

Village of Lawrence

2018 State of the Village Report

Mayor Alex H. Edelman

To be successful, a business must maintain itself aloft while at the same time moving forward. So too, Village Government must maintain and provide a set of effective and expected government services while continuously thinking of new ways to move forward on behalf of its residents.

In reporting on the current state of the Village of Lawrence, I am happy to note that the “business” of operating our Village has been effective, innovative and successful. There are many parts that, taken together, compose our Incorporated Village:

Financially, the Village is strong and secure, having had New York State remove an earlier designation of “financial distress” since all finances, reports and documentation are now current. That action is, in part, because in 2018 the Village retained new auditors after negotiating substantial reductions in payment to our prior auditors. Thanks to Deputy Village Treasurer Lina Fusco’s efforts the Village finally and successfully concluded Sandy/FEMA applications with a maximum funding received of \$6 million *plus* an additional ten percent from New York State. The Village has also initiated sales of surplus property and expects to eventually receive \$3.3 million from the sale of land to the Peninsula Public Library. We are also saving \$60,000 a year through the installation of LED street lighting, and have more than doubled the income produced by our Building Department from \$300,000.00 to \$600,000.00 annually by preparing accurate assessments of permits and construction costs, as well as speeding up the process and placing forms online. It should be noted that Village services have been enhanced (including responding to more than 6,000 inquiries during the past year) because the number of staff was increased, albeit at reduced cost and with no increase in payroll. Such prudent management and constant oversight have resulted in the fact that the budget is \$221,000.00 *less* than last year, and there will be no tax increase in 2018.

While finances are crucial, so too is the physical state of the Village. Beyond the effective and rapid snow removal during four major snowstorms, our Highway Department accelerated road repair with the repaving of Causeway between Broadway and Rock Hall Road, between Rock Hall Road and Ocean Avenue, the entire Pearsall Place, portions of Central Avenue, and Barrett Road between

Causeway and Tanglewood Crossing scheduled to begin within the next four weeks. Pothole repairs are an ongoing project and, to ensure the safety of residents (and the preservation of vehicles) have extended beyond Village-owned borders and roads. In the same vein, the Village has coordinated with utility companies to pave Sutton Park, and demanded (and spurred) State action to address flooding on Marbridge Road, Monroe Street, Harrison Street, Kenridge Road, Barrett Road and Meadow Lane, now set to begin in 2019 at a cost of \$8.276 million. The Village has accelerated the removal of unsightly and dangerous double poles; has increased lighting in back Lawrence; intends to address any possible lighting inadequacy in “front Lawrence”; has improved the traffic flow in Parking Lot #4; resolved security concerns in Parking Lot #2 (Inwood Train Station); continues to upgrade parking meters from mechanical to electronic; in 2019, plans to repave Auerbach Lane and Briarwood Lane; and most significantly, bypassed New York State to repair, install and repair again, the dangerous and unacceptable street lighting on Route 878.

Sensitive to the need to maintain our quality of life, we have addressed pest control by spraying earlier in the year, and have constructed and placed greater numbers of fly traps at appropriate locations. We have removed whatever “zombie houses” blighted certain blocks; enforced trimming of hedges and grass; planted additional trees; and repaired and upgraded pumps in all Village ponds.

In 2018 the Village revised its Zoning Code and established standards for the Board of Building Design that facilitate new construction while preserving neighborhood integrity.

As always, special attention has been given to the gem of our community, the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club, under the direction of recently retained Consulting Manager Cory Menking. New netting has been installed at the Practice Range and Marina; sand traps have been repaired with placement of high quality sand; and the second floor card room and lounge has been refurbished. The Tennis Club House and Tennis Courts have been revitalized; lighting has been installed to allow Night Tennis, and Pickle Ball courts have also been introduced and installed. A second kosher caterer, The Saffron Culinary Inc., is now on board and contracts with Chap-A-Nosh and Royalton Caterers have been renewed. Golf, Tennis and Marina membership have dramatically increased, as programs such as Lawrence Family Movie Night initiated by Trustee Syma Diamond, are instituted to involve and accommodate more residents.

As noted, this past year was marked by a desire to move beyond traditional services and incorporate different areas of engagement. As a result, the Village oversaw the County's procurement of an ambulance for use by Chevra Hatzalah of the Five Towns on behalf of Village residents; expanded its Student Intern Program to familiarize the next generation with the value of local government; embraced the rejuvenation of the Lawrence Civic Association; updated and revitalized the Village of Lawrence website; and re-established and expanded close personal working relationships with the Nassau County Police Department's Fourth Precinct, the Lawrence-Cedarhurst Fire Department, the Village of Cedarhurst, the Auxiliary Police Department, all utilities, and the Town of Hempstead and Nassau County elected officials.

Most dramatically, there has been a palpable improvement in the morale and spirit of not just Village employees, but of residents. Everyone appears to recognize how fortunate Lawrence is to have dedicated elected officials, conscientious volunteer Board members and a professional staff that enables Lawrence to not simply sustain itself, but to move forward and soar.

In the coming year, that forward movement will be accelerated as the Village addresses the proposed relocation of our Peninsula Public Library; the appropriate disposition and use of the decommissioned Sewer Plant property; the proposed construction of a recreational swimming pool and health center; a reasoned response to the sale of the Woodmere Club; further flood remediation and lighting and safety of Route 878; better roadway maintenance by the Town and County; the traffic on Rockaway Turnpike; the creation of a viable evacuation route; and the role of the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club in the lives of succeeding generations.

In closing, the state of the Village of Lawrence is excellent, as we make it our "business" to move forward in the service of our residents and the Village we all call home.

Sincerely,
Alex H. Edelman
Mayor

*PLEASE E-MAIL YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO
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