

Mayor's Report June 7th, 2022

The primary focus of the Village during the last month was to complete and submit two complete \$1,117,000 FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant applications for engineering, design and permitting for the seawall. The Village had previously applied for a \$955,000 BRIC grant and is waiting to hear if the grant was approved. Asharoken is working with Congressman Suozzi for \$1,200,000 of Congressional Community Project for repair work to the wall, as well as Senator Schumer for an additional \$1,200,000 of Congressional Direct Spending for seawall repair work. The Village is also working with Senator Schumer to secure \$14,500,000 of Congressional Direct Spending to be used for seawall replacement. In summary, since January 1st of this year, the Village submitted 5 separate requests for either grants or Congressional Directed Spending to repair and replace the seawall.

I would like to take a moment to thank Deputy Mayor Pam Pierce for the incredible job she has done to oversee all of the grant and federal fund requests. Each of these applications were very complicated and time consuming to complete. On every occasion, Pam made sure that all of the required paperwork was done in a professional and timely fashion. The Village is lucky to have a Deputy Mayor like Pam who is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done for Asharoken. Thanks again Pam.

In other seawall news, I wrote to Huntington Town Supervisor Ed Smyth on May 23rd to request that the Town formally partner with the Village to fix the seawall. On June 3rd, Deputy Mayor Pam Pierce and I met with Huntington Supervisor Smyth, Deputy Supervisor John McCarron and Deputy Director of Maritime Services Grant Chelius to discuss the letter I submitted and begin to formulate a plan going forward. It was an extremely productive meeting and I look forward to working with the Town going forward.

The Village also arranged a seawall site visit, scheduled for next week, with the US Army Corps of Engineers to review the area of the seawall that is collapsing and have the Corps suggest some type of short-term stabilization. During the month I also had conversation with Huntington Town Highway Superintendent Andre Sorrentino to secure the Town's assistance in implementing this short-term repair.

In 2017, 2018 and 2021 the Town and Village worked together to do major maintenance projects on the wall and share in the costs of the projects. This unique partnership has defrayed costs for the Village and made these complicated projects much easier to mobilize and complete. The Village owes former Town Highway Superintendents Gunther and Orelli a debt of gratitude for their terrific cooperation.

Lastly, and maybe most importantly, I would like to make one more comment on the seawall. At last month's BOT meeting a resident claimed that the Village owes \$500,000 for the seawall. That unfounded allegation was subsequently morphed in a letter he sent to residents accusing the Village of spending over \$500,000 of Village money to fix the seawall. Let me be as clear as I can, there is no truth to any of these allegations. They are simply ludicrous. The Village has not spent \$500,000 on the seawall and is not obligated, nor does it owe any funds for the seawall on June 7th 2022.

These are the facts. In 2018 the Village purchased \$11,094.30 worth of stones to secure a sink hole that had developed. Also in 2018 the Village paid \$7778.75 for engineering and supervision costs for the sink hole repair The Town provided in kind help by placing the stones. In 2021 the Village spent \$3850 to

replace toes stones that had been displaced. The Town paid for half of this project. In 2022 the Village spent \$8500 to secure the services of an engineering firm, GEI, to assist with completion of the two FEMA Hazard Mitigation grants and provide the Village with a template to facilitate the Village, in the future, independently complete these complicated grant applications. These are the facts of what has been spent on the wall. Anything to the contrary that you may read or be told is completely wrong.

People often have asked me how the Village has managed to go seven years without a tax increase. There are many components that have helped the Village not to raise taxes: careful and thorough budgeting, increases in building permit fees from a substantial increase in construction, increases in the assessment role resulting from new houses being built, buying out a full time police officer and replacing him with one starting out at a much lower base salary, going to outside carting, using shared services with other communities to lower costs, applying for and securing grants to defray costs (\$1.4 million to date) and developing excellent personal relationships with outside agencies. Additionally, having a Village Clerk and Treasurer each with 14 years of experience working on Village budgets gives Asharoken an excellent perspective on how to keep costs down and find outside sources of revenue. In summary, seven years without a tax increase has been the result of a lot of hard work and careful planning.

Moving on to road paving. On June 1st the Village received bids to pave two sections of Asharoken. The first one is from Village Hall to 285 Asharoken to restore the roadway to its condition prior to the National Grid gas main replacement. National Grid will pay the complete cost of resurfacing this section. The second section of road paving will extend from 355 to 501 Asharoken Avenue as well as repair the extended shoulder. The cost of this section will be paid for by a \$70,000 Multimodal Grant, the Village's accrued CHIPS money and the balance will come out of the Village's Highway reserve fund. This evening the Village will evaluate the bids and I expect that a bidder will be selected. When both of these sections are completed, I can proudly say that during my 10 years as Mayor all of Asharoken Avenue, from Village Hall to 563 Asharoken Avenue will have been resurfaced.