

## State of the Village – December 5, 2022

We are very lucky to live in a community where so many residents are willing to step up and volunteer and donate to our Village, where our Village staff is exceptional and where the members of our Fire Department and Police Department are not just our first responders, but truly part of our community as well!

This year has been another very busy year in the Village. We are extremely proud of our accomplishments over the past year, which range from infrastructure, financial, environmental, to our parks and our business district.

Starting with Village finances, the Village adopted a tax-cap compliant budget, for the fourth year in a row, which provided the resources needed to continue providing Larchmont residents with the high quality of services they have come to expect and deserve from their local government. In addition, for the fourth year in a row we did not have to apply fund balance for operational expenses.

Meanwhile, the Village continues to maintain its highly-coveted Aaa bond rating, a symbol of exceptional fiscal management. The Aaa bond rating is held by less than 1% of all municipalities in the nation. In addition, the ability to borrow at some of the lowest rates possible will help the Village in its efforts to complete a number of capital projects now and going forward. Finally, beginning this year and into next year, the Village will receive a total of \$624,000 in ARPA funds. The Village Board has allocated those funds towards much-needed repairs and improvements to the aging sanitary sewer system.

Since 2016, the Village has invested over \$1.5 million to cleaning, maintaining, and repairing its sanitary sewer system. Approximately \$600,000 of the total has been provided for through a New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation 40% reimbursement grant that the Village is party to, along with Pelham Manor, New Rochelle, and Town of Mamaroneck. Acting as a consortium, the four municipalities make up Westchester County's New Rochelle Sanitary Sewer District, and have been leaders in the County in proactively addressing repairs to the sanitary sewer system, ensuring that it functions properly with no negative impact to the environment. The Village will continue to build on its progress, not only on sanitary sewers, but in all areas of Village infrastructure.

The Village Board has also committed funds in its capital budget for the repair and maintenance of the stormwater sewer system. A flood mitigation modeling project focusing on the Pine Brook neighborhood has been approved for funding by Westchester County and will require a 50% match by the Village. In addition, the Village will also review drainage areas near Fountain Square and East Creek. There are a number of smaller poor drainage areas located throughout the Village's 22 miles of roadway. Last year, the Village made improvements to three of these locations by adding catch basins and storm sewer pipes to connect trouble areas to the Village's storm sewer system. This work is generally done in concert with the Village's road repavement program in an effort to maximize the life expectancy of its roadways and capitalize on cost savings from simultaneous infrastructure improvements in one location. Efforts are made to repair or replace all known infrastructure defects before a road is paved.

This year, the Village completed pavement work on sections of road including Bayard, Mayhew, Kilmer, Monroe, Willow, and Beach. This past year we paved more roads than ever before. The funding to complete road rehabilitation comes from a number of sources, including the Village's general fund, reimbursement from Con Edison, and New York State Department of Transportation.

The recently established Special Revenue Parking Fund enters its second year of operation, in which the sole revenue stream is fees generated from payment of on-street and off-street metered parking. The Village Board has allocated 90% of net revenue from the fund to be used solely for transportation, parking, and other improvements related to the parking lots and business districts. Last month, the Village Board approved a professional services agreement to review and redesign the Gilder Street Parking Lot, with plans to commence construction in 2023. This will be the first major infrastructure project that will be financed through the Special Revenue Fund.

In addition to the Gilder Street Lot, the Village is in discussion with Metro North for the proposed construction of 30 new parking spaces on North Avenue between East and West Avenues, on what is currently overgrown railroad right of way property. Funding for this project is largely supported by the fees received as a result of CENTRO's approval. This is a "shovel ready" project, anticipated to begin in 2023.

In addition to investing in its infrastructure, the Village has also been investing in the professionalism of its workforce. Over the last few years, Departments across the board have seen significant attrition. The Village Board has made a concerted effort to recruit and hire professional staff throughout the ranks. Positions have been filled in the Police Department, Fire Department, and Department of Public Works, by exemplary individuals with excellent work history and experience, which we expect to complement the existing members of the Larchmont Team.

Of note, an Assistant Civil Engineer was hired in 2022, paving the way for the Village's first engineer since the position was last filled in 2003. The Village also hired its first ever Assistant Village Administrator, further increasing the professionalism our staff. The Assistant Administrator's main focus will be public relations and communications, parking, training and development, and assisting the Village with its budget process. These staffing developments have already begun to address service gaps and ensure operational continuity during future transition and turnover periods.

Other initiatives under way in 2022, leading into 2023, includes a new Village website. The Village Board allocated funding to replace its antiquated website platform, and through a diligent selection process, identified a vendor, and is well underway with developing a new, user-friendly, modern website to serve as the digital gateway experience for residents and visitors.

Our parks are such an important part of our Village and we are extremely lucky to have so many of them, along with a dedicated Parks and Trees Committee. Brian Reilly, our Deputy Clerk, has issued almost 30 permits for events in Constitution Park alone this past year.

Our Parks and Trees Committee has been very hard at work this year, and is responsible, along with our DPW for planting 99 new trees in the Village. We want to thank our DPW and the Parks and Trees Committee for their efforts.

Those 99 trees include 17 donated by the Friends of Larchmont Parks (FOLP) for placement in Constitution Park. We want to thank FOLP for their contribution!

In 2022, the Village to engage in public private partnerships to reinvest in its parks. FOLP has raised the funds for landscaping projects in Turtle Park and

Addison Park, and for a project in Willow Park that includes replacing the fencing, expanding the playground and updating the basketball courts.

The Village has continued to work closely with the Flint Park Conservancy on its makeover of Flint Park. We are very excited to be working with them on this ambitious project. During Phase 1, we plan to install a new playground, update the basketball courts, reimagine and restore the tennis pavilion, and replace our turf field.

Continuing the Village of Larchmont's trailblazing environmental initiatives, 2022 marked the first year of the gas-powered leaf blower ban, made possible through the efforts of the Village Board, the Larchmont Environmental Committee, Village staff, and the cooperation of local landscapers. The Village grounds and landscaping contractor has been required to use all electric blowers since 2021, and while not without challenge, is getting the job done at a high level of quality.

In addition, the Village was awarded a New York State Zero Emission Vehicle grant for the purchase and installation of three electric vehicle chargers. One of these charges is currently installed in the Addison Street parking lot, and will be operational by the end of this month. The other two are waiting approval from Con Edison to be installed in front of the Library and on Wendt Avenue at Lot 10. Once these chargers are operational, the Village will review opportunities for additional chargers to be installed in other areas of the Village.

The Village has also maintained its commitment to our environment, by following through on its Green Fleet policy. Operationally, the Village received delivery of its first electric vehicle, which will be used for parking and code enforcement purposes throughout the Village, and approximately half of the Village's patrol fleet are now hybrid powered vehicles. We plan to continue purchasing hybrid vehicles as we replace the older gas-powered fleet.

The Village signed the Mayor's Monarch Pledge through the National Wildlife Federation. By signing this Pledge, the Village has committed to take action in our community to support monarch conservation.

As always, we appreciate all of the hard work of the Village's Environmental Committee. In partnership with the LEC, the Village hosted a workshop for

landscapers on using electric lawn equipment and as part of that workshop, gave away free electric lawn equipment.

The Village also hosted the LEC's Earth Day Celebration in Constitution Park on Saturday, April 23rd. We had a fantastic roster of tables and an electric car demo through Nissan New Rochelle, electric bike demo through 10538 Bicycles, and the MHS Bee Team.

The Village and the LEC promoted the Sustainable Westchester GridRewards program. The LEC also participated in the second annual tri-municipal Repair Cafe, hosted by Town of Mamaroneck and co-sponsored by the LEC and the Village of Mamaroneck Committee for the Environment.

With the help of the LEC, the Village provided support and educated residents about the Environmental Bond Act Resolution.

Lastly, the LEC assisted the Village in winning 4 separate NYSERDA grants. We received 3 grants of \$5,000 each plus a fourth grant of \$10,000.

We had plenty to celebrate in our business district this past year! The Village's partnership with its local business community, including the continuation of Larchmont al fresco, outdoor dining permits and special events, ensures the continued success of our merchants and restaurants. We also welcomed a record number of new businesses to our Village in 2022, showing the strength of our business community.

We held 9 ribbon cuttings for new businesses, including:

- Ani Ramen
- Atelier Modern
- Baked in Color
- Billy & Pete's Burger Bar
- Bistro Le Steak
- Dot Dot Dot
- La Vie Est Belle Librarie
- Lincoln Glenn Gallery
- ProClinix

We hope to be able to schedule a few more in the coming months: Blue Stone Café, The Dressed Pretzel, the newly renovated Manor Deli and for Stephanie's Kloset's 12 year anniversary.

It's clear that our vacancy rate is at an all time low and most of our storefronts are filled with vibrant and exciting businesses.

You also may have noticed that many of our businesses along Larchmont Ave near Boston Post Road have undergone a bit of a facelift! This is thanks to One Larchmont, and its director Melissa Manice. She has worked with the Village, and businesses and landlords in our downtown to improve signage and building facades. We can't wait to see the finished product at Corriander, as well.

1912 Palmer and the Centro building on Chatsworth have been completed and are open for business. Both buildings are looking great and have truly enhanced the Palmer Ave. side of our business district.

In order to explore more opportunities and other improvements we can make in our business district, the Village Board has committed to engage in a comprehensive downtown study. We have applied for a grant from New York State to assist us in the cost for the project, and hope to be able to begin that process next year.

We had another year of fun and exciting events in the Village. We started with the Spring Egg Hunt in Constitution Park, hosted by the Volunteer Fire Department and the Larchmont Event Team. There was a great turn out, as always!

The Memorial Day Parade is another Village favorite and this year we were happy to have former Trustee Carol Herman serve as our grand-marshal.

We had our second annual Larchmont Music Festival in Flint Park – what a fantastic day filled with great performances. And then continued the fun with our summer concert series in Constitution Park.

We had our annual Sprint to Flint event, which is always an exciting event for kids and adults.

Heading into the fall, we participated in the annual Tri-Municipal 9-11 Memorial event to honor all of those lost on that terrible day.

We held our annual Larchmont Day event, and had a record turnout! The following day, we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the laying of the Village Hall corner stone. As part of the celebration, Ned Benton gave a fantastic presentation about life in Larchmont 100 years ago. We dug out the original time capsule placed inside the corner stone 100 years ago and we created our own time capsule, which we buried just outside of Village Hall. Please be sure to stop by the Village Hall lobby to see some amazing artifacts from Larchmont's history, including some of the artefacts from the original time capsule.

The Larchmont Arts Festival was a huge success, even though we had to move the date because of the weather, and are looking forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arts Festival next year.

At the end of October, we hosted our annual Ragamuffin Parade – which is always a family favorite!

Lastly, just this past weekend, we celebrated Light Up Larchmont with, which was organized by the Larchmont PBA and Larchmont Professional Fire Fighters Association. In particular I would like to thank Lt. Valentine in the Fire Department and Sargent Calipai in the Police Department for all of their hard work to make Light Up Larchmont a success. This is also the second year in a row the Library and Friends of the Library joined in the fun, hosting crafts for kids and a party on the lawn for adults! Light Up Larchmont is always one of my favorite events.

As we move into 2023, there have been some changes to the Village Board with a new Mayor for the first time in six years and we also have a new Trustee. This Board plans to continue to build on the progress that has been made in recent years, striving to maintain a high level of service, delivered with efficiency and effectiveness. We will continue on with many of the projects we have begun this year, including:

- Reviewing our land use application process, with the goal of improving and simplifying that process for our residents, including looking into new land use software.
- Completing our new and improved Village website. We know that this will be a dramatic improvement over our existing website and improve our residents' ability to receive information and interact with the

- Village. This would not have been possible without former Mayor Walsh, so a huge thank you to her for seeing this project through.
- Continue with investment in Village infrastructure, as well as efforts to continue to modernize operations.
  - Working to complete phase 1 of Flint Park Rehabilitation Project with the Flint Park Conservancy. Once this is completed, it will be a crown jewel of Larchmont, a place for families and children to make new memories with new, safe, updated equipment, fields, courts and structures.
  - Finally, staff is exploring new technology options to update antiquated in-person and paper-based services.

I always feel so amazed when we get to the end of these speeches by how much we were able to accomplish each year. But, as I said at the beginning, it truly takes a Village and we would not have been able to accomplish all of this without an incredible amount of time and dedication from our Village Hall staff, Fire Department, Police Department and DPW, who always go above and beyond. We also depend on our many volunteers who serve on our committees and commissions, and who generously give their time and on groups like One Larchmont, the Flint Park Conservancy and Friends of Larchmont Parks who work so tirelessly. Lastly, I want to give my thanks to my fellow Board members, who give so much of their time to the Village and without whom none of this would be possible.