

Dear Friends,

Tuesday November 6th is Election Day and polls are open from 6am-9pm. It's not my job to tell you who to vote for, but please, don't waste your right to vote! I hope you will go to the polls and choose the leaders at all levels of government that you feel best represent your values. There are hard fought races for federal and state level offices, but in Nyack, the local elections are less competitive this year: Trustees Louise Parker and Donna Lightfoot-Cooper are running unopposed for re-election.

With that said, I want to share a few updates on some issues we've been dealing with in Village Hall and in the community.

Infrastructure

For several weeks the NY State Department of Transportation caused traffic delays with their lengthy work installing new bus stops and sidewalks near the intersection of Route 59 and Waldron Ave./Mountainview Avenue, but the work is finally done, and the new bus stops are ready to welcome riders on the new Hudson Link bus system across the Tappan Zee Bridge. The state is currently conducting additional construction work in Nyack at the corner of Franklin and Depew, replacing sidewalks at the corners and moving traffic light poles to improve pedestrian safety.

At the Village Board, we've recently been hearing complaints about street lights that are burned out or not working properly. If you are aware of any, please let me know where they are. The village is compiling a list of problem lights to give to O&R for repair or bulb replacement. We are also continuing to move forward with the eventual purchase of street lights from O&R and conversion to more energy efficient LED bulbs.

Trees

Last week we got some great news on the tree front when we received word that the village's grant application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation had been awarded \$50,000 for an Urban and Community Forestry Project to provide professional services for tree pruning and stump removal throughout the village. The project also includes training sessions for DPW staff and community tree volunteers in the proper techniques from pruning small trees so that they grow correctly into stable and healthy trees. Sustainability Coordinator Marcy Denker deserves a round of applause for spearheading this grant application.

Meanwhile, the Nyack Tree Committee had another successful round of tree planting last weekend. More than a dozen volunteers came out to plant trees along streets in the village, and I was thrilled to join the effort. Though my back is a little sore from all the digging, it's incredibly rewarding to know that the trees we planted will still be beautifying our community decades from now. A few more trees will be planted this week, and then we'll start gearing up for another large planting effort in the spring. If you want a tree for your front lawn, or the grass strip in front of your sidewalk, let me know.

Overnight Parking

After reviewing the parking study I conducted, the Village Board has agreed to take some initial steps towards opening up additional overnight parking for residents. There are currently several streets in the village that allow parking for 21 hours a day, seven days a week, but never allow overnight parking. At our first meeting in October, the board agreed to allow overnight parking on alternate nights of the

week on some of these streets, just like most of the surrounding streets already have. The streets covered by this change will be:

- N. Broadway from 3rd Avenue north to the village line
- High Ave. between Broadway and Franklin
- Lydecker Street
- N. Franklin Street
- S. Franklin Street (except on blocks with MuniMeters)

Please note that the new parking rules **have not yet taken effect**. The DPW is ordering signs and residents of the area will be notified about any change before it takes effect.

Opening these streets to overnight parking will bring some degree of relief for residents, and I greatly appreciate the responsiveness and concern that everyone on the Village Board has shown on this issue. I do continue to believe, however, that to really make life easier for residents, we need to shift some residential streets away from overnight parking restrictions entirely. There are other times of day and other ways that we can regulate parking that would be much less inconvenient for residents. If you are in support of this idea, I encourage you to let me, and perhaps more importantly my colleagues on the Village Board, know what you think.

Affordable Housing Proposal

The Village Board has been presented with a request from a property owner on Waldron Avenue, working in conjunction with the Rockland Housing Action Coalition (RHAC), for a zone change on his property from the Commercial Corridor (CC) to a Multifamily Residential (MFR-2) zone. If the zone change is granted, RHAC is proposing to construct a new building with 50 affordable apartments with rents ranging from under \$800 for a studio apartment to around \$1,400 for a three bedroom unit.

This is a complicated issue. RHAC is a wonderful organization with a great track record in the county and our community, and the need for more affordable housing in Nyack is absolutely clear. According to the Census Bureau, the median rent in Nyack is \$1,440 a month, while according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 43% of renters in Nyack are cost-burdened, paying more than a third of their monthly income in rent. When RHAC opened Nyack Point Apartments on Main Street last year, they had over 500 applications for the 33 affordable units. Nevertheless, rezoning this property raises concerns. The change from a low-rise commercial zone to a dense multifamily zone is a significant one, and could potentially set a precedent, leading to additional requests from property owners to rezone their properties in a similar manner. The tax revenue and shopping options provided by the businesses along Route 59 are important to the Village. The four story building proposed for the site would also be significantly out of character with surrounding structures. At the Village Board meeting on October 25, we heard from many residents of the surrounding neighborhood in Central Nyack who were worried about the impacts of the zone change, but also from other community members who spoke movingly in favor of the need for more affordable housing.

At our October 25 meeting, the Village Board asked the Planning Board to offer an advisory opinion on the desirability of moving forward with the zone change process, and assuming we receive their response, we will review the issue again at our Village Board meeting on November 8. If we decide we

are open to the idea, there will be a full review process, which would include reviews by the County Planning Department, State Department of Transportation (because the site is near Route 59), and others. Environmental assessments and traffic studies would also be conducted. If the zone change is granted, the project itself would still go through a full land use process, including detailed review by the Planning and Architectural Review Boards, and Zoning Board of Appeals (if any variances are requested).

If you want to get more details on these or any other Nyack topics, I'm holding my monthly "Meet Your Trustee" event on **Thursday, November 29 from 6pm to 7pm at Johnnycakes on Main Street**. Stop by for a casual conversation about any Nyack issues on your mind. Until then, you can always reach me by phone or email. Have a happy Thanksgiving!

Best,

Elijah