

## **From the Desk of Mayor Paul Ehrbar**

Budget continued:

While going through the budget process, the Village Board discussed, at length, the possibility of conducting a revaluation of village properties, including both commercial and residential properties. Over the past number of years, commercial and residential property owners have been filing for property tax reductions, resulting in legal expenses for the village and at times unfairly moving tax obligations to different segments of the Village population. In order to bring this process under control, the Board, over the past year, held lengthy discussions with both Standard Valuation Services and Haberman Associates regarding the possibility of doing a reassessment. A number of villages throughout Nassau County have gone through this process with positive results. While this process is expensive (approximately \$225,000) in the end, Village expense dealing with court litigation should, for the most part, be greatly reduced. Most importantly, more equitable distribution of property tax assessments should be realized by all property owners. During negotiations with Standard Valuation Services, we were able to negotiate payment over three budget years in order to lessen the financial impact of this expense.

As part of the revaluation process, the village expects to pass a Homestead Law, which, once put in place will stabilize the commercial-residential tax ratio. Currently, commercial property owners pay approximately 25% of the total tax obligation. A few years ago this obligation was closer to 30%. By establishing the Homestead Law the commercial property owners tax obligation, for the most part, will remain at or close to 25% and in effect, stabilize the tax ratio between residential and commercial properties.

This brief synopsis touches the surface of the issue. In order to fully inform our property owners, at our regularly scheduled meeting of July 18, a full length presentation will be conducted by Matt Smith (Standard Valuation Services) and his associates. Questions and comments from the public are encouraged, as an informed and educated population will help the Village move through this process. I ask that residents attend this meeting so as to best eliminate confusion and/or misinformation regarding this important issue. As noted, the end goal is to ensure an equitable property tax to all village property owners. The Village Board is anxious to provide as much detailed information possible to the public. As we move forward, ongoing information will be provided at meetings, through this column, and through the Village web site.

On a separate issue, traffic safety remains a major concern. Third Precinct Police Officers have been issuing moving violations throughout the Village. I was recently approached by a resident complaining about receiving such a ticket for failing to stop at a stop sign. The driver's argument was that there were no other cars in the vicinity (except the Police vehicle which went unobserved) and that he was only a block from his home. His argument fell on deaf ears. I expect all to follow safe legal driving patterns throughout our Village. Children, seniors, joggers, young

families strolling and others walk around our village regularly and should be able to proceed without fear for their safety. I continue to preach this topic but I need help to accomplish my goal of safer streets. The Police provide motivation but the entire population of this great Village of Williston Park must get on board to accomplish this goal. All drivers, Please Slow Down and observe traffic regulations. "Together we can make a difference".

Continue to enjoy the beautiful summer weather with your family.