



12.4.2020

Dear Pine Plains,

This week Pine Plains disproved somewhat an interesting adage: “a Town is only as good as its problems.” Being a writer, I want to revise that adage to something like, “a Town is only as good as its attention to its problems, and willingness to address them”! It was a week of seeing numerous committees reach high levels of competence in their inquiries and insights. **The Broadband Committee** will come to our Town Board Workshop on the 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm (live-streamed on YouTube) to discuss their findings, and the **Police Reform Stakeholders Committee** met on Wednesday to describe their insights into town policing, and to launch their investigation of the new Dutchess County Plan to Reform, Modernize and Reinvent Law Enforcement and Policing in Dutchess County. This Plan was assembled by stakeholders across the county in a series of meetings that have been ongoing since the governor’s executive order that every police department in the State must look at its culture and practices and reform its policies. In our County, the work is being done with all agencies involved, so that the State Troopers, Sheriff’s Department,

Environmental, and Town Police are all on the same page in their anti-bias training, de-escalation policies and use of force, to name a few. Both of these committees are exciting in their scope and membership, and I am proud to work with these folks. I have mentioned the Broadband Committee before, but our stakeholders are Brenda Jackson, Lisa Michetti, Nelson Zayas, Keary Hanan and Sarah Jones, and I could not wish for a more accomplished, knowledgeable and caring group of people. Alongside our own officers, we will be able to create policy and a mission that codifies practices in Pine Plains as well as protects and supports our police.

I was invited to the **Council of Churches** monthly meeting to discuss their willingness to address two key problems in this small town, **homelessness and drug addiction**. We are in the process of putting together a way forward to invite a Recovery Coach to town to be available to anyone, as well as an NA Meeting to be held at one of the churches weekly. Right now, AA and NA meet in ZOOM calls, but the minute we can go back to in-person, we want to be ready. My enormous thanks to Rev. Steve Schunk, Pastor Ryan Lark, Father Wilson and Nathan Badore for being more than receptive to my request for help on these issues, and for Jack Banning, Patti Vincent, the Badore family, Patrick Trettenero, Officer Steven Camburn, the Northeast Community Center, Evelyn Garzetta from Grace Church in Millbrook, and the Zayas' for jumping right in to help. What would Pine Plains do without them?

Anyone interested in serving on an **Workforce/Equitable Housing Committee**, please let me know. This is a call for help on the subject, as we are ramping up our involvement with the Tri-Town Coalition to bring some kind of workforce housing to Pine Plains, both rental and to-own. There are some opportunities out there and we need public participation in this venture. Contact me or Alice at 518-398-8600 ex1.

As I write this, Alice is working on our next submission of **Hometown Heroes** photos to the printer. We gather a dozen at a time and bring them in. There is

plenty of time to fill out a form and sponsor a service member who enlisted from Pine Plains. If you don't have the money, come see us. A number of very generous people have stepped forward to help out. We will be taking down the flags that are now up soon and storing them for winter, then putting them up again in the Spring in time for Memorial Day. So far we have 25 flags to go up. I am only sorry that long-time residents who did not enlist from here cannot be represented in this way. They deserve all the honor a flag can muster, and I know a lot of us would like to see them up there. And there are a few shy folks who don't want to be on flags. Yet. I hope they will step up some day and let themselves be honored.

The **ice rink** went up on the day before Thanksgiving and all we need are some steady cold days and we will be skating. Thanks to Matt Zick and Michael Cooper and Don Bartles for leading the crew. Look for updates on Facebook.

Here is **a bit of history** that feels relevant now, which I want to share. This comes via the work of Heather Cox, a history professor in Maine, married to a lobsterman. Abraham Lincoln's Free Labor theory stated that the nation worked best when the government supported ordinary people, rather than a wealthy elite. His government abolished slavery and embraced a labor force free to choose their own work. This resulted in an intelligent workforce which innovated freely, and they built the economy. In order to pay the enormous cost of the Civil War, **Lincoln's Republican Party** invented our first national system of taxation, including the income tax. They established state universities and built the railroads. They welcomed black people into this economy and gave black men the vote. (Indigenous people and women were a different matter—and a painful reminder that success is often built on the backs of others). But in this way, as Lincoln said, they helped to foster the ideal that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

You are the people, Pine Plains!  
Darrah Cloud