

**NEW MIXED USE CODE
for Main Street
To Allow for
Revitalization of
Downtown Farmingdale**



The Village Board hired experts, funded by a New York State grant, to study our downtown. This study, which included valuable community input over the past three years, implemented a new mixed use downtown building code that will allow luxury dwelling units above smaller, retail stores as pictured above. This proposed three story revitalization is just south of the clock tower on Main Street. Entrances to the residential units are behind Main Street and much of the parking is proposed to be on the ground level behind the smaller, retail stores that front Main Street.

**FARMINGDALE
VILLAGE REPORT**

Inc. Village of Farmingdale
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Farmingdale, New York 11735

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FEBRUARY 2012
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**FARMINGDALE
VILLAGE REPORT**

Moving
In The Right Direction

Mayor George "Butch" Starkie
Deputy Mayor Patricia A. Christiansen
Trustee Cheryl L. Parisi
Trustee William Barrett
Trustee Ralph Ekstrand

Dear Friends and Neighbors

This will be my last official newsletter as your Mayor. The six years I have served you have been some of the best years of my life so far. I have always loved a challenge, and the responsibilities and challenges of being Mayor never let me down.

When my oldest child went off to college this past summer, it became very apparent to me how quickly time passes and how much quality family time I had missed. The other issue I face is this unfortunate, declining economy which has caused my livelihood to suffer greatly. The choice to not seek re-election, though difficult, was necessary at this point in my life.

I first need to thank my Deputy Mayor, Pat Christiansen and the Board of Trustees. You would be hard pressed to find a more dedicated, hardworking and honorable group of people who came together at a critical time in the Village. I will truly miss working with them.

Now, down to business...The first mixed use project will have a public hearing in March. This is an exciting time. All the years of studies and planning are now going to bear fruit. The Bartone Properties project on Front Street is going through the planning and public hearing process. I know you might hear from the nay-sayers that this is overdevelopment. It's revitalization - we will lose an old, underutilized warehouse and replace it with a beautiful retail and living complex. The Village will get a new park at the train station, road widening and drainage upgrades and monetary contributions to ease everyone's tax burden.

The Board is also in the final stages of completing the study of the Village's Water Department management (2 years) with either the Bethpage Water District or Suffolk County Water Authority. These proposals are now being evaluated by an outside consultant who will help the Board make the best long-term decision for the benefit of our residents to provide this vital service. At the end of the day the Village will retain ownership of the Water Department's assets, the Village Board will set the water rates, no one will lose their jobs, we will get millions of dollars of infrastructure upgrades and water rates will come down for most residents and businesses. Hard to believe but it can and will be done. Economies of scale are a wonderful thing.

The Board is in the process of delivering my 4th budget. Over the past four years we have maintained all services and our average tax rate increase has been below the 2% mandated tax cap. We didn't need the Governor to tell us we needed a break from the spiraling costs of government, although the Board appreciates the help. We also procured two new fire trucks, rebuilt six roads, delivered rehabilitated parks. With the help of record amounts of grant money, we replaced light fixtures in our parking lots, implemented a sign program for our downtown merchants, replaced concrete and bricks on Main Street. In partnership with our Historical Society, we designed and constructed a Memorial Walkway in our Village Green and added a Civil War Memorial in honor of our greatest asset, our veterans!

It's been a great run and I can truthfully say I did my best. Thank you for the privilege of being your Mayor. It was an honor. For the people who didn't vote for me, I hope over time you came to see that it was your interests that were first and foremost, not self-interests. For the people who voted for me, I hope I met your expectations. A special thank you to my wife and kids for loving me unconditionally. I love you more than Ritz Crackers! Patti, fire up the Pizza oven, I'm making dinner!!

See you on Main Street



Thank You!



Several years ago there was a popular book, *It Takes A Village*, the premise being that it takes many people to raise a child. If a book were to be written about our Village the title would have to be, "It Takes Committed, Caring, and Generous People to Make A Village".

Over this past year we have been the recipient of the generosity and commitment of so many.

- Checker Cab's owner Phil Fortuna for providing ice cream for the audiences at all our Pops Concerts and Movie nights;
- Lowe's Home Improvement Store for its \$1,500 grant used for holiday decorations;
- Scott's who donated \$10,000 towards improvements in Village Green;
- Farmingdale Bethpage Historical Society who donated the Civil War monument and for providing and serving refreshments at the Village's Annual Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony;
- McDonald's for donating fruit drinks at Movie nights;
- Luncheon Rotary Club for sponsoring the annual Rag-A-Muffin Parade;
- Chamber of Commerce for organizing the annual Holiday Parade and Easter Egg Hunt;
- Beautification Committee together with volunteers from the Village Fire Department, Women's Club, Relay for Life, and Girl Scouts for their time, talent and commitment planting spring and fall flowers and installing all the holiday decorations;
- Gerngras Park neighbors who open and close the park each day, plant seasonal flowers and keep a watchful eye on this gift to the Village;
- Our DPW staff who water the plants, rake the leaves and plow the snow to keep our Village looking attractive and inviting for our residents and visitors.

We are very grateful to all who take the time and interest to preserve what has been entrusted to us for the enjoyment and well being of all our residents and visitors alike.

INTERMUNICIPAL AGREEMENTS SAVE THOUSANDS

The Village has partnered with the Town of Oyster Bay in several ways to deliver services to our residents at a more efficient cost.

Several years ago, many of our residents raised concerns about the excessive amounts of trash waiting pick up on Main Street, particularly during the summer months when folks were taking advantage of warmer weather and dining outdoors. Deputy Mayor Pat Christiansen and Trustee Cheryl Parisi worked with the Commissioners in the Town of Oyster Bay and together developed a plan whereby trash along Main Street from Front Street to Prospect Street is picked up at the rear of the stores. All our merchants were very cooperative and we no longer have trash picked up on Main Street.

Holiday lighting along Main Street, Conklin Street, Route 109 and Melville Road had been installed annually by the lowest bid received from electrical contractors. After dis-

cussions with the Town of Oyster Bay Lighting Department, it was determined that by having Town employees perform this service, at their cost, would reduce the expense the Village had been incurring each year. The end results are beautiful decorations around the Village at a much lower cost than the Village had been paying.

Finally, the Town of Oyster Bay has been replacing street lights throughout the Village at a much lower cost than the previous contractor. If you see a light out within the Village, please call Village Hall at 516-249-0093 and provide the address of the outage. The Village transmits this information to the Town of Oyster Bay for repair. If you notice that the light is not repaired within a reasonable amount of time, please let us know so that it remains as an open item on our log until the repair is completed.

NYSERDA GRANT MAKES VILLAGE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT SAVING \$24,000 ANNUALLY

The Village was fortunate to secure a grant in the amount of \$85,000 for energy efficiencies. With these funds, lighting stanchions in Parking Lots 1, 2 and 3 were upgraded with more efficient fixtures. The former fixtures had two or three globes that generated light in a circle.

The new, more attractive, fixtures which provide the

same amount of lumens, direct the light to the ground rather than the sky. The fixtures which replicate those on Main Street add to the attractiveness of our downtown and save approximately \$2,000 a month in electric costs or \$24,000 a year.

Again, special thanks are due to our friends at the Town of Oyster Bay who installed the stanchions and energy efficient lights at a nonprofit cost.

VILLAGE HOLDS TAX RATE BELOW NEW YORK STATE 2% CAP

Just before the Legislature left Albany for their summer vacation, it passed a bill that limited the annual amount of the increase in a local government's tax levy to the lower of 2% or the annual rate of inflation. The Governor signed the bill into law. For the 2012/2013 Village budget year, this law restricts the increase in the tax levy to 2% more than the previous year's tax levy.

The good news is that during Mayor Starkie's term as Mayor, the average annual increase in the previous four year budgets commencing June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2012 has been less than 2%. This has been accomplished despite significant increases above 2% in costs that the Village has no control over, such as NYS pension costs, fuel and energy costs, health insurance rate increases and other mandated costs.

Your Village employees have stepped to the plate and helped ease the tax burden by not having a pay raise in at least three years. However, this cannot continue. Also, the law, for non school districts, does not exclude capital costs in determining the 2% tax cap. A Village will have a difficult time trying to remain under the 2% tax cap when it has to purchase fire fighting vehicles, department of public works vehicles, perform major repairs on its buildings or fix Village roads.

The mechanics and determination of the 2% cap is a difficult computation that is subject to audit by the New York State Comptroller. If the calculation is not correct, the effects of the miscalculation must be returned to the taxpayers in the next budget. The Comptroller's staff will not be able to detail check every local government's calculation annually. The Comptroller estimates that many years may pass before it audits the initial calculation and the change will effect subsequent year's calculations. For this and other reasons, many local governments have used the law's opt out provision which allows governments to increase the tax levy in excess of the 2% cap, providing 60% of the Board agrees to a tax levy in excess of the calculated 2%. Should a local government, such as a Village, "opt out" of the 2% tax cap, it is not subject to the stringent calculations of the 2% tax cap and can approve a tax levy in excess of the 2% tax cap.

Your Village Board has performed a preliminary review of the anticipated 2012/2013 budget which must be adopted prior to April 30th. Based on this initial review, the Board believes it can once again deliver a budget that does not cut present services and the tax levy increase will be in accordance with the 2% tax cap law.

Farmingdale Home2Suites by Hilton

Hilton Hotel representatives came to Farmingdale to view the privately owned lot on the south side of the train station. After their extensive feasibility study they made application to the Village's Zoning Board of Appeals



for a small height variance and were granted approval by that Board. The Village Code permits the construction of a hotel in this business zone.

In order to promote economic benefits to the existing merchants within the village, the Hotel has been intentionally designed without a restaurant or bar; thereby encouraging guests to wine, dine and shop on Main Street. If a guest were to spend just \$50 a day in downtown Farmingdale at 75% occupancy, there would be a 1.1 million dollar increase in sales to merchants.

After rethinking the construction strategy, the developer determined that the Hotel would be built after the mixed use building at 120 Secatogue Avenue was completed. Upon the completion of both buildings there will be a vibrant continuation of our downtown directly to the train station; a well-lit destination, encouraging walkability and breathing new life into the Village of Farmingdale.