

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

Supervisor's Report

Short Takes

Emergency Home Repair

If you are a homeowner, age 60 or older and you are in need of emergency repair to your home, you may be eligible for a "Restore" program grant up to \$7500.00. For more information contact Frank Boos at North Country Ministry, 251-0890.

It's Baseball Time!

An important meeting for anyone interested in Johnsburg Youth Baseball is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on February 9 at Noxon Hall in Wevertown. The youth baseball program encompasses major league, minor league and T-ball. The meeting is essential for adults wishing to be involved in the program or who want to be involved in discussions about how the program operates.

Town Historian

At the Town of Johnsburg organizational meeting in January, Joanne Smith was appointed town historian replacing longtime historian Doris Patton. Joanne can be reached at 251-3974.

County Financial Crunch

County Treasurer Frank O'Keefe has advised the Warren County Board of Supervisors that the County will likely have to borrow money in late January to meet fiscal responsibilities. The County's fiscal condition is of grave concern as the Board faces the 2009 budget process. Short and long-term bonded debt, the worsening New York State budget crisis and unfunded state mandates have brought the financial crisis home to Warren.

Flacke Appointed to ORDA

Lake George businessman, former supervisor and state cabinet member Bob Flacke has been named as Warren County's representative to the ORDA Board.

Struggling for Priorities in The Economic Meltdown

Every newscast brings still more desperate word of the financial crisis. Unemployment has been described as being at its highest rate in 60 years. The housing market has virtually ceased to exist. Banks are in crisis and Wall Street is shuddering. Putting food on the table and paying bills in the current economic environment is a challenge for many.

So what can or should a small town municipal government do about the crisis at a local grass roots level? Frankly, I think the answer is plenty.

Responding to the crisis requires an identification of governmental priorities at the most basic level. Certainly we can't fix Wall Street or save Chrysler, but with clear priorities there is much we can do to make things better for people locally. What follows is a list of my priorities in attempting to address the financial crisis from a local perspective. This list is part blue print, part goal identification and mainly intended as a statement of my thought process as we face what one man called a long, cold lonely winter.

1. Attack the Budget—This Spring I will reconvene the Budget Advisory Group in an effort to again examine the Town's fiscal well being. We can still make government smaller and cheaper.
2. Lower Taxes Again—In 2008 we were able to lower Town taxes by a number of budgetary changes. In 2009 we must again make lower taxes our goal.
3. Support Service Organizations—The Town must stand ready to address as necessary the growing financial pressures on organizations that help people in crisis. Organizations like the North Country Outreach Center and North Country Ministry are facing unique challenges and Town government will be there to help.
4. Juice the Local Economy—Our community has witnessed dynamic business growth in 2008 and we must move to protect that growth. Supporting our local merchants, spreading the word at every opportunity about our community and creating a business environment

(Priorities, cont. on back page)

Park Grant Update

Administration of the multi-purpose park grant is continuing under the new leadership of Kelly Nettle. We expect this Spring to begin with renovations to the tennis and basketball court in Ski Bowl Park. Our hope is to have improvements completed on the courts in time for the JCS tennis season.

Tannery Pond Fee Structure in Place

The new fee structure for users of the Tannery Pond Community Center became effective as of January 1, 2009.

Under the new arrangement there are fees for use of rooms within the building according to a fee schedule available through town hall. The fees are very reasonable.

Long term users (organizations or persons) that make frequent substantial use of the building during the calendar year have each negotiated a separate annual fee arrangement based upon their usage and financial wherewithal.

The goal is to strike an appropriate balance so that the building is used as much as possible while the overall financial burden is reduced.

Beach Problems

The Town Board is struggling with issues associated again with the Dam failure in Ski Bowl Park. The center portion of the Weir Dam collapsed on itself last Spring and lowered water levels in the pond by several feet, reducing the swimming area and eliminating the town's ability to place the dock.

Engineer Jim Hutchins has presented an overview of the engineering and regulatory challenges associated with a rebuild and has also advised the board of cost issues.

The price tag for the fix could well exceed \$50,000.

Discussion about the dam and other options are ongoing.

If you have any ideas or opinions, please call the town hall.

Check Out the Trail Cut

A small trail cut now appears in Ski Bowl Park tracing the area formerly occupied by the Big T-Bar and soon a triple chair lift. The still narrow cut begins at the base area and extends all the way to the top of the infamous "wall."

This lift line will hopefully be the key to the interconnect of the two ski areas. While ORDA has purchased the lift for next year, its functioning is contingent upon ORDA obtaining operational expenses. The interconnect itself is also the subject of a lawsuit brought by the Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (RCPA). The RCPA has sued ORDA, the APA and DEC to stop the project. The three agencies are represented in the matter by the New York State Attorney General.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The First MLK Jr. Celebration at Tannery Pond Community Center was a great success and it is hoped that the event will become an annual one. The event featured readings from JCS students, a documentary film on Dr. King's life and a presentation and discussion by John Warren, historian and journalist who has conducted significant research in Adirondack and regional history.

Copperfield Sale Completed

A group of private investors have purchased the Main Street anchor and interior renovations and updating are underway. An opening in early February is anticipated.

Rafting News

Discussions are underway to establish a safer rafting take out area along the Hudson River just over the town border with Indian Lake. State Senator Betty Little and Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward were in attendance at a meeting with Supervisor Goodspeed and Indian Lake Supervisor Barry Hutchins to try to move the process forward with various regulatory agencies.

Priorities cont.

that attracts still more growth are key.

5. Finish the Interconnect—No single economic force is so important in the short run as a completed interconnection between Gore and the Ski Bowl, bringing thousands of tourists to our business district daily. Some people oppose or support a particular housing or motel project but I submit that it is impossible not to support the basic interconnect itself as the connection will have the net effect of bringing consumers to our businesses who now bypass them. The interconnect is about job creation, sustaining our business environment and retaining the quality of services we now enjoy. The interconnect is the way our Town can fight its way out of the recession.

6. Create a Summer Season—Obviously a work in progress but continued marketing of the tourist train, expansion of our concert series and the long awaited addition of a farmer's market are steps in the right direction.

7. Dialogue not Division—As we struggle with the current economic conditions and as our Town endures change it is important that our community is just that, a community. Stress fractures and fissures tend to emerge more dynamically in times like these. Distinctions like flatlander and redneck, native or transplant, us or them should be vaporized by a spirit that says our Town won't just survive, it will thrive.

8. County Legislative Vigilance—Monitoring the county budget process and working to control county spending will have a net effect on the overall tax burden placed on citizens.