

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

Supervisor's Report

Short Takes

Project Mnemonic

Comlinks Project

Communication is improving between the Town, Comlinks and various investor groups. On March 6, 2008 an onsite meeting occurred to discuss the project's future. In the next several weeks more information will be

Grant Update

Supervisor Goodspeed, Candace Lomax and Grant Coordinator Joel Beaudin attended an introductory grant meeting regarding the Ski Bowl Park Grant with state official John Albert. The grant award consists of 5 separate components. Because the Town is required to provide a 50% match for funding great caution is being taken to avoid taxpayer impact while still improving the Town.

Attorney's Fees

In the first two months of 2008 attorney's fees for the Town have averaged \$950 per month. Staying at or near this level would produce annual fees of approximately \$12,000 versus \$35,000 in 2007. The Town Board has passed a number of local laws that force developers to pay Town legal fees that would otherwise occur and the Town has now gone to a "hot and cold" attorney system where Town attorney Tony Jordan attends every other Town meeting.

Budget Group

The larger budget advisory group has now been divided into 3 groups each of which will meet independently and then reconvene in the larger group setting

Weather Woes

Consistent storms over the last 6 weeks have created financial pressure on the highway budget. Thank you to our highway department for their hard work and let's think Spring!

Water Issues

The North Creek Water District turned on the water to the Top Ridge Development on March 6, 2008. Under agreement with the town the developers have built the district extension to town specifications and provided a \$40,000.00 fee.

Shuttle Discussions

Preliminary exploration is now underway aimed at providing shuttle linkage for the 2008/09 ski season between Gore, the Ski Bowl and Main Street Businesses.

County Budget Woes

Warren County Supervisors were briefed at a special board meeting regarding significant budget problems. Reserves have been vastly depleted and the County's debt service has risen to nearly \$45 million. Stay tuned for more info.

The draft EIS for Gore's UMP was reviewed at a DEC hearing while the APA's hearing on FSMD was conducted at Tannery Pond Community Center.

How do we sort all this out? Here's my best effort.

On March 4, 2008 about 75 citizens attended a public hearing at Gore to review and discuss the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Gore's connection to the Ski Bowl. The study had been reviewed and approved once, some years ago. A new study was required for Gore to proceed with the interconnect when Front Street Mountain Development Co. (FSMD) made it possible to reopen old trail systems at the Ski Bowl as part of the interconnect. While the new connection is superior to the older, pre-approved one, new environmental studies were deemed necessary to change Gore's Unit Management Plan (UMP) to accommodate the modification. State land such as Gore is required to draft and follow management plans for land use and development.

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) has been conducting a separate but related view of the Front Street project for more than a year.

Front Street's application was deemed complete on February 20, 2008 giving the APA 90 days to complete its review. The public hearing at Gore was intended to see whether the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will approve the new connection plan. If both move forward the legal framework for the interconnect will be completed.

The Town is involved as a co-applicant in this process because of the anticipated legal arrangements between the Town, ORDA, and Front Street.

(Mnemonic continued on next page)

Oh Canada!

Are you one of the many folks wondering why dozens of Canadian flags lined Main Street in mid-March?

The flags were placed there in tribute to a tourist group that flocks here each March from Canada.

The group is not a formal club but rather a large number of families of Eastern European descent who now call Toronto home. Each year between 600-1000 arrive in Johnsburg for a ski holiday.

Chamber of Commerce President Ed Milner was instrumental in securing the flags and placing them as a welcome to our community. The group provides a much needed injection of capital to the local economy as ski season begins to wind down.

"It's great because it's a long term destination stay," noted Emily Stanton, Gore Mountain Marketing Director. Stanton explained that the group stays in various rental properties throughout all the hamlets in Johnsburg and in Chestertown and makes use of many community businesses and amenities. One night the group enjoyed a film festival at Tannery Pond and another night they enjoyed tubing in Ski Bowl Park.

2008 marks the sixth year of the group's visits to the area with plans to visit for many years to come.

(Mnemonic, continued.)

The Town is swapping certain lands with Front Street, providing a lot northeast of the old Ski Hut area where FrontStreet will build a lodge and a wetland area across the road from the nursing home. In exchange the Town will receive title to most of the old Ridge Trail and Oak Ridge Trail. (NYS still owns a portion of each at the top of Little Gore), the Hudson Trail, the old Hudson bypass Trail and a new trail that will run under the new chairlift and replace the former "big lift." Once the Town owns the trails, ORDA will be permitted to maintain, groom and blow snow on the trails. All school district children will have free access to these trails as well as all the ones at Gore.

Meanwhile, Front Street's application remains pending with the Johnsburg Planning Board. In total the project consisting of multiple phases includes 200 housing units, motel, bed and breakfast, lodge and clubhouse. If Phase One were to be approved it is anticipated to include the first group of 9 town homes, the bed and breakfast and the Hudson Lodge Clubhouse.

APA Public Hearing at Tannery Pond



APA Officials and town residents gathered for an informational public hearing at Tannery Pond Community Center on the Gore Interconnect project and FrontStreet Mountain Development proposal.

Ask Annie

By Ann Deppe, Town Assessor

What is an equalization rate and why do we need one?

Simply put, the equalization rate is a number the NYS Office of Real Property uses to indicate the total value of a town. The number results from using data collected from property sales that are divided by assessments. The Assessed Value (Assessment) on your property is determined by the assessor and remains the same each year unless improvements are made or a reevaluation is done.

The Market Value changes each year as determined by New York State using sales data. The market value may go up or down as determined by the current year's equalization rate. Our equalization has gone down steadily for the past several years indicating that market values are rising faster than assessed values making our town more valuable. This increasing value does not make your share in your tax bill higher but only shows your property is worth more. The reviews would also be true if the equalization rate went up and the values went down. Your share would still be the same and not result in lower taxes.

It is necessary to have equalization because not all municipalities are at the same percentage of market value. There are a couple of towns within one school district, the amount of taxes to be collected needs to be fairly divided in proportion to the total market value of each town. The STAR exemption, sales revenues, joint indebtedness, as well as the State's assessments are all based on the equalization formula.