



Westchester County Legislator
PETER B. HARCKHAM
Proudly Serving the 2nd District



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Dear Friends,

Over the past three years we have worked hard to responsibly reduce the size and cost of county government. Spending has been reduced by \$100 million, taxes cut by 2.2% and the county workforce reduced by over 15%.

Yet this year's adopted budget was a step backward. While it held the line on spending and taxes (identical in both regards in the bottom line to the budget I voted for and helped to craft in the Committee on Budget & Appropriations) it borrowed too much for operating expenses, funded over \$5 million in patronage at the expense of professional county workers and cut investments in important programs that help keep people working and contributing to our economy and off of costly mandated social services.

Thankfully, at my urging, funding for some of these initiatives has been restored and I will continue to fight for investments that have proven to save money in the long run. Responsible, structural reductions in the cost of county government were necessary, but unwise cuts to investments that save you money in the long run are penny wise and pound foolish.

Sincerely,

Pete



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2013 Newsletter



Peter B. Harckham

District 2 ~ Bedford, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers

Groundbreaking Hydrofracking Waste Ban Passed

Protecting Westchester's Drinking Water

The Westchester County Board of Legislators has passed groundbreaking legislation, sponsored by County Legislator Pete Harckham, which will protect the county's fragile drinking water supplies from the dangerous impacts of hydrofracking waste disposal.

In other parts of the country, the brine, the liquid that is highly concentrated with salts and naturally occurring but highly dangerous radioactivity, (both a severe threat to drinking water) are sold or given to municipalities to use on roadways for dust control or as a de-icing agent. Further, the chemical waste from pressurized hydrofracking has been trucked for disposal to wastewater treatment plants that are not designed to treat such dangerous chemicals. In both cases, pollutants have found their way into drinking water supplies.

Said Harckham, "With hydrofracking being contemplated in counties just west of here, the risks were far too great to allow fracking waste into Westchester. Not only is our drinking water at stake, so is the drinking water for eight million New Yorkers."

The law applies to all roads in Westchester and all sewage treatment plants, both public and private. Penalties for violations can include fines up to \$25,000 and or 30 days in jail.

Said Harckham, "we needed to be serious about this legislation. Just one infraction could imperil our drinking water for generations." ■



Major Repairs Slated For Ward Pound Ridge

\$8 Million for Roads & Buildings

Help is coming to Ward Pound Ridge. In January, the Westchester County Board of Legislators approved two bond acts totaling over \$8 Million dollars to address the crumbling roads, poor drainage and aging buildings in the park. Roughly half will go to repairing roadways, parking areas and stormwater management while the remainder will go to repairing failing lean-to's, barns, office, maintenance facilities and visitor's center.

County Legislator Pete Harckham, whose District encompasses the park, said "These improvements are a long time in coming. Ward Pound Ridge is one of Westchester's most cherished parks because of its natural splendor. These capital improvements will ensure

that the next generation will be able to access the beauty of our park."

The improvements are part of the County's five-year capital plan for the parks system. Harckham worked with the County Executive and the Parks Department to advance the improvements. Delaying the effort was design work needed for state mandated stormwater management measures and phosphorous reduction call for by the enhanced MS - 4 regulations. Said Harckham, "given the proximity to the Cross River and the Cross River Reservoir, the Parks Department had to be meticulous in its stormwater management planning."

The Work is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2013. ■

Holding NYSEG & Con Ed Accountable After Superstorm Sandy

String of Reforms to Emergency Planning

Westchester County Legislator Pete Harckham, working with other elected and OEM municipal officials, with the support of Governor Cuomo, brought about a string of badly needed reforms to how the utilities will plan for emergency situations in the future. Said Harckham, “The utilities response to Sandy was by all measures unacceptable. After having worked through three prior storms with them, it was though they forgot all important lessons learned.”

Harckham, along with his colleagues, met with senior officials from the utilities to review failures and to insure implementation of preventative measures in the future, including embedding ‘make safe’ crews with local highway departments to speed road clearing, institutionalizing lists of critical infrastructure by municipality and pre training local liaisons so they will have a working knowledge of each municipalities roads, critical infrastructure and circuitry.

Added Harckham, “We can’t prevent natures’ furry, but we can hold our utilities to a much higher standard of preparedness for when storms strike.” ■

County Board Passes Legislation to Facilitate Police Mergers

Saves Taxpayers Money, Enhances Public Safety

The Westchester County Board of Legislators has passed legislation, co-sponsored by County Legislator Pete Harckham, that revises the County Charter to remove barriers and enables local municipal police departments to more easily merge with the Westchester County Police, both saving taxpayers money and enhancing public safety.

Under prior law, the county Department of Public Safety could contract with a municipality for specific policing duties. With this law, the county may now provide total delivery of police services.

Said Harckham, “by eliminating duplicate administrative and command and control structures, taxpayers save money. Public safety is enhanced because of the additional resources the County Police

can immediately bring to bare.” This outcome was quantified in the Ossining merger.

Harckham added, “officers like the mergers too because it gives them more specialties to learn and more room for advancement.”

Any Inter Municipal Agreement must be negotiated and then mutually approved by both the County Board of Legislators and the municipality’s governing body. ■



▲ Speaking at the Mount Kisco Senior Center

Local Development Corporation Passed Into Law By County Board

Low Interest Financing For Not For Profits – Northern Westchester Hospital Center Approved for \$49 Million for Operating Suites

The Westchester County Board of Legislators, working with the County Executive’s Office, passed legislation creating a Westchester County Local Development Corporation (LDC) to issue bonding obligations that act in the public interest and help generate capital expansion projects spearheaded by county not-for-profits. One of the first issuances approved was \$49 million in low cost financing for Northern Westchester Hospital Center to con-

struct new, state of the art operating suites.

Said Harckham, “The final legislation insures appropriate oversight and transparency for taxpayers, and offers our not-for-profits a tool that can empower them to grow, expand and to create jobs both in the short term and the long term.”

Financing or refinancing of financial obligations through the LDC is at no cost the taxpayers of Westchester. ■

Federal Courts Fault Astorino Handling of Federal Housing Settlement

CDBG Funds at Risk, Penalties Could Follow

Two Federal courts have ruled against County Executive Rob Astorino’s handling of the implementation of the federal fair housing settlement. On May 3, 2012 the district court ruled that the county was in “unambiguous breach” of the settlement as a result of the County Executive’s 2010 veto of legislation passed by the Board of Legislators that would prohibit source of income legislation. The settlement agreement specifically calls for the County Executive to “promote” such legislation. Additionally, on April 2 the Second Circuit affirmed the district court’s ruling and stated, “the county violated the consent decree.”

Facing the threat of personal contempt ruling by the US Attorney, the County Executive finally reintroduced the Source of Income legislation, that he previously vetoed, to the Board of Legislators. As of this writing, the Board has passed the legislation out of two Board Committees with very minor modification. Said County Legislator Pete Harckham, “It is sad that it took a federal contempt threat to prod the County Executive



to do the right thing. It is deplorable that in Westchester County we can say to a veteran ‘thank you for fighting in Afghanistan, but you can’t live in my building because you pay your rent with a disability voucher.’”

Further, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is withholding \$7.4 Million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding from Westchester Municipalities because the County Executive has not adequately submitted an approved Analysis of Impediments to Fair & Affordable Housing in Westchester as required by both CDBG and the housing settlement. This funding is used by municipalities and not for profits for housing and infrastructure projects in primarily low-income areas. HUD has also directed Hurricane Sandy re-

lief funds to be disbursed by the state instead of the County.

Said County Legislator Pete Harckham, “despite the County Executive’s statements to the contrary, the Analysis of Impediments is not outside the ‘four corners’ of the document, it is the underpinning of the settlement”. Harckham added, “It is my hope that the County Executive will turn away from his bellicose, intransigent stance and begin to work collaboratively with the federal government to fully implement the terms of the settlement so we can move forward as a county.”

The settlement also called on the county to build 750 units of fair and affordable housing. To date, the county is on schedule and on budget with its target benchmarks. ■



▲ Speaking at the Elizabeth G. Butler Angel Foundation’s Art Against Abuse

◀ Celebrating 110th Anniversary of the Bedford Hills Volunteer Fire Department