

10.23.2020

Dear Pine Plains,

First on the agenda, VOTING! As I hope you know, this year's POLLING PLACE HAS CHANGED to THE STISSING CENTER. I have put that in all caps for a reason! This, to be very clear, is not a political move. The bi-partisan Dutchess County Board of Elections determined our Town Hall to be too small for Covid-19 regulations, so they looked for an ideal space. They chose TSC for its ADA compliance, high ceilings and air circulation. This is to protect poll workers and voters alike. You can enter through the front of the building at 2950 Route 199, either by the stairs, or by the right side door for the elevator access. Signs will be posted to guide people. Parking is available in back of the building via the entrance to The Stissing House or El Guacamole...

Prepare for Halloween! The State allows Halloween to go on, so it is up to all of us to make it really safe for all who want to participate, either by having a good spooky place to trick-or-treat, or by sending your kids out for some fun. We could all use some of that! It's the perfect holiday for a pandemic, what with masks being its primary component.

This week I assembled the paperwork to get our Zoning Review going. This requires Town Board approval in a resolution for the Committee members, as well as the writing of a Request for Proposal for a planner to oversee the work. This RFP will then go out to planners for bid. One of the things we will discuss is zoning for large parcels, like what we call the Catholic Fields, 21 acres in the middle of town. Do you have ideas as to what you'd like to see there? Think big or small: affordable housing for seniors, a park? Both? Remember that we have a beautiful recreation area with fields near Stissing Lake. What would we want there in the center of town? Please write to me with your ideas at supervisor@pineplains-ny.gov.

The Broadband Committee is working steadily on results from the survey, while hosting experts in the field at weekly meetings so that we can get a better understanding of the history of the problem, and any possible solutions on the horizon. The survey work is what shows us where the holes in our broadband service truly are, which roads lack high-speed internet availability, and therefore what it would cost for Pine Plains to be completely covered. The estimate currently is that it costs \$40,000/mile to lay fiber optic lines, which is why federal and state funding for this is so crucial. Altice estimates it will be at least 5 years before they are able to start replacing their old slow copper cable up here with fiber optic, which is far less susceptible to the problems our current technology has. (Mine slows or goes out when it rains!) Numerous people filled out the survey but did not put their addresses down, which has slowed the committee's work. We may be knocking on your door to get more answers. Stay tuned on that. But if you haven't filled out a survey, or know that you didn't put your address in and you don't have good service, please feel free to just write us at Town Hall with that information. You can do a speed test and find out what speed you actually have at your place by going to www.speedtest.com and following the very easy instructions there. Broadband is an economic development issue in rural areas, and its infrastructure is vital to the Town's future. I am not talking solely about growth; this is about resilience to withstand whatever comes our way (a pandemic, for instance), and survival for the future.

The Presbyterian Church will be selling turkey dinners for Thanksgiving, more on that as we near the holiday, and the Library's fundraising Cemetery Tours are almost sold out. Please seek tickets on their website at www.pineplainslibrary.org We are working with the towns of Stanfordville and North East on a joint Senior Bingo Drive-through Game with County Executive Marcus Molinaro as the caller, tentatively scheduled for November 5th. Stay tuned for more details on that too!

I bet you are as grateful as I am to be living in the Hudson Valley at this time in history. A small town can do so much to protect its citizens because it is nimble and because people know each other, and the best in us wants to help others, and the effect of that help is so much more evident to all. I think the constant awareness of what our neighbors are going through helps to keep teaching and reminding us that we are all in this together. Empathy is our strongest asset.

Think big, stay small, Pine Plains!

Darrah Cloud