

Supervisors report December 2012

As we near the close of 2012, I would like to take a quick reflection on some of the issues the board worked on this year. While I would like count these subjects as achievements, I fully respect that many of these issues were influenced by previous administrations and without the help of all of our department heads and residents around town; none of these would be “accomplishments”

As 2012 began, we adopted an Ethics law that eliminated the need for a town Ethics committee, whose action has never been needed in town, and appoints the County’s Ethics committee as the towns, if the need arises.

I met in February with Congressman Gibson’s office and representatives of CSX in regards to the Schoolhouse road bridge which remains closed, and presented an alternative to them, we still await replies from CSX; I will continue these talks this year.

Worked with the County IDA to extend the PILOT program for Bio-Medica, I believe to be the town’s largest employer.

I had the pleasure making the final payment on our town hall building; much credit goes to former Supervisor Tod Grenci who was in charge when the building was built.

I have met several times throughout the year with Allied Health Care in efforts to maintain Sand Bar Park a “town park” while attempting to help make driveway improvements that would benefit the Hydro-Electric plant.

I attended several broadband symposiums sponsored by Congressman’s Gibson’s office and the County Economic Development Committee to study what requirements our County residents have when it comes to broadband and what role the County could play.

In May we had guests from Columbia Land Conservancy and Scenic Hudson attend a board meeting to speak about conservation easements, as I often thought they were misunderstood by residents.

In June we were able to get representatives from DEC to attend a town meeting and make a presentation on the future riverfront development at the end of Ice House Road. As it stands now DEC has committed to spending the \$250,000.00 that the town received in a settlement from GE 20 years ago. This can only happen if DOT installs a gated crossing at Ice House Road. I spoke with both agencies at the beginning of December and was told that both projects are scheduled for 2013. We will continue to remind both agencies of their commitments, so that we all may enjoy improved river access.

We also got great news from DOT who conducted several public meetings on the future of Ferry Road and it appears they have listened, and now have stated that a traffic light will be installed to improve safety of the crossing and therefore eliminating the threat to residents who live there or who enjoy river access on that road. There were already new gates and lights installed at this location, and we can expect work on a traffic light to occur sometime in the future.

I have continued to work with DOT to receive approval to get to the construction phase of the Rail Road restoration grant that was approved years ago, and due to new requirements implemented by Federal and State agencies, we have not been able to proceed to construction, but we are making progress. Meanwhile we have a very active committee that has had a great year of fundraising that has been used to offset the towns share in the grant funding. We also have seen volunteers who, on a regular basis get together and have done a great job with restoring doors and windows and maintaining to building. If you have not had the opportunity to see how this building looks, I encourage you attend an event and enjoy the building. Remember this is a town building and anyone who has ideas on uses for this historic community building, should feel free to contact a board or committee member.

The town board and our town Highway department have had a busy year with the Capitol project of renovating the towns Highway garage that was built in the early 1960's and has had little major work preformed since. We added a truck bay with radiant floor heat and insulated the building with high density foam insulation to conserve energy going forward. We also constructed two salt and sand storage areas, one near the garage where trucks need to get loaded and

a larger facility on Sharptown road with large overhang roofs to store equipment out the weather, which not only makes us compliant with state laws regarding salt storage but helps to extend the life of our equipment, and allows for the storage of a full years worth of material, which enables better purchasing. Engineers had estimated a cost of \$845,000.00 for this project, but it was completed for around \$750,000.00 including some new parking lot paving that was not included in the cost estimates. Although a referendum had passed authorizing the town to borrow the full amount of \$845,000.00 we completed the project with only needing to borrow \$700,000.00. This bond will be paid off over the next 15 years at about \$65,000.00 a year. Working this new payment into the 2013 budget as well as the decision by the board to use \$40,000.00 less of the fund balance to offset taxes, required us to increase the amount to be raised in taxes by \$14,000.00, so you can see some serious cuts were made.

The Highway department also replaced one of our large plow trucks with a new truck and dump body, and the entire cost was paid for out of reserve funds. Bernie did a great job of selling the old truck at twice the price that suggested by the dealer.

December brought out the new town web site which had been in the planning much of the year. Our original web site had been set up and maintained by a local resident who retired from this work this year, and the town now desired to have a site that could be easily managed in house. Our Town Clerk, Melissa Naegeli has been doing a great job in learning to manage this new site in house, eliminating the need for outside contractors to input data to the site. We hope this new site will help keep residents informed.

Changes made in health insurance program that the town provides for its highway employee's will net a savings of about \$8,000.00 a year going forward. Changes to the municipal phone and internet services are expected to save tax payers \$800.00 a year, while providing town offices with the latest technology. The town board has just begun looking into a lease program for solar electric panels for the town hall that would help offset monthly electric bills without any capital investment.

We ended the year with the news that the Hydro Electric plant in which the town is a co-licensee in was up and running with one generator and for a short time on Friday the 28th, was on line with National Grid. 2013 will no doubt bring a dedication ceremony as they get the plant fully operational. Restoration efforts of the building itself will also continue, keep posted on our new web site for more news on your opportunity to see this operation in action. We also saw the retirement of Charlene Leach from our towns planning after only 30 years of faithful service on that board.

I have enjoyed my first year as Supervisor and again would thank all department heads and fellow residents who have helped make 2012 an enjoyable and productive year here in the town of Stuyvesant.

Happy New Year!

Supervisor Ron Knott