

Niskayuna Town News



Fall 2007

Supervisor Says:

In just three short months I will end my eight-year tenure as your Town Supervisor. These eight years have been extremely challenging and very satisfying. As you may or may not know, with these eight years my total government experience will be 34 years. During this time, I have worked at the State, County and local levels. It is the local level that has been the most rewarding. This is true probably because you can interact most directly with the population you serve.

As I leave office, I want to thank all of your town employees for their splendid efforts on my behalf and of course on your behalf. You should be comfortable knowing they are a great group of professionals. I want to thank my fellow Town Board members with whom I have served over the years - both Democrats and Republicans. They also work very hard on your behalf.

Above all, I want to thank you, the residents, for giving me the opportunity to work with and for you. It is my fervent hope that I leave you with greater trust and credibility in your local government, and that you do not feel you have to fight "City Hall," but rather, that "City Hall" will fight for you.

Good bye and God Bless.

Sincerely,
Luke J. Smith

Supervisor



YOUR TOWN COMMITTEES AT WORK

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Luke Smith, Chair

- Formulating the Town Budget for 2008
- Reassessment/reval. project continuing
- Monitoring revenue stream, sales tax, mortgage tax, taxable value

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Luke Smith, Chair

- Reviewing development projects on Consaul Road: 104- and 56-unit residential
- Rosa Rd. condominium project
- Working on Historical Site designation for Train Station at Lion's Park
- Final Site Plan approval granted to Stanford Crossing

SPECIAL DISTRICTS COMMITTEE

Maria Freund, Chair

- Fall water bills being sent out
- Water recycling project at Wastewater Treatment – will use treated waste water in treatment process
- Purchasing grout truck to allow the fixing of sewer pipes without digging up roads
- Town water wells have been redeveloped
- Exploring development of new wells to cut down on outside purchase of water

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

Diane O'Donnell, Chair

- Train Station building at Lion's Park has been rehabbed. Town hopes to have art shows there, perhaps as early as this fall
- Plans for Grange Hall are moving forward in cooperation with the Environmental Clearinghouse, who will be the tenant when it is rehabbed
- Weather cooperated this summer allowing road reconstruction and paving to be completed on schedule



RECREATION COMMITTEE

Liz Orzel Kasper, Chair

- Survey work being done on safe routes
- Safe Routes planning is continuing
- New playground equipment purchased for Town parks
- Fall recreation soccer is underway with over 700 young participants
- Senior trips being scheduled. Call the Senior Center at 372-2519
- Pickleball has arrived in Niskayuna. This is a great outdoor and indoor game for senior citizens.

PUBLIC SAFETY

William Chapman, Chair

- Purchasing in-car cameras to enhance effectiveness of patrols
- Worked with School to address traffic concerns while the High School is under construction
- Two officers hired to replace retiring officers

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

DOG LICENSES

Residents age 65 and over are entitled to a discount for their dog's license. Licenses are \$2.50 per year for spayed and neutered dogs; \$10.50 for unspayed and un-neutered dogs.

VOTING PRIVILEGE

The General Election will be held Tuesday, November 6, with polls opened from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. You should have received a post card from the Board of Elections reminding you of your voting location.

PROPERTY DEEDS

All deeds are filed with the Schenectady County Clerk's office – not in Town offices. Searches and copies can be made free of charge online using www.schenectadyclerk.com.

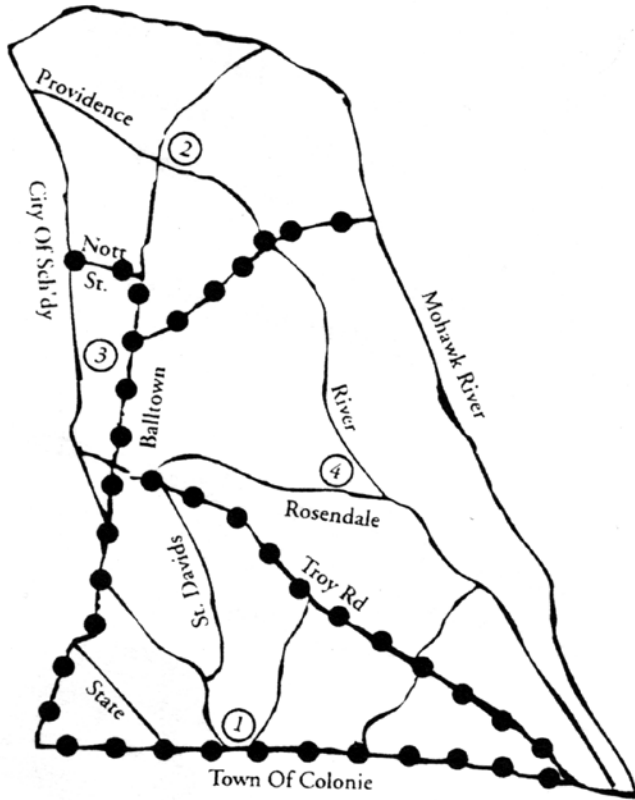
NEED YOUR BIRTH CERTIFICATE?

The Town Clerk's office has a list of websites with phone numbers to help you secure a copy of your birth certificate.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT LOOSE LEAF AND BRUSH PICKUP

As always, there is no loose leaf or loose brush pickup on Troy Road, Balltown Road, or Union Street east of Balltown Road. Pick up schedules have been made available in this newsletter for other



Loose Brush Pickup

Zone 1	Week of October 1
Zone 2	Week of October 8
Zone 3	Week of October 15
Zone 4	Week of October 22

Loose Leaf Pickup

Zone 1	Week of Oct. 29 & Nov. 19
Zone 2	Week of Nov. 5 & Nov. 26
Zone 3	Week of Nov. 5 & Nov. 26
Zone 4	Week of Nov. 12 & Dec. 3

areas of town. Remember to keep branches at a maximum length of 4 feet; and please keep brush and leaves separate.

Each zone's loose leaves are scheduled to be picked up twice (before the first heavy snowfall, we hope), but due to the unpredictability of the weather, we request that you bag your leaves after you have had your first scheduled pickup and there is a heavy snowfall. Our machines are not equipped to handle wet, icy leaves.

DO NOT put leaves on the pavement. They must remain on the grass in front of your house. Putting them on the pavement creates a dangerous road hazard, and the homeowner could be liable for any injuries or property damage.

We will also be picking up bagged leaves, but there is no schedule. Just leave your bags or containers at the curb for random pick up starting Monday, October 15. Barrels and pails should not exceed 32 gallons, and paper bags should not exceed 40 pounds. Please adhere to these restrictions.

SNOW EMERGENCY PARKING

In order to facilitate snow removal, all vehicles must be removed from Town or County street or highway following any snowfall of three inches or more until the street has been plowed by or at the direction of the Commissioner of Public Works or the Highway Superintendent of the Town of Niskayuna. A snow emergency shall continue for 48 hours after the snowfall ceases. This law is in addition to the one that prohibits parking on the street from November 1 to April 1 between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Please do not blow snow from your property into the street; and keep the area in front of your mailbox free of snow. Also, you will be held responsible for any damage caused by snow being blown into the street by any contractor you hire.



RECREATION DEPARTMENT

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Activities for Children include:

- Cross Country Run
- Chess Instruction
- Fall After School Bowling
- Fencing
- Friday Night Bowling
- Friday Night Community Fun Nights
- Niskayuna Mom/Toddler Group
- Introduction to Pickle Ball

Activities for Adults

- Low impact Fitness
- Tai Chi
- Competitive Table Tennis
- Schenectady Chess Club
- Niskayuna Town Band

Activities for Seniors

- Low impact Fitness
- Line Dancing
- Bocce/Pickleball
- Mini Bus Transportation

ESPECIALLY FOR SENIORS!

For information on the Niskayuna Senior Center, please call Susan Leonard or Edie Cannizzo at 372-2519.

Join the Niskayuna Seniors each Tuesday and Thursday. In addition to activities listed below, our morning programs include crafts, Scrabble, Bridge, Pinochle, Rummy and other card games.

After a hot lunch at noon, our afternoon activities include games, speakers, trips, movies and more. There is no membership fee, and many programs are free of charge. Also, join us on our monthly shopping excursions, and trips to shows, museums, luncheons, etc. Senior activity calendars are available at the Senior Center, Town Hall and online at www.niskayuna.org.



UPCOMING SENIOR CITIZEN EVENTS

Sun., Sept. 23: “Chicago,” the musical, at the Cohoes Music Hall. Soup and salad bar lunch at Butcher Block.

Fri., Sept. 28: Lunch Bunch – Enjoy a buffet luncheon at the Whitestone Café.

Wed., Oct. 17: “Out to Lunch” at the Log Cabin in Holyoke, MA. Show and lunch will stop at Yankee Candle afterwards.

Fri., Oct. 26: Enjoy a fabulous lunch in the Cafeteria de Medici Restaurant at the Culinary Institute in Hyde Park. Also visit Millbrook Vineyards & Winery for wine tasting.

Sun., Nov. 4: “Bus Stop,” the 1956 classic at Stillwater Center Dinner Theatre in Stillwater, NY. Catering by Panza’s Restaurant.

Fri., Nov. 30: “Christmas Glories, Christmas Stories,” at Beck’s Grove Dinner Theater, Blossville, NY. Holiday show and delicious Holiday dinner buffet with salad and dessert bar. Later, enjoy the beautiful outdoor light display.

Tues., Nov. 13: Thanksgiving Dinner with entertainment by Niskayuna HS Choral Group.

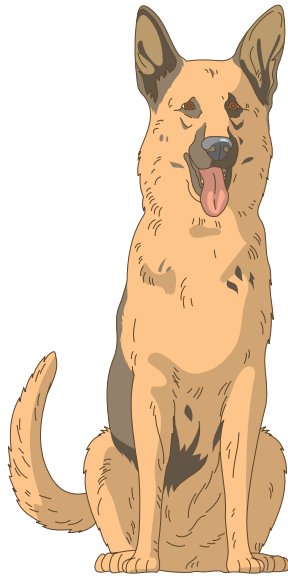
Tues., Dec. 18: Holiday Dinner and entertainment by chorus from Niskayuna High School.

December: Dinner at the Metro Diner followed by “Lights in the Park” in Albany. Call for date.



NISKAYUNA DOG PARK

It's time to renew your Dog Park permit! 2007-2008 permits can be purchased at the Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall weekdays from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. The cost is only \$30 per year for one dog and \$15 per year for each additional dog owned by the same family. Remember, town ordinances require all dogs using the park to wear a current park permit ID tag.



Owners of dogs without current tags who are found using the park will be ticketed. The Dog Park is located in Blatnick Park across the road from the Skate Park and behind the baseball fields. Please call the Recreation Office at 372-2519 for more information.

Please remember to clean up after your dog whether at the Dog Park or on the street.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Reassessment Update

The reassessment project is on schedule. To date approximately 85% of data collection for residential and vacant parcels is completed and photos have been taken for all improved parcels in town. As part of the data collection process, sketches of improvements for each parcel have been created.

In the month of October a second inventory survey will be mailed to all property owners. Unlike the first inventory survey, the survey to be mailed to taxpayers in October will be "populated" (all data such as square foot of living area, room count, lot size, etc. will be filled in). Property owners will have two weeks to review the survey and return it with any additional corrections to the inventory. GAR Associates and the Assessor will review all returned surveys and make inventory corrections accordingly. **This phase of the project is very important. All taxpayers are urged to take**

time to review their populated survey. Correct inventory is crucial to establishing accurate values.

The Assessor and GAR will be giving two more Taxpayer Education/Awareness Workshops. The topics to be covered will be:

- 1) Valuation - How the valuation process works.
- 2) Preparation in Receipt of New Assessments – How to challenge your new assessment.

In order to give more individual attention to those who attend the workshops, seating will be limited to 80 people or less. We will have as many workshops as necessary for each of the two topics in order to accommodate all taxpayers wishing to attend. Specific dates of these workshops will be published on the Town website in October and February respectively, and included in the populated survey you will be receiving. Press release for the workshop will also be published in the Daily Gazette and the Niskayuna Spotlight.

Please visit the Town's website for an updated Project Schedule at www.niskayuna.org. Town Departments, Assessor, and Town Reassessment Project. The Project Schedule is also posted on the Town Hall Bulletin Board.

Other Assessment Topics

- Exemption applications for seniors over 65 will be mailed late December 2007.
- All veterans new in town should contact the Assessor's Office to see if you are eligible to receive a veteran exemption.
- All new homeowners should contact the Assessor's Office for STAR exemption information.
- All exemption applications must be filed in the Assessor's Office no later than March 1, 2008.

If you have any questions on the reassessment project, or any other assessment questions, call the Assessor's Office at 518-386-4550.



TOWN DEPARTMENTS



BUILDING DEPARTMENT:

Are you thinking of getting a shed to store all of your summer stuff? If you are, then you will need a building permit. Whether you build it yourself or are buying one already built, you need to contact us. A shed is considered an "accessory structure," the same as a pool, detached garage, gazebo, etc. You are permitted to have two such structures on your property.

The location of your shed is important. If the shed has 120 square feet or less of floor space, it may be placed up to 5' from the rear or side property line. If it has more than 120 square feet of floor space, its location is governed by the setback requirements of your particular zoning district; and please note, a shed is not permitted in the front yard.

We encourage you to call us at 386-4522, or visit our website for more information. We are here to help you through it all.

TAX OFFICE

As you read this, the School tax bills will already have been mailed. Please see the back of the bill for helpful information. Any resident, non-escrowed, who did not receive a bill should call the Tax Office at 386-4540.

Shortly, the Water Rent bills will also arrive. We in the Tax Office request that residents write two separate checks for these bills, since they are

separate bank accounts. The Water Rent goes to the Town while the School Tax money goes directly to the schools. Bills paid after October 5th must include a 2% late charge.

The School Tax collection will end on October 31, after which no further payments will be accepted. Water Rent collection will end on November 2, 2007.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

As fall approaches and cooler weather arrives, many of us will turn off our air conditioners and leave our windows open at night. During these overnight hours it is critical that, should you hear a noise of a suspicious nature, you call the police department immediately. The police need you, our residents, to act as our eyes and ears, and alert us of any suspicious occurrences. This summer we had acts of larcenies, criminal mischief and other quality of life crimes that may have been prevented had someone called to report a noise that "just didn't seem right." Always lock your vehicles and remove items of value. Wallets/purses, money, and computers should never be left in your cars - even in your own driveway.

NO PARKING REMINDER

Time for our annual reminder. Niskayuna has on record a local law to help our highway crews with snow removal. By enactment of local law 9 (1981) the Town of Niskayuna amended its Vehicle and Traffic Code to read as follows:

"NO PARKING AS SPECIFIED AT ANY TIME BETWEEN THE FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER IN EACH YEAR AND THE FIRST DAY OF APRIL IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR, ON ALL PUBLIC HIGHWAYS IN THE TOWN OF NISKAYUNA FROM 3:00 AM TO 6:00 AM."



TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Violators of the above mentioned local law may be issued parking summonses to appear in Town Court and face possible fines. Again, this law is on the books to help in the removal of snow from our streets which, in turn, helps keep our streets clean and safe.

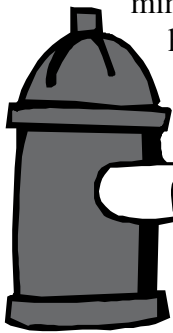
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Transfer Station

Information on the Transfer Station is available on the Town Website www.niskayuna.org. If you come in on Saturdays, you may notice a change. Our first female Transfer Station attendant joined the crew on September 1. Welcome Christina Anderson!

WATER MAIN EMERGENCY AND FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

On Wednesday, August 22, one of our town's water crews was replacing a hydrant that had been run over by an auto at the Corner of River and Rosendale Roads. Two thrust restraint rods that held the hydrant and hydrant shut-off valve to the water main broke loose. The shut-off valve blew off leaving a 6-inch diameter opening in the side of a major high-pressure water transmission main. Within seconds, water was gushing out the side of the pipe at a rate of 5,000+ gallons per minute. A job that started out as a routine



hydrant replacement escalated into an expensive emergency water break with system-wide implications.

The large water break described above, and the ever increasing number of breaks

throughout our system (74 breaks in 2006) may be early warning signs that our buried infrastructure system is beginning to exceed its useful life. On August 22, we encountered problems with rusted thrust restraint rods, an obsolete hydrant, leaky and inoperable valves, and insufficient and inaccurate mapping and emergency equipment failure. As pipes and valves wear out, they must be

replaced. It is a very expensive process that is just beginning. The remainder of this article looks at what the Town, over the last several years, has begun to do, and what needs to be done in the upcoming years.

To prevent problems from escalating into crises, part of our department's mission is to evaluate risks and recommend management strategies. One recommendation that we have just started to implement is pipe replacement. Last year, we replaced several lengths of water pipe at the bottom of Niskayuna Road. So far this year, we have replaced several more lengths of pipe on Trottingham Drive near Pearse Road, and plan to replace some pipe on Whitney, Harris and Winnie Roads. Next summer, we plan to replace almost one mile of pipe along four roads in the eastern portion of town.

We are beginning to ramp up expenditures on infrastructure replacement to avoid more costly replacement work under emergency conditions. As our capital expenditures increase, we should reach a point where our emergency response expenditures start to decrease. We will strive to find the optimum balance between emergency response and planned capital expenditures in an effort to minimize long-term costs while providing an acceptable level of service. Pipe replacement has begun and will continue to be a critical element in our mission to provide high quality drinking water to all our customers.

The focus of this article has been on water. However, the same risk assessment approach has been applied to our sanitary and storm sewer systems. We have found many ways to improve service and reduce risk. Over the past several years, we have started to systematically identify and evaluate our assets. We have purchased GPS and GIS equipment and software to accurately locate and map our assets. We are developing our capabilities to have asset data and smart maps available on laptop computers in the field where and when our crews need them. We have purchased state-of-the-art equipment, including two

TOWN OF NISKAYUNA
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, New York 12309-
4381

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Schenectady, NY
Permit No. 137

Luke J. Smith
Supervisor

Town Council

Liz Orzel Kasper
William R. Chapman
Diane P. O'Donnell
Maria P. Freund



combination vacuum and jetter trucks and video inspection equipment, to inspect and maintain both sanitary and storm sewers.

We have just installed a SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system to oversee and control pump stations. We purchased an excavator and some newer, larger trucks to more efficiently repair and replace pipe, but our most important asset is our competent and motivated staff. We have increased our staff size and expanded training programs for them to provide more effective maintenance and emergency response while maintaining public safety.

In conclusion, public awareness of underground utility conditions will always be plagued by the "out of sight out of mind" mentality. Hopefully this article will remind everyone that we must stay vigilant to assure that our aging infrastructure will be replaced in a timely and cost-effective manner.

MARK THE DATE FOR NISKA-DAY 2008

Construction at the High School has necessitated moving the 2008 Niska-Day celebration. On May 17th we will celebrate our annual community day on the grounds of Craig Elementary School on Balltown Road.

The Niska-Day committee has already planned for this change in venue and promises to retain the current Niska-Day activities, including the parade and fireworks. In response to many requests, a Niska-Day website is being developed to provide all the information needed to make the day successful. As the time nears, more information will be made available.

Anyone interested in joining this dynamic committee are invited to contact Bill or Denise Leader at 370-1346.

