

An E-Newsletter From Woodbury Town Councilman James Skoufis

Your Woodbury!

December 2011

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

I hope you and your family had a wonderful Thanksgiving and best wishes for a happy holiday season.

Always,
James



Woodbury Government

---> Congratulations to Tim Arone, Lyn Prestia, and Rob Weyant, who are, respectively, Woodbury's two new Councilmembers and new Highway Superintendent; they will all take office at the start of January. Additionally, Amidee Haviland, Carlton Levine, and Pete Stabile have given many years of combined service to making our town a better place - it was a pleasure working with each of them and I wish nothing but the best going forward.

---> You may have recently read in the papers that the Village of Kiryas Joel et al have sued the Town of Woodbury, Village of Woodbury, Woodbury Planning Board, and Woodbury's Building Inspector. Their main point of contention is over the density allowances (number and type of buildings in a given area) in Woodbury's Comprehensive Plan. Make no mistake that this is an incredibly serious set of claims that KJ is leveling against us. To quote their lawsuit's petition:

"The Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendments create a fiction of comprehensive planning that arbitrarily, capriciously, unlawfully, and unconstitutionally fails to accommodate, and in fact excludes, the local and regional Hasidic Jewish population in Southern Orange County from living and freely practicing their religion in Woodbury."

I and others believe this and their other claims are totally baseless. Simply put, Woodbury controls Woodbury's density allowances - not KJ - and we are fighting to make sure that that right is preserved just as it is in every other municipality in New York State.

---> Without question, the traffic on Route 32 and elsewhere by Woodbury Common is a major issue, especially during the high shopping season. In light of a lot of concerns coming to a head recently, it's important we all first know the facts (and, in the process, please don't shoot the messenger). First, Route 32 is a state road - the Department of Transportation, not Woodbury or any other entity, maintains Route 32; this includes plowing, repairs, and, yes, traffic light management. Additionally, state troopers - not the Woodbury Police - are hired by the mall for traffic control. Finally, a major Route 32/Thruway project has been approved by the state that would help mitigate the traffic issue by creating a ramp from the mall onto the Thruway, preventing the need for cars to first exit onto Route 32. Until a couple weeks ago, this project was set to begin in 2013 - we have recently received word, however, that this start date may well get moved back to 2017.

---> What we can do: first, given the amount of revenue that the Town of Woodbury provides the state through sales

tax, it is simply unacceptable to me that our Route 32/Thruway project be delayed - Woodbury Common is one of the single largest revenue sources in the state and for them to deny our local residents long-overdue quality of life aid is outrageous. County Legislator Roxanne Donnery and I have plans to meet with state officials to lay it all out on the table and try to persuade them that this project needs to happen and needs to happen on time. In the meantime, a petition is circulating town requesting that local residents be given more attention in the traffic control process - if you would like to sign, please call 845-928-2411. I'll be sure to keep you updated as things progress.

Woodbury Calendar

---> December: Both the Highland Mills and Central Valley Fire Companies have begun their annual Christmas tree sales - if you have yet to get yours, this is a great way to support our local volunteers. Trees are available on Thursday and Friday evenings from 6:00-9:00pm and all day on the weekends until 9:00pm - free delivery is offered for Woodbury residents. Bring your tree stand and an exact cut will be made. Finally, wreaths are also available while supplies last.

---> December: Bryan's Dog House, Woodbury's newest eatery, is now open for business. They are located at 20 Smith Clove Road in Central Valley, next to the firehouse, and are open from 11:00am-8:00pm every day. It's important we support all of our local businesses; if you know of a new one coming to town, let me know and I'll promote it in a forthcoming newsletter.

---> December: The Port Jervis train line re-opened on 11/28 - Woodbury residents can resume taking the Harriman train into New Jersey and NYC.

---> Saturday 12/3: Santa Claus is coming to Woodbury. The Central Valley United Methodist Church will host their 9th Annual Breakfast with Santa from 8:00-11:30am. Come visit with Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Elves and enjoy a delicious breakfast in the Fellowship Hall, located around back of the church at 12 Smith Clove Road. The event is free to all.

---> Sunday 12/4: The choir of St. Patrick's Church will participate in the 52nd annual performance of the Christmas section of G.F. Handel's famous Messiah. The concert will take place at 3:00pm at the West Point Cadet Chapel - admission is free, however, guests are urged to arrive early to allow ample time for parking and security check-in.

---> Saturday 12/10: The Woodbury Parks' Annual Holiday Party will be held at the Senior Center in Highland Mills from 4:00-6:00pm. There will be refreshments, crafts, entertainment and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Event is weather permitting.

---> Saturday 12/31: If you're going out in Orange, Sullivan or Rockland to celebrate the New Year, please make sure to not drink and drive. Dana Distributors is once again sponsoring Alert Cab this New Years Eve - when you're ready to go home, simply let restaurant or bar staff know and they'll call Alert Cab to pick you up, free of charge, if you live within ten miles. Finally, I wish you all a very happy and healthy new year.

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