesday, May 10. The agenda will be sent as usual on the Friday before.

We will be in touch soon with another update. Until then, we hope everyone is enjoying the outdoors and please be safe ... and please be sure to ***Slow Down***. It is not worth it to be in a hurry.

Sincerely,

Mayor Hartley Connett