

June 2010

Dear Rye Brook Residents:

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Mayor for the past two years. Although it has been the practice of former mayors to mail a quarterly update to all residents, I have halted that practice in order to reduce the costs associated with Village mailings. I will use this forum, as well as the Mayor's Memo in the Westmore News, to keep you informed as to Village developments.

1. Ridge Street Construction. You certainly are aware of, and may have been inconvenienced by, the construction taking place on Ridge Street. This project is being done and paid for by Westchester County. The scope of the project consists of storm water drainage improvements, traffic signal enhancements, the installation of new concrete sidewalks and curbing, and the milling and repaving of Ridge Street from Meadowlark Road to the Rye City border. As part of the County contract, off duty Rye Brook police officers have been hired to assist with traffic flow. Once the project is completed Rye Brook will take ownership of Ridge Street from King Street to Westchester Ave.

Although the project has been scheduled to continue through November, the work has proceeded rapidly and much of it already has been completed in the southern portion of the Village. At the time of its completion Ridge Street, the gateway into our community, will be in pristine condition.

2. Flooding Measures. Flooding in Rye Brook is a reality and many residents who have experienced flooded basements and backyards can attest to that. It seems that over the past five years we have experienced numerous storms ---the infamous April 15, 2007 Nor'easter that dumped almost 8 inches of rain over a 24 hour period, to the remnants of Hurricane Hanna in the fall of 2008 when we had 4-1/2 inches of rain in just a few hours. Residents have noticed over the past five years that flooding in our Village has increased. Certain areas in the northern part of the Village have seen improvements as a result of the new drainage in the Loch Lane area and the installation of detention basins under the turf at the Rye Brook Athletic Field on King Street.

The most recent project was just completed last month: the installation of a new detention basin on municipal property near Edgewood Drive and Rich Manor Park. The purposes of this basin are to reduce downstream flooding below the basin and to improve water quality. This project was funded in part by a \$218,750 grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There was a disturbance of approximately 1.6 acres and numerous trees were removed, although new landscaping has been installed as part of the project. I want to thank the surrounding neighbors for their cooperation and patience during the construction of the basin.

3. Amnesty Program. The Board of Trustees has instituted an amnesty program that expires on November 15, 2010. This program waives the administrative fee for all work that was completed without a building permit, and in many cases obviates the need to go before the Architectural Review Board. The fee that is being waived is 12% of the cost of construction with a minimum fee of \$500.00 and a maximum of \$3,500.00 The Board of Trustees believes that by offering Amnesty residents will be incentivized to legalize work that was done without the necessary permits or without obtaining the required certificate of occupancy.

4. Budget. The new fiscal year of the Village commenced on June 1st. In April the Board held public workshops to review the proposed budget on a line by line basis (one of those workshops was held on a Saturday morning to better accommodate the schedules of our residents) as well as a public hearing to discuss the budget. Of course this was a difficult budget process since we are faced with a decline in revenues and an increase in mandated expenditures. The overall tax levy increase for the 2010-2011 fiscal year is 2.28%, with the residential, or homestead, portion increasing by 1.81%. I have always thought the tax levy is a better indicator of the impact on the pocketbook of our residents since the assessment of our properties will vary as the fair market value of properties fluctuates.

The Board of Trustees is sensitive to the fact that these are uncertain fiscal times for all of our residents. We know of Rye Brook residents who have lost their jobs and others who have been forced to put their homes on the market. We will continue to closely monitor our costs and work diligently to maximize our revenues from non-property sources.

5. Grievance Day, June 15. All residents should have received notices from the Town of Rye regarding their updated property assessments. Every year residents have the right to challenge their assessment by submitting an appeal to the Town's Board of Assessment Review (BAR). The deadline to submit this information is Tuesday, June 15th. The Town's website, www.townofryeny.gov, contains information as to the forms and other information to be filed with the BAR.

6. Rye Brook Birthday Celebration. The annual Rye Brook Birthday Celebration will once again be held at Crawford Park on Saturday, June 19th, rain or shine! Due to declining donations it is necessary to scale back some of the events and charge a nominal amount for food. Nonetheless, it is a wonderful day to see your neighbors and friends and I look forward to seeing you there.

On Tuesday June 22nd the Board of Trustees will hold its regular Board of Trustees meeting at 7:30 PM at the Posillipo Center on Garibaldi Place and an update will be given regarding parking, overcrowding and other issues experienced by residents in the southern portion of the Village.

Residents have informed me that not all people are picking up after their dogs. In addition, plastic bags containing dog droppings are being placed in catch basins

throughout the Village. Obviously, this is a practice that must stop and I ask you to remember to discard dog waste in proper receptacles. We certainly want to take pride in the appearance of our community.

Please know that I am always available to discuss any issue with you. You can either leave a message for me at Village Hall or call me at my home.

Joan L. Feinstein
Mayor