



Volume I Issue 12

Town of Bethlehem e-Newsletter

January 2008

445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054
518.439.4955

www.townofbethlehem.org

Town Board

Jack Cunningham, Supervisor
Joann Dawson, Board Member
Mark Hennessey, Board Member
Kyle Kotary, Board Member
Sam Messina, Board Member

On Friday, December 28, 2007, at 3:00 p.m., Town Supervisor John H. Cunningham took the oath of office to begin serving his first full term as Supervisor of the Town of Bethlehem. Also taking the oath of office at this time was Mark Hennessey who will serve a four year term on the Bethlehem Town Board.



This ceremony also included the swearing-in of:

- Town Judge Paul Dwyer - elected to his 2nd term
- Town Clerk Kathleen Newkirk - elected to her 9th term
- Receiver of Taxes Nancy Mendick - elected to her 7th term
- Highway Superintendent Gregg Sagendorph - elected to his 9th term

January Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held at the Town Hall unless otherwise indicated

Town Offices closed

Tuesday, January 1

Zoning Board of Appeals

Wednesday, January 2, 7:00 p.m.

Special Town Board Meeting

Monday, January 7, 5:00 p.m.

Town Board

Wednesday, January 9, 6:00 p.m.

Route 9W Study Committee

Thursday, January 10, 4:30 p.m.

Industrial Development Agency

Tuesday, January 15, 8:00 a.m.

Planning Board

Tuesday, January 15, 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Wednesday, January 16, 7:00 p.m.

Development Planning Committee

Thursday, January 17, 10:00 a.m.

Town Offices closed

Monday, January 21

Town Board

Wednesday, January 23, 6:00 p.m.

For agendas, please see:

www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/agenda/agenda.asp

National Grid Continues to Make Headway on Infrastructure Improvements

To date, National Grid has trimmed trees along 50% of the town feeders, primarily along Delaware Avenue, Elsmere Avenue, and Kenwood Avenue. They have some of the smaller sections, rear lot feeders left to do. In addition, they have rebuilt the Elsmere Avenue feeder system, upgrading it to a higher voltage and thus, greater reliability. They plan to reconductor or rebuild the two smaller taps off the Bethlehem 98 feeder that serve the Douglas Road, Fernbank, Louise and Centre areas. This work is currently being designed and should be ready to be built in the field in late winter, early spring.

They have accomplished quite a bit, and although many residents might feel Nation Grid neglected their trees in the rear lots, they have not. They are doing a systematic trimming that must first involve the main trunk lines on the main thoroughfares because this protects our system. Once the larger sections have been trimmed, then they will start on the smaller ones.

Special Meeting of the Town Board January 7, 2008 5:00 p.m.

Purpose: To Adjourn to Executive Session to discuss Police Contract negotiations.

New Town Hall Hours

Town Hall offices are now open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

CACC Corner



In an effort to provide information about the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC) to Town residents, news of our activities will now appear in the monthly e-Newsletter in a series called "CACC Corner". Currently, we are providing articles that discuss open space protection funding opportunities and tools that are applicable to the Town of Bethlehem. The articles are derived from the CACC's, "*Open Space Protection Programs – Funding and Tools Report to the Town Board*", prepared in October 2006 and can be found at the bottom of the following web page:



<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/AdvisoryComs/advCACC.asp>

Drafting and refining the report was a careful and methodical process driven by many exchanges of ideas and facts; and therefore, each topic article will appear as originated in the Report.

This month the Corner discusses Transfer of Development Rights (TDR.)

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Transfer of development rights (TDR) programs allow willing landowners to transfer the right to develop one area of land to a different area of land within the same municipality or a neighboring municipality. Generally, TDR programs are established by local zoning ordinances. In the context of farmland protection, TDR is used to shift development from agricultural areas to designated growth zones closer to municipal services. TDR can also be used to protect other types of open space. The area of land where the rights originate is called the "sending" area. When the rights are transferred from a sending area, the land is restricted with a permanent conservation easement. The area of land to which the rights are transferred is called the "receiving" area.

Buying these rights generally allows a developer to build within the receiving area at a higher density than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning. Rights are bought and sold on the open market. Receiving areas in Bethlehem, for example, could be any new area the Town might want to plan for development along the riverfront as part of the upcoming LWRP process, as was discussed in the Town's comprehensive plan or any of the new hamlets already planned and zoned. Other receiving areas could be areas adjacent to or within Delmar, Glenmont or Selkirk that might be appropriate to upzone (i.e., increase density).

TDR programs are based on the concept that property owners have a bundle of different rights, including the right to use land, lease, sell and bequeath it, construct buildings on it and mine it, subject to reasonable local land use regulations. Some or all of these rights can be transferred or sold to another person. When a landowner sells property, generally all the rights are transferred to the buyer. TDR programs enable landowners to separate and sell the right to develop land from their other property rights. TDR is most suitable in places where large blocks of land remain in farm or open space use and where there are significant growth pressures. In communities with a fragmented agricultural land base, it is difficult to find a viable sending area. Jurisdictions also must be able to identify receiving areas that can accommodate the development to be transferred out of the farming or open space area. The receiving areas must have the physical capacity and infrastructure to absorb new units, and residents of those areas must be willing to accept higher density development. Often, residents of potential receiving areas must be persuaded that the benefits of protecting farmland or open space outweigh the costs of living in a more compact neighborhood programs because they involve the private market. Alternatively, TDR sending areas could consist of entirely new planned hamlets, where opposition would be minimal.

Most TDR transactions are between private landowners and developers. Local governments generally do not have to raise taxes or borrow funds to implement TDR. Some jurisdictions have established TDR banks to facilitate the start-up of TDR programs. A TDR bank can buy development rights with revolving public funds and sell the rights to private landowners, using revenues to purchase additional rights. A TDR bank can also make up the difference between appraised farm/open space and development values of property if market offers for TDRs are inadequate.

TDR programs generally require significant downzoning of sending areas so that landowners will be motivated to sell rather than use their development rights on-site. TDR programs are fairly complex to develop but low-cost and with great potential for effectiveness.

Recently, the New York Planning Federation received a grant from the Schenectady Foundation to help the Town of Glenville and Village of Scotia develop a TDR program.

Advantages to Town of TDR:

1. TDR promotes orderly growth by concentrating development in areas with adequate public services.
2. TDR programs can accomplish multiple goals, including farmland protection, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, the development of compact urban areas, the promotion of downtown commercial growth and the preservation of historic landmarks.

Disadvantages to Town of TDR:

1. TDR programs are technically complicated and require a significant investment of time and staff resources to implement.

2. May increase Town liability and maintenance costs.

CACC Corner is an ongoing series of articles by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC) discussing its recent activities. Look here each month for a new conservation topic of interest.

**Town Offices are Closed on Tuesday, January 1
and Monday, January 21**

Public Meeting Notices are available on the Town's web site

Besides local newspapers, Public Meeting Notices are also available on the Town's web site at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org>. Go to News and Events and click on Public Notices on the left OR from the home page, click on "more news..." under Community News or "more events..." under Calendar and then click on Public Notices on the left.

News from BEMO
Bethlehem Emergency Management Office

Several new links have been recently added to the Emergency Management Office's web page. See the U.S. Emergency Alert Map that gives the latest 24 hour report of emergency incidents and weather related locations, the Worldwide Terrorist Activity Map that displays possible terrorist activities worldwide, and the Emergency State Animal Response Team for information regarding animals, animal treatment and sheltering during disasters and emergencies. These links and other vital hazard information can be found at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/depServices/emergencyMan.asp>.

NY-Alert is a free emergency notification system

NY-Alert is a free emergency notification system made available to private citizens by the State Emergency Management Office. By signing up for NY-Alert you can choose to receive warnings and emergency notifications by phone, email, text message, and instant message. The types of warnings include severe weather, significant highway closures, hazardous materials spills, and many other emergency situations.

You may sign up for this service by clicking on "Sign Up for NY-Alerts" on the NY-Alert website at www.nyalert.gov. Or go directly to the "Sign Up for NY-Alerts" at <https://users.nyalert.gov/>

You will be requested to enter your contact information, along with the geographic area for which you would like to receive alerts, and the types and severity of alerts you would like to receive. Once you have signed up for the notification service you can modify the type of information you receive or unsubscribe at any time.



Did You Know?



The "Telephone Reassurance Program" is sponsored through the American Red Cross and provides the opportunity to socialize by telephone with someone who cares. It allows individuals to remain in contact with their community and helps to decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation. If you would like Telephone Reassurance calls, please contact the Office of Volunteers at the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York at 458-8111, extension 3003.

Senior Services News

Health and Wellness Series begins on Friday, January 4

On Fridays during the months of January through March, Senior Services will explore various health and wellness issues. A brochure is available in the Senior Services office outlining the entire 2008 program. The following selected programs are listed in chronological order. They include a lunch-out component available by signup in person in the senior office or by telephone at 439-4955, extension 1176. All programs in the Health and Wellness Series are sponsored by Bethlehem Senior Services, Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc. and supported by the Albany County Department for Aging, the New York State Office for the Aging and the Administration on Aging. The programs are FREE and are held from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. at the Bethlehem Town Hall.

"Health and Humor", January 4 - This program promises to increase the awareness of the participants of the role that humor has in maintaining and promoting good health. Come learn about the physiological and psychological benefits of humor. Bring a good joke for the group!



"Skin Care: Keeping It Healthy", January 11 - Good skin care is important for your health. Learn how to prevent skin cancer, how to moisturize your skin and the best approaches to keeping it in good condition. Bring your questions for this nurse who has experience in the area of dermatology.



"Senior Financial Literacy Training and Education Initiative", January 18 - The program's goal is to empower and educate older adults about the importance of increasing their knowledge of financial literacy issues and raising awareness of financial abuse and fraud that targets older adults.

To see all of the interesting activities, events, programs and services provided by Town's Senior Services department, pick up a copy of the bi-monthly Senior Services newsletter at the Senior Services Department, Room 110 at the Town Hall, on Senior Services transportation vehicles or on the Town's web site at

<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/depServices/seniorServices.asp#Brochures> .

Not just for Seniors!

Some programs may have age restrictions, many do not (for example, Food Pantry, LawHelp/NY, volunteers, Caregiver programs), please call for specifics, 439-4955. In order to participate in any programs or to volunteer, an [Intake Form](#) MUST be filled out first. Intake forms are available in the Senior Services office or [on the Town's web site](#).

Parks and Recreation Department News

Winter / Spring 2008 Program Registration Continues

Program registration is underway for all winter and spring programs. Included are many adult fitness classes, adult athletics, youth play/exercise programs, youth aquatic programs and many others. Check out our complete program brochure on our web site <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/images/parks/2008WinterSpring.pdf>

Hurry! Programs start soon!

SCREAMS – High School Musical - The Ice Tour **Students Craving Really Exciting Activities at the Middle School**

Join us as we go to the Times Union Center to watch [Disney's High School Musical - The Ice Tour](#) on Wednesday, January 16 at 7:00 p.m. Registration is currently underway and is being accepted at the Elm Avenue Park office (261 Elm Avenue.) This event is for all middle school students who reside in the Town of Bethlehem or the Bethlehem School District. Look for flyers distributed at the Middle School in early December, flyers will also be available at the Park office or visit the town website, <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/parks/parksPgms.asp#SCREAMS>



January Ski Club Trip for Middle School and High School Students

January 12 - Bromley
January 21 - Gore

To sign up, see Mr. Tyler (Room 109) at the Middle School or Mr. Mooney (Room B111) at the High School. Club dues are \$10.00 and a signed permission slip is required.



From December to March, the Ski Club is making two trips per month to area slopes.



Ski or snowboard at many ski resorts this winter with your friends - beginners are welcome! Trip destinations vary so watch for posters at the Middle School and High School and listen to announcements at school. The schedule of trips, informational packet, permission slips, advance sign-up sheet and descriptions of each trip are available on the town web site at

<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/parks/parksPgms.asp#SchoolSkiClub>.

Lifeguard Training Course



The Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the YMCA, will be holding an American Red Cross Lifeguarding class at the Bethlehem YMCA. The class will be held on February 20, 21, 22 and 23, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$215.00. For more information, please contact Kate Voce, Aquatics Director at the YMCA, 439-4394, extension 1430.

Colonial Acres Season Passes and Gift Certificates

Season passes are now available! Gift certificates and punch cards are also available for golf at Colonial Acres during the 2008 season? Call or visit the Park office for details, 439-4955 option 3.



Pavilion Reservations for 2008



Residents of the Town or Town based organizations may reserve the pavilions at Elm Avenue Park, Henry Hudson Park and Maple Ridge Park for recreational functions beginning January 2nd, call the Park office at 439-4955 option 3 to determine availability and obtain a permit request form / fee information. Permits for all users will be issued on a first come, first paid basis.

Apply for Summer Jobs Now

Applications for summer jobs are now available at the Parks and Recreation office (261 Elm Avenue) or on our web site at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/images/Parks/2008ParksSummerApp.pdf>

All applications must be received by April 1, 2008. Job opportunities include Lifeguard, Pool or Golf Course Attendant, Swim Instructor, Maintenance (park and golf course), Camp Counselor, Ranger, Office Clerk and many other program leaders and supervisors.



Did You Know?



Law Regarding Appropriate Shelter for Dogs



There is a New York State law that requires that dogs kept outdoors be provided with a waterproof, structurally sound and adequately insulated shelter that must allow freedom of movement and normal postural adjustments. The shelter and the area immediately surrounding it must be regularly cleaned.

For more information regarding the law, please see <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugtf.cgi?COMMONQUERY=LAWS>, select AGM for Agriculture and Markets, then Article 26 - Animals, and then Article 353-B "Appropriate shelter for dogs left outdoors."



Tax Office Information

Property Tax Bills

Property Tax Bills are mailed in early January. No penalty will be added if U.S. postmarked or paid in person on or before January 31. Postage meter indicia or foreign postmarks are not acceptable for determining timeliness of mailing. On taxes remaining unpaid after January 31, please note that a 1% penalty for payments made in February and a 2% penalty for payments made in March will be added. Bills cover January 1 to December 31st.

Be aware that tax payments, or any payments, made from your home computer usually do not have a postmark stamp when they are received by us. These payments should be made mid month to hope that they are received before the deadline. The postmark determines the timeliness of payments. Envelopes received with no postmark are considered paid on the date they are delivered to us per New York State law.

The back of the tax statement contains important information on exemptions, deadlines and third-party notification. Taxpayers are urged to carefully review the back of the tax bill. In the event you did not receive a tax bill, if you have an escrow account and you received the tax bill or a bill was sent to you in error, please call Nancy Mendick, Receiver of Taxes at 439-4955, extension 1178.



REMINDER: Every year, the town has a "NO PARKING" ordinance that begins on November 1 and continues through April 15. The law prohibits vehicles from parking on town streets and highways between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Vehicles parked in violation of the "NO PARKING" ordinance may be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense.



Did You Know?

- If you have a question that may pertain to Town government or operations, you can visit our [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on our web site to look for quick references.



We'd like to hear from you

Let us know what you think of this newsletter. Please use the feedback form on the Town's web site, www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/about/contact.asp

[Click here for a printable version of this e-Newsletter](#)

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