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## State of the Village – April 1, 2019

No State of the Village could begin without first acknowledging the extraordinary efforts of the many members of the Larchmont community who volunteer countless hours to make this Village such a wonderful place to live and work. While I will make some specific references throughout this presentation, I want to be sure that I give a personal thank you to the Board of Trustees (with congratulations to Carol and Malcolm on their re-election), all Village committee members, volunteer firefighters and the Volunteer Ambulance Corps, community organizers, business owners and Village staff. It truly does take a Village.

Of utmost importance to this Board is the financial operation of the Village and preparation of the annual budget. For the second consecutive year, we have kept the increase in our tax levy below the NYS Property Tax Cap with no use of surplus funds. The Village Administrator and Treasurer, with direction from the Village Board and input from the Finance and Budget Committee, with guidance from liaison Trustee Herman, have produced a budget that continues to deliver services in a fiscally-responsible manner, using a process that provides transparency and encourages citizen input. The tentative 2019/20 budget submitted on March 20<sup>th</sup> has a tax-levy increase of 1.94% (0.42% under the cap of 2.36%), without the customary \$73,000 in NYS AIM funding which had been cut in the Governor's initial executive budget. In February, I joined fellow Westchester municipal executives to lobby Albany for the restoration of AIM funding and I'm happy to report that it was reinstated in the NYS budget passed yesterday. In light of this additional unencumbered revenue, we will be reviewing and expect to amend the tentative budget by the April 15<sup>th</sup> public hearing. The final budget must be adopted by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

As fellow residents, we are always sensitive to the need to control taxes. The Board has been working to develop additional non-tax revenue streams, as well as take a new look at some of the drivers of expenses.

To that end, this year we amended Village policy to encourage film and tv production, being careful not to place an undue burden on our community and

cover all related Village costs through fees beyond the permit. This past year we have had a major motion picture with Julia Roberts and several HBO series filmed in the Village, providing over \$19,000 in revenue from the associated permit fees. Through better communication with location scouts, we are looking to do more in this area.

Grants can be an important component of non-tax revenue and we are pleased to announce that this past year the police department received a grant of \$10,000 toward the purchase of the new “live scan” system for finger and palm prints, an upgrade required by NYDCJS. In addition, the fire department was awarded \$2,500 for new tablets to use in the 3 fire trucks.

We have begun discussions, along with the Town of Mamaroneck Board, about the operations of our waste disposal services to look for efficiencies and improved environmental policies.

We recently appointed a new Treasurer, Kimberly Siegrist, and Deputy Treasurer, Frank Magneri, and are in the midst of improving our financial software systems to provide a level of real-time and in-depth analysis not previously possible.

Next, I would like to highlight some of the operational and capital projects undertaken in the Village.

We have taken several steps in an effort to enhance overall efficiency and quality of service.

Maximizing the opportunity presented by a retiring stenographer in the building department, we replaced the position with an assistant building inspector, Nick Cecere, and contracted with a planning consultant, Pat Cleary.

We instituted on-line parking ticket payment and hope to have the ability to sell parking permits on-line as well shortly.

We have improved the oversight and management of our water franchise by instituting a multi-stakeholder committee, under the direction of Trustee Herman, which serves as a focal point for troubleshooting, financial analysis and strategic planning for infrastructure improvements. Within the water department, we continued to send leak alert letters to residents, switched to quarterly billing to provide contemporaneous consumption data to residents and businesses and, with the final approval from Westchester County Dept. of Health, concluded our over 2-year effort to replace the water tank and pump station at Byron Place. This effort was recognized by the American Water Works Association with the 2018 Distribution Project of the Year award and the ACEC of New York, Gold Award for Comprehensive water supply rehabilitation for safety and sustainability. We

made an unsuccessful grant application to NYS to replace some lengths of water main, some of which we will now have to complete in house this year.

The Larchmont/Mamaroneck Joint Garbage Commission created a new website and app to help residents easily find sanitation and recycling information on their phones or computers. With the Waste Wizard Recyclopeda you can learn how to recycle, donate or dispose of any item. I know I find it helpful.

Working with the City of New Rochelle, the Town of Mamaroneck and the Village of Pelham Manor, we completed a thorough survey and evaluation of our sanitary sewer system. We are now beginning the repairs and renovations identified during the study. All in all, we expect to perform 18 point repairs to sewer mains, rehabilitate 120 manholes and line several thousand linear feet of pipe. The consortium was awarded a \$5.7 million grant from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Village's share of which is \$807,000.

The Village purchased a 2005 American LaFrance Pumper with 18,500 miles from the Valhalla Fire District for \$53,000. The body and mechanical components of the truck are in excellent condition. It has a 1,500 GPM pump and a 750-gallon tank, both desired improvements over our retired 1993 truck, which was sold for \$10,000. In addition, the drivetrain is the same as other vehicles in the fleet, allowing the Village to efficiently stock parts and service the vehicle. A brand new replacement pumper, with similar specifications would have cost about \$500,000 more than was spent.

In the 2018/19 fiscal year we will be completing 1 mile of road repaving, 2 miles of curb renewal or replacement, and 700 linear feet of new sidewalk. Work not completed before winter will resume shortly, including addressing the need for an ADA ramp and bump-out at the Larchmont Avenue mid-block crosswalk and paving portions of Cherry, Monroe, Locust, Bronson, Birch, Concord, and Mayhew Avenues. In 2018/19 we had 53 street opening permits by Con Ed to perform gas main replacement work. The Village works closely with Con Ed to assess each street for joint-paving opportunities, through which Con Ed reimburses the Village 50% of the cost to pave curb to curb. In the current fiscal year, Con Ed will be reimbursing the Village approximately \$231,000. Residents should know that the Boston Post Road is a state-owned road and we are not permitted to do any repairs to the roadway.

Additionally, we replaced sidewalks in front of Village properties, such as by Village Hall, some sections near parks, and at the DPW yard on the Boston Post Road – which also received a façade makeover executed by DPW staff.

Over the past year we have been testing LED light fixtures in various locations around the Village. We have engaged New York Power Authority for an Energy

Efficiency Project, including a photometric survey and engineering documents to upgrade over 700 Village street light fixtures. We expect to complete this project over the course of 2019/20 and anticipate significant savings in electricity costs beginning in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

The tradition of public/private partnerships continued in full-force this past year. The Turtle Park Project has been working to replace the playground, creating a wonderful, inclusive, new space for Larchmont's families. The Pine Brook Neighborhood Association continued a plan of improvements to the park begun several years ago by installing a newly-graded entrance, tricycle paths, new benches and trees and a resurfaced basketball court. In the summer, we joined Girl Scout Troop 2463 to create a Mindfulness Garden in Addison Park. The Friends of Larchmont Parks has been busy holding fundraisers and working with the Parks & Trees Committee, Village Board and landscape designer, Rivi Oren, on finalizing the renovation plans for Constitution Park. We're getting close to final design documents and are hoping for a fall start time (after Larchmont Day and the Arts Festival). Finally, a resurgence of interest in Flint Park has resulted in planned meetings with the Flint Park Conservancy to discuss ideas for renovations and upgrades to that parkland and critical environmental area.

We are dedicated to ensuring our parks are in good shape and we have promised to plant 50 new trees on public property beginning this spring. We are committed to enhancing the Village's natural and built environment.

On the one-year anniversary of launching the food-waste composting program, the Village, along with the Town of Mamaroneck, proudly accepted a 2018 Westchester County Eco Award. There are now over 600 households participating and approximately 70 tons of food waste have been turned into nutrient-rich compost, removing it from the solid waste stream.

The Larchmont Environmental Committee, assisted by Trustee Bauer, led a robust campaign to make residents and landscapers aware of the Village ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, as well as the health and environmental dangers associated with their use. Their focus this spring is a tri-municipal Healthy Lawns initiative, in part to educate the public about the environmental consequences of pesticide use. The Village was acknowledged as an environmental leader by ICLEI in the area of climate change mitigation efforts and we expanded our bike lanes to create a marked route from Larchmont Avenue to Hommocks School.

Two years ago, as the result of considerable community interest in local historic preservation, the Board created the Historic Preservation Task Force, on which Trustee Frouman serves as a liaison member. Last year they produced an extensive annual report, as well as a "Larchmont Historic Preservation FAQ" brochure. Both documents are posted on the Village website. They recently applied to the

Preservation League of NYS for a grant to conduct a “reconnaissance-level historic resource survey” to help with their mandate to advise the Board on historic preservation legislation in Larchmont.

Of course, a major focus of the Board has and continues to be the vitality of Larchmont’s downtown. Many people aren’t aware that there are over 215 storefront businesses in Larchmont. In 2016, the vacancy rate was about 12%. It is now around 6%. This past year, we’ve had 7 ribbon cuttings for both new and expanding businesses and there are an additional 5 anticipated openings coming in the next few months. This shows that businesses are eager to come to Larchmont and they are succeeding here.

In the past few years we have enhanced the area by painting the Chatsworth bridge, installing a new Welcome to Larchmont sign at the post office, creating the Palmer Pocket Park by Chase bank, hanging 66 flower baskets and 67 flags from our lampposts every spring, and wrapping those same posts with lighted garland every holiday season. Trustee Frouman has designed new Welcome signs which will soon be installed on the Neptune signs at 4 of the 5 entrances to Larchmont. In November, we had the exciting Historic Larchmont Murals project in the downtown, which brought out several hundred participants and created 6 thought-provoking pieces of artwork illustrating figures from Larchmont’s history. Last year we created a seasonal position in the DPW dedicated to watering plants and cleaning sidewalks, tree pits and parking lots in the commercial areas and we intend to continue that this year.

The Village staff and I have worked closely with the owner of 1912 Palmer Avenue to help expedite the rebuilding of his property. I am happy to report that construction has begun and the new building will have modern street-level retail space with well-appointed apartment units above. This will make a big difference to the Palmer streetscape.

The Larchmont Playhouse Theater design work is completed and they have received all of their land-use board approvals. The theater will undergo an internal gut renovation and expansion, creating 4 screens with stadium seating, new, fully-accessible restrooms and a wine bar/café in the lower level. Cohen Media, the new owner, envisions the Playhouse will be an art-house movie theater for Southern Westchester. We anticipate work to begin this summer.

Parking has been a perennial problem in Larchmont’s downtown. I am happy to report we have completed phase 1 of our parking project and the consultant’s report is posted on the Village website. To support the needs of all the stakeholders who use our parking (commuters, apartment dwellers, merchants and their employees, etc.) and better manage the Village’s on-street and parking-lot

assets, we will convert some of our already time-restricted parking to paid parking. We will be reaching out and seeking community input about this in the coming months.

The contract with Down to Earth Farmer's Market, which brings many people to our streets on Saturdays from April through December, has been renewed for another 5-year term. We look forward to their opening day on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

There is certainly work still to be done, with a few highly-visible and long-term vacancies in the Palmer/Chatsworth area. Additional outreach efforts to work with landlords will be undertaken. It should also be said that some properties are in very derelict condition and have not had any capital investment in decades. One such property is the row of shops on Chatsworth, including the former Food Basket. We are happy to announce that property has been purchased and we anticipate the presentation of plans to completely rehabilitate the location soon.

Yes, we've been busy working, but we have been having a bit of fun too!

In September we celebrated the birthday of Larchmont's incorporation with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Larchmont Day festival. This event keeps expanding in scope and growing in popularity and it would not happen without the volunteer help of the LPFFA and PBA members, volunteer firefighters, lots of community involvement and the event organizing skills of Trustee Fanelli.

The recreation committee continued all the classic events, as well as providing new offerings. In June, Carolyn Lee ran another outstanding Sprint to Flint for almost 900 runners. We all enjoyed the Memorial Day Parade, Ragamuffin Parade, Halloween window painting, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Races and the Tour de Larchmont. Carol Miller and Annie O'Connor worked hard to increase tennis and paddle tennis clinics, brought pickle ball to Larchmont and started the first Larchmont tennis team in the Westchester Town Tennis League.

This past July, the annual Thursday night Summer Concert Series was held entirely in Constitution Park with great success. Having this lively community event in the Village Green suggests the great potential of things to come when the park is renovated to include a proper performance patio. In addition to the concerts, the Arts Committee also held their annual Art Festival in the park.

In December, we enjoyed the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Light Up Larchmont holiday tree lighting event, entirely sponsored and run by the LPFFA and Larchmont PBA.

Many community members participated in Larchmont's first Love Your Parks Day, planned to coincide with Arbor Day happenings. These are jointly organized by the Parks & Trees Committee and the Friends of Larchmont Parks. This coming spring, they will be joined by the Larchmont Environmental Committee to bring

increased service and educational experiences around the topic of the natural world.

I hate to end on a somber note, but the candlelight vigil for peace and tolerance held in constitution park on November 1<sup>st</sup> highlighted our collective commitment to the strength of community in Larchmont.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we thank you for the opportunity to serve our friends and neighbors in the Village of Larchmont and we look forward to another productive year.