

THE MASTIC BEACH

July 15, 2015

# VILLAGER

Newsletter – Volume 1, No. 1

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# THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE

*By Maura Spery*

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Dear Neighbors,

I want to thank the tremendous number of community members, business leaders, civic-association representatives, volunteer organizations, County—State—and Federal—elected representatives, our employees and my colleagues on the Village Board for the tremendous support and interest demonstrated to move our Village forward. The first 100 days of our new administration have been exciting ones that have brought much-needed efficiencies, improvements and change to the delivery of our governmental services. The opportunities for further forward movement of our Village are encouraging.

While many challenges lie ahead, I appreciate the efforts of so many to achieve the accomplishments that are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. Please be assured that through this newsletter, as well as my “Mayor’s Message” emails, via social media on the Village Facebook ([www.facebook.com/masticbeachvillage](http://www.facebook.com/masticbeachvillage)), Twitter (@VillageofMB), Tumblr ([VillageofMB.Tumblr.com](http://VillageofMB.Tumblr.com)), Instagram ([VillageofMB.instagram.com](http://VillageofMB.instagram.com)) and G+ ([plus.google.com/villageofmb](http://plus.google.com/villageofmb)), I will continue to keep you apprised of both our challenges and successes.

This is an exciting time in the Village of Mastic Beach, and I look forward to our continued collaboration to bring smart, innovative and cost-effective governmental services to our Village.

Yours truly,

Mayor Maura P. Spery

# SAFETY FIRST

*Protecting the people and empowering code enforcement.*

## **ENHANCED CODE ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

By restructuring Code Enforcement and Public Safety, we have not only saved money, we have also been empowering our staff. Since April of this year, Public-Safety Officers have increased tickets on problem homes by 25%. After Notices to Comply were ignored, these problem homes have been fined in accord with Village Code and violators have been summoned to appear in Court.

Public-Safety Officers have red-tagged illegal construction at homes where many have illegal renters living in potentially dangerous conditions. Properties with code violations have come into compliance by getting the necessary permits which

makes our community much safer. We have been doing exactly what this Village was intended to do—making the owners of dangerous and illegal houses comply with our Village Code. As the Board’s liaison, Trustee Anne Snyder continues to focus her efforts with our Code-Enforcement/Public-Safety Office.

All Code-Enforcement violations can be reported to 631-281-2326, extension 302, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, except holidays, and 4:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. on weeknights, Saturdays and Sundays. Any and all criminally-related matters should be immediately reported to the Suffolk County Police Department by calling 911.

# POLICE-RELIEF STATION

*Suffolk County Police-relief station coming to Village Hall.*

## **POLICE ON NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD**

Mayor Spery is pleased to announce an agreement has been reached with the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) to have Village Hall become a police-relief station. This agreement enables SCPD Officers to have access to Village Hall on Neighborhood Road to fill out paperwork and charge equipment during their breaks. The officers’ presence will provide extra attention to activities in and about Main Street (Neighborhood Road), which will address a long-time desire of area residents and business owners. This transition is expected to be completed by early Fall 2015.

As a reminder, please be sure to call 911 when you have an emergency; 631-852-8700 when there is a quality-of-life issue or 631-281-2326, extension 302, to call the Village’s Public-Safety Office to report Village-Code violations.



# BRINGING NEW BUSINESSES

*Mayor welcomes new businesses to the Village.*

**REVITALIZING MAIN STREET:** Mayor Spery continues to meet with various business owners interested in coming to the Village, including several who have been instrumental in the successful revitalization of the Village of Patchogue.

Our Main Streets (also known as Neighborhood and Mastic Roads) are open for business, and the Mayor looks forward to continued conversations with these entrepreneurs to bring new and viable businesses to our downtown.



# VILLAGE HALL RESTRUCTURING

*Reorganizing the procedures to serve you better.*

## **RESTRUCTURING FOR EFFICIENCY**

The Village staff has been restructured to ensure optimal efficiency and effectiveness, with Mayor Spery establishing an office in Village Hall. This enables her to better coordinate and direct Village resources to address the daily priorities of the Village.

Moreover, each department has been relocated to allow for open communication within each department. The Building Department, which was previously split among two locations, is now located in the Village-Hall trailer where there is sufficient room to review blueprints and plans. Building Department staff can now conduct uninterrupted meetings with residents.

Public-Safety/Code-Officers were remotely located at the Village's Department of Public Works (DPW) building while the Code Dispatchers were situated at Village Hall and the Public Safety/Code Supervisor was located in the Village-Hall trailer. All Public-Safety/Code-Department staff members are now located in a designated area in Village Hall where they can more efficiently focus on quality-of-life issues. The Mayor, Clerk/Administrator, Deputy Village Clerk, Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer are all located in another area of Village Hall.

All these changes have made a positive difference in bringing better protocols, processes, efficiencies and internal controls to our Village government. With the additional space in the DPW building, our new DPW Supervisor has been able to better organize equipment and supplies at the Mastic-Road location.

## **APPROPRIATE POLICY AND CONTROLS**

As a part of this restructuring initiative, we have tightened internal controls while setting appropriate policy and protocols for the employees and Village operations. This will facilitate Village Hall operating in a legally—and ethically—compliant fashion. Our aim remains to serve the constituents in a more efficient way. Another benefit derived from better staff scheduling and intelligently locating the placement of employees has been a reduction in staff-overtime expenses. Efforts continue to streamline procedures that are constituency-focused and enhance the professionalism of Village employees when interacting with those we serve.

## **TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

In the interest of advancing transparency and accountability, we have added a great deal of public information to our new Village website. The Village Code is still available as are various forms, including those pertaining to Freedom-of-Information (FOIL) and employment-opportunity listings. The website also features new resources for residents such as an enhanced calendar of events and recreation pages that focus on the beauty of our area. Please be sure to get acquainted with the new Village website ([www.masticbeachvillageny.gov](http://www.masticbeachvillageny.gov)). To receive the latest updates about our Village, please also sign up for email communications and check out our social-media sites daily to keep informed.

 [www.facebook.com/masticbeachvillage](https://www.facebook.com/masticbeachvillage)

 [www.villageofmb.twitter.com](https://www.villageofmb.twitter.com)

 [www.villageofmb.tumblr.com](https://www.villageofmb.tumblr.com)

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 [www.plus.google.com/villageofmasticbeach](https://www.plus.google.com/villageofmasticbeach)

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

*Saving money while providing services.*

## **EFFICIENCIES AT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Deputy Mayor Bruce Summa serves as the Board's liaison to the Department of Public Works (DPW) team and has focused efforts by having potholes filled, streets swept, grass mowed and trash picked up. The DPW operations required some necessary reconfiguring. To address this, the Village recruited to fill a long-standing vacancy by hiring a new Supervisor who is an experienced individual. He previously worked in our area when employed by the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department. Our new DPW Supervisor knows how to inspire a team to care for and work on our local roadways. His collaboration with the DPW team has saved the Village money.

For example, our new DPW Supervisor has changed the way the DPW purchases supplies. We are now able to purchase off the Town of Brookhaven's approved bids and vendor list. This enables us to receive a competitive price while complying with New York State purchasing laws and the Village's recently updated procurement policy. By doing this, we have the ability to save money by sharing in the

Town's purchasing power by leveraging its discounted, bulk-rate pricing. This is how most of the Villages in Brookhaven Town purchase their supplies.

Additionally, Deputy Mayor Summa has conducted a top-to-bottom review of safety compliance. Steps continue to be taken to assure the Village operates in accord with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standards. We are working on increasing the DPW staff training, which has already reaped dividends by lowering our expenses. For example, we are licensing four of our current personnel so they can all use the heavy machinery instead of having only one person trained to undertake this work. With these added licenses, we will be able to add faster mowing, street-sweeping and general-cleanup services in the near future.

Introduced by Deputy Mayor Summa, the Board passed unanimously a resolution to pave the entire length of Mastic Road before the winter. We are looking forward to beginning that project.



# BUILDING DEPARTMENT

*Making changes to serve you better.*

## **RESTRUCTURED BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

Trustee Elizabeth “Betty” Manzella serves as the Board’s liaison with the Building Department and has been actively reviewing the Department’s restructuring. We have been streamlining the permit process to make our Building Department more user friendly for our residents. While there have been growing pains in the Village’s efforts to streamline processes, we know these new systems and protocols will—in the end—make the permitting process faster and allow our Building Inspectors and Fire Marshals to do their jobs in an effective way.

Getting people into their homes safely and in compliance with Code remains a top priority for us. Our Building Inspectors have brought into compliance more than 100 incomplete files that were backlogged, in some cases, for more than a year.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON “ZOMBIE” HOMES**

Trustee Manzella also has been working hard with Mayor Spery by taking on the “zombie”—and blighted—housing problems in our Village. They have been working closely with New York State Senator Thomas Croci’s, New York State Assembly Member Dean Murray’s, Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning’s and New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman’s offices, among others, to take on the scourge of blighted homes in our community.

In a focused effort to discourage illegal squatters, we are working with the Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA) and PSEG of Long Island to identify and shut off utilities to these “zombie” and blighted homes. Working closely with the Suffolk County Police Department, we have successfully used owner affidavits to facilitate the removal of illegal squatters and continue to aggressively pursue strategies to remove and/or rehabilitate these problem homes.

The Vacant—and Blighted—Homes Committee, created by Mayor Spery, has seen Wells Fargo Bank give the Village a foreclosed home that now will be renovated and put into the hands of a first-time homeowner. This program contractually requires the owner to occupy the home for a minimum of ten years. We are in the process of receiving many more homes from Suffolk County and, by working with our County partners and with the banks, these once-blighted eyesores will be owner occupied and out of the hands of unscrupulous investors.

## **HOMES FOR HEROES**

Similarly, Bank of America has taken a blighted, vacant home in our Village, renovated it and then donated it to a veteran. Mayor Spery continues to promote this “Homes for Heroes” initiative by working with Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank and others to transfer even more rehabilitated homes to our service members.

## **FOCUS ON NY RISING**

We have been working with Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Office of Storm Recovery and New York State Senator Thomas Croci’s and New York State Assembly Member Dean Murray’s offices to expedite the NY Rising awards to our area. We have seen firsthand the application-process bottleneck our residents have endured. After speaking with NY Rising representatives, Mayor Spery was told that a state grant was available to the Village since 2013, for which the Village never applied. Mayor Spery immediately arranged to have the paperwork filed and the Village has now secured this much-needed grant. This grant will allow for the Village to hire more staff to assist residents whose homes were damaged by Super-Storm Sandy. In turn, this will free up our current Building Inspectors to more efficiently inspect rentals, new construction and renovations and issue related permits upon proper and complete submission of required documents.





# SEWERS

## *And alternative waste-water options.*

One of the most important issues facing our Village is waste-water management. Educating our residents to understand the problems that single and separate septic and storm-water systems pose to our waterways and aquifers began at our July 7th community-wide meeting and will continue throughout the year.

Mayor Spery has been working tirelessly to secure funding to get sewers and alternative septic systems to our residents. Working closely with our elected officials, government agencies, civic groups and others, she has been able to assure the entire Village was finally included in the Mastic/Shirley Sewer Plan. The next step is to secure the funding for an engineering plan.

To that end, Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning has requested that the \$1.3 million allocated for an engineering plan by New York State to the County of Suffolk be redirected to the Village of Mastic Beach. This funding was

previously secured by United States Congress Member Lee Zeldin when he served as New York State Senator.

We are pushing to expedite the process so that we can start with the sewers on Neighborhood and Mastic Roads, which will spur much-needed economic development. Our Village is receiving significant support from Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone on this and other initiatives.

We are happy to announce the Mastic Beach/Smith Point of Shirley NY Rising Community-Reconstruction Project (CRP): (To Prepare a Storm-Water Management Plan and Construct Improvements) has been approved and is the first such project approved on Long Island. The State will be moving forward with \$1 million in funding to improve Storm-water drainage. In turn, this will help to reduce pollution from the rainwater runoff and will decrease flooding on our streets.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## *Moving forward for Mastic Beach Village.*

The Village's Comprehensive Plan is nearly ready to launch. In an attempt to minimize the fiscal impact on our residents, Mayor Spery was careful to assure the Village filed a Consolidated-Funding Application (CFA) to secure a grant. If approved, this grant will pay for 75% of the \$70,000.00 cost for the Comprehensive Plan that is included in the 2015-16 Village budget. In 2014, the Board passed a Resolution to retain Wendel Associates to implement the plan. According to Wendel, the Village's chances to receive this grant appear favorable, and we are hoping to begin the planning process within six months. While we would love to jump start the comprehensive-planning process, fiscal prudence mandates we exhaust grant opportunities before spending budgeted funds.

## *Citizens' Committee {Spotlight}*



### **THE GREEN COMMITTEE**

This committee was formed to educate and identify methods our community can utilize to improve our environment, reduce greenhouse gases and lower energy costs.

As you travel throughout the streets of Mastic Beach Village, you are encouraged to look at the rooftops for you will see more and more homes are installing solar photo-voltaic (PV) panels. Not only are these homeowners saving money on their electric bills, they are reducing their carbon footprint. It is amazing to see the number of homes—in the last year alone—that have taken advantage of this great technology.

Below the ground, which you cannot see, is another technology being implemented known as Geothermal. Geothermal utilizes ground-source heat pumps, which reduce a homeowner's heating and cooling bills by approximately 50-70%. When solar and geothermal are combined, you can create a net-zero home. A net-zero home is one that becomes self-sufficient—no electric, heating and cooling costs—thereby saving a homeowner thousands of dollars a year.

In the upcoming months, the Green Citizens' Committee will be holding educational seminars to help Village citizens take advantage of these technologies. Together, let's help make the Village of Mastic Beach one of the greenest, environmental-friendly communities on Long Island!

# CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATES

*Join a committee to make the Village of Mastic Beach amazing!*

The Village has a number of committees that are now meeting regularly and are open to the public. Meeting dates/times are included in the Village's website calendar of events ([www.masticbeachvillageny.gov/calendar](http://www.masticbeachvillageny.gov/calendar)).

## BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Community volunteers pick up trash and clean up designated areas throughout the Village. Please see the Village calendar for related meeting dates and times. We hope you will join in helping us to enhance our community's beauty.

## HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Housing and Human Services Committee identifies grants/funding to assist those in need in our community. They coordinate food pantries to better assist those in need in our community.

## MARKETING COMMITTEE

Working with Village consultants, the Committee is working to enhance the Village's way-finding signs, marketing our brand on social-media, developing an advertising campaign and publicizing our Village's natural beauty, rich history and smart-growth opportunities.

## GREEN COMMITTEE

The Green Committee is being spotlighted in this issue on page 7. Learn more about our Green Committee.

## QUALITY-OF-LIFE COMMITTEE

The Quality-of-Life Committee assists Code Enforcement by identifying problem homes. Committee members catalogue vacant and blighted homes, identify rental homes and coordinate with the Beautification Committee on clean-up efforts.

## JOIN A COMMITTEE

Have a voice in making the Village of Mastic Beach an even better community in which to live and work.

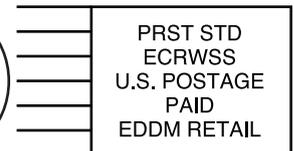
**COMMITTEE SCHEDULES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NEW VILLAGE WEBSITE!**

THE INCORPORATED  
VILLAGE OF MASTIC BEACH

369 NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD  
MASTIC BEACH, NEW YORK 11951

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