

**Village of Hastings-on-Hudson
Board of Trustees**

**Annual Report
to the
Village Residents**

2010



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March 9, 2011

Fellow Residents,

I am pleased to submit for your review this Board of Trustees' Annual Report, describing our initiatives and projects in 2010 as well as providing an indication of what lies ahead. This is a report that we distribute every year as part of an effort to keep residents informed about the Board's activities.

I became mayor two years ago, bringing two new trustees to the Board. We have since divided the work of the Board among all the trustees. We're individually responsible for pursuing a specific set of initiatives, while collectively responsible for the normal course of business like budgetary oversight, personnel, and regulatory changes.

As a result, I have asked my fellow trustees to report on the progress of their initiatives this last year. You will find their (and my) reports on the following pages. We've continued to enjoy considerable success:

- **Waterfront**

This year has built on the success of the previous year. A final building was demolished, continuing to open up views shielded for over a century. More importantly, the clean-up has begun, with substantial work underway on the southern third of the site. Trustee Quinlan provides details on what was done and lies ahead on page 3.

- **Downtown**

The highly successful Friday Night Live series continued, becoming a village institution. We've set up a Tourism Board, that's already set up a website aimed at day-trippers. Directional signage has been designed and will be installed shortly. We've worked with a revitalized Chamber of Commerce on a number of new initiatives, and Trustee Walker describes this and other work in her summary starting on page 6.

- **Sustainability**

New green building code in the works, a new focus on recycling, a hybrid bus, changes to our laws and other successes are detailed in Trustee Jennings' report on page 10.

- **Volunteers and Budget**

A new budget process has changed the way we create and review the budget. More on this, and our volunteer committees, in Trustee Armacost's report on page 12.

- **Other**

And I cover the \$2 million commitment won from BP, the ongoing struggle to address our deer overpopulation, the success with Verizon, our Comprehensive Plan, successes in shared services, and an emphasis on communications on page 14.

It continues to be a privilege and honor to work on behalf of our fellow residents, in concert with our dedicated Village staff. I hope that you do not hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns or ideas – or a helping hand, if you would like to volunteer. We are always listening.

Peter Swiderski

Mayor@hastingsgov.org

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Trustee Quinlan's Annual Report for 2010

Trustee Quinlan is focused on promoting remediation efforts around the 42 acres that constitute most of our waterfront. While we are blessed with a waterfront with remarkable views and location, portions of it are among the most PCB-contaminated land in the Northeast and will require a very expensive and lengthy clean-up. His report below covers the steps that Trustee Quinlan has pushed to move this critical process along. If you want to hear more, please feel free to reach out to him at trusteequinlan@hastingsgov.org.

BP/ARCO SITE

(the 28 acres on the northern portion of the waterfront)

a) The Status of the Decision Making Process

The meetings to review the modified feasibility plan submitted to DEC by BP/ARCO have been completed. These meetings were attended by Mayor Swiderski and Trustee Quinlan, the Department of Environmental Conservation, BP/ARCO, our engineering consultants Malcom Pirnie and Riverkeeper consultants. The purpose of their meetings was to establish a senior-level protocol for collaboration and communication between the parties to advance the selection and implementation of a remedy for the remediation of this hazardous waste site. (The primary contaminants are PCBs, copper and lead.)

Going forward in 2011, BP/ARCO will submit its response to DEC comments to its original submittal for the alternatives for the cleanup of the waterfront in May of 2011. This response will hopefully be a compromise between the parties as to the alternatives that are acceptable to all parties and technically possible to ensure a safe cleanup for the remediation of the site.

b) The Status of Early Remediation of the Site

The efforts to remove DNAPL, a form of PCB that is quite dense and for lack of a better term, gooey, is continuing in a limited manner on the BP/ARCO property. They now have 4 working wells in the Northwest corner of the property that are approximately 40 feet deep and are recovering 5-6 gallons every six weeks throughout 2011. BP/ARCO is designing more efficient pumps and wells, and in 2012 they plan to have 8 more effective working wells in full production to increase the removal of DNAPL.

c) Demolishing old structures

One of the two remaining brick buildings on the site was demolished (Building 51) after it was declared unsafe by the Fire Inspector and our Building Department. The remaining building (Building 52) is undergoing an engineering review to determine its stability.

TAPPAN TERMINAL SITE:

(14 acres of the southern portion of the waterfront: 8 acres owned by Mobil/Exxon; 6 acres owned by Uhlich Color Group, with Chevron also a responsible party)

a) Summary of activity to date

This portion of the waterfront is listed as a State Superfund site and primary contaminants include chlorobenzene , petroleum and dyes. A record of decision (ROD) was issued by DEC in September of 2006, which requires (first) excavation of grossly contaminated soil containing petroleum and dye contaminants then (second) pumping air into the soil and trapping escaping vapors and then (third) covering the sight with soil cover. Chevron and Exxon have begun the full remediation of their sites. They have excavated the sites and set up dewatering facilities.

b) Next Steps in 2011:

In the first 3 months of this year, both Mobil/Exxon and Chevron should complete the excavation of grossly contaminated soil. Mobil/Exxon will have removed approximately 500 cubic yards of petroleum contaminated soil. Chevron will have removed approximately 1,100 cubic yards of dye and solvent contaminated soil.

Following the soil excavation a ground water treatment system is expected to be installed by the end of 2011. In 2012 the ground water treatment system is expected to be operational. After the contaminated soil is excavated and the ground water treatment system is operational, a two foot soil cover will be placed over the entire site.

Trustee Walker's Annual Report for 2010

Trustee Walker has focused on a range of actions to promote downtown revitalization and growth. Her report below covers the many activities undertaken over the past year, including the popular Friday Night Live series, and describes the year ahead. If you want to hear more, please reach out to her at trusteewalker@hastingsgov.org.

GOALS FOR THE DOWNTOWN

The following goals were identified in my 2009 Downtown Action Plan:

- Make our downtown a community gathering place and cultural destination through events and exhibits.
- Attract visitors to Hastings from neighboring towns and beyond by working with other Rivertowns to transform the area into a regional tourist destination.
- Improve the appearance of the downtown by enforcing the new “Design Guidelines for the Central Commercial District” and ensuring the cleanliness of the downtown.
- Improve the parking situation, particularly for downtown merchants and employees.
- Install better directional signage to help visitors find the downtown, and the resources and parking it offers.

The Board is in the process of adding new goals and strategies through the Comprehensive Planning process. These will be prioritized in the coming months and we will work to implement them over the next two years. These include:

- Enhance the number and quality of downtown public spaces so that they support community gathering and outdoor performances.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation to and throughout the downtown.
- Create a Historic District to preserve historic character and specific landmarks in the downtown.

YEAR-END ASSESSMENT

During this period of economic hardship, small downtowns have particularly suffered and Hastings is no exception. Over the last two years, the Board of Trustees and Village staff have worked proactively with the Chamber of Commerce and local business owners to try to ensure that our downtown businesses not only survive but thrive. Empty storefronts have been a sad sign of the weak economy, yet we are all pleased to see that many vacant spaces in Hastings have been filled over the last year with successful new restaurants and shops. Hastings residents are enjoying our monthly Friday Night Live events and supporting our local businesses, and our downtown is becoming a destination for people from outside our community.

Here is a progress report and a strategy for the coming year:

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

We are thrilled that Friday Night Live is becoming an exciting and eagerly anticipated monthly fixture in the downtown. Our goals in creating Friday Night Live were to make Hastings' downtown into a vibrant destination for residents and visitors by showcasing our local creative talent and providing opportunities for the community to gather. Thanks to the participation of so many talented Hastings residents, we were successful in our first full year.

Next steps:

- Step up our fundraising efforts to ensure the economic sustainability of FNL.
- Work with the Hastings Village Arts Commission to enrich and extend the creative offerings beyond Friday Night Live.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Veterans of Foreign Wars to make improvements to the VFW Park so that it functions as a real Village Square for public gatherings. I am extremely excited that the Chamber has offered to finance and build a gazebo in the park that will be used as a stage for performances, and a gathering place for events and picnics.

PROMOTING TOURISM

We have teamed up with Dobbs Ferry's and Irvington's Boards of Trustees in an effort to attract more outside visitors to the Rivertowns. Focusing on the historic Old Croton Aqueduct trail that links our three villages, the new Rivertowns Tourism Board (RTB) will promote the walking and biking opportunities it offers, as well as the area's fascinating history, great Hudson River views, shopping, fine dining, and spa amenities, all easily reached from the city by Metro North.

Next Steps:

- Launch a Rivertowns Tourism Board website with maps and historic information to attract travelers who like to walk.
- Launch a tourism services directory sponsored by local businesses.
- Erect and maintain travel kiosks in strategic locations near the South County bike trail and the Old Croton Aqueduct.

IMPROVING PARKING

With the assistance of Police Chief David Bloomer and Village Manager Francis Frobel, the Board of Trustees created 12 additional metered, on-street parking spaces in the downtown last year. In addition, prepaid metered spots for merchants and downtown employees have been designated in outlying areas and are indicated by an orange band around the meter pole.

Next steps:

- Promote the prepaid parking permits to downtown employees.
- Seek additional on and off-street parking spaces.
- Improve on-street parking turnover.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

A package of directional signs has been designed to guide visitors to the downtown shopping district, as well as the Metro North Station and the waterfront. The Board has dedicated funds to the effort, and the Village is now seeking approvals from state and county agencies. We hope to install the signs in the spring.

Next steps:

- Install directional signs.
- Develop a kiosk concept to display a downtown directory along with notices about upcoming events.

DOWNTOWN APPEARANCE

The Board approved the “Design Guidelines for the Central Commercial District” that were prepared by the Architectural Review Board. This thoughtful document provides design standards for the renovation or new construction of entire buildings in the downtown, as well as building components, such as facades, storefronts, signage and awnings. The guidelines will simplify the ARB approval process by clearly stating the aesthetic goals for the downtown, and should help to preserve the small town character and to stimulate commercial activity.

In addition, the Board has been actively working with the Chamber of Commerce in their “Clean It Up!” campaign to improve the cleanliness of the downtown. While it is the responsibility of property owners and their tenants to clean and maintain their sidewalks, the Village is striving to assist them by removing gum and regularly cleaning the public spaces.

Next steps:

- Investigate creating a Historic District in the downtown to help preserve important village landmarks.
- Increase participation of property owners and tenants in cleaning sidewalks, and continue to dedicate Village staff to steam cleaning and litter removal.
- Provide recycling receptacles in strategic locations in the downtown.

Trustee Jennings' Annual Report for 2010

Trustee Jennings is focused on promoting a sustainability agenda within the Village government and across our town. He is pursuing multiple efforts, including guiding a program that will green up our building code, improving recycling, and setting a range of initiatives and efforts across a range of issues. His annual report is below.

The following goals were announced by the Board of Trustees on April 7, 2009:

- Make Hastings a more sustainable and resilient community via policy and regulation, education and facilitation.
- Make village government a model of sustainable policies and practices.

This past year's (2010) Initiatives were:

- Reinforce public commitment to sustainability goals and initiatives in village planning
- Green the Government: - enlist staff ideas and support in green initiatives
- Begin enactment of sustainability oriented laws and regulations
- Strengthen public education and sustainability outreach efforts
- Increase recycling and reduce solid waste disposal

Longer Term Initiatives currently under discussion and consideration are:

- Regional consolidation and cooperation
- Street lighting and pool lighting
- Household composting
- Development of a renewable energy infrastructure for the future

Progress and Accomplishments in 2010

In 2010 we made substantial progress on the initiatives summarized above. In April the Board of Trustees officially adopted a Village Climate Action Plan. This has served as a roadmap for the Greening of Hastings. The Comprehensive Plan, which was completed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee in 2010, and will be adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2011 strongly commits the village to sustainability goals as well. Here is more detailed listing of accomplishments in various sustainability-related areas of the village.

The Village Board has made Hastings' commitment to energy conservation and climate change adaptation official, public and binding.

- Hastings has incorporated significant sustainability commitments in the village Comprehensive Plan
- Hastings has joined the NY State Climate Smart Communities program.
- Hastings is helping review and revise the Greenburgh Emergency Plan
- The Conservation Commission has been reorganized and officially charged with responsibility for pursuing the Village Climate Action Plan.

Legislative and regulatory measures that will lead to energy conservation and GHG mitigation have been enacted.

- A village ordinance banning use of Styrofoam and related products on village property and at village functions has been adopted.
- Significant progress has been made in developing revisions to the village building code incorporating green building standards following codes from the International Code Commission.

Village staff and volunteers have focused on sustainability issues in village governmental operations.

- Coordination between the Conservation Commission and the village Staff has been established.
- A “Green Team” made up of village staff from all departments and functional units has been created and will begin training and activities in 2011.
- Progress has been made in making the village fleet more energy efficient.
- A Hybrid van has been purchased and is in operation for village activities.
- An electric utility vehicle donated by BP/ARCO has been put into service by the School District for buildings and grounds operations.

Steps have been taken to increase Municipal Energy Efficiency.

- An LED street lighting demonstration project is in progress in the area around Village Hall.
- Steps have been taken to improve energy efficiency of government buildings (Village Hall, Library, Community Center).
- Thermostats are being managed so that heating and cooling is reduced
- Village staff and employees have been provided with information and support concerning energy efficient practices.
- Incandescent bulbs have been replaced with compact fluorescents.

Improvements has been made in the Village Waste Management System and Practices

- Provisions in the Village Code dealing with solid waste management policies and practices have been reviewed, consolidated, and updated in accordance with municipal best practices.
- Educational materials for the public have been developed and disseminated that suggest sustainable behaviors to reduce the disposal of material into the waste stream.
- Educational materials for the public have been disseminated to increase and enhance the village recycling program.
- Increased user fees for commercial disposal of yard waste have been enacted.

Improvements have been made in the Village’s Storm Water Management Regulations

- The Village Stormwater Management Plan has been revised and updated to conform with the latest state standards.

Trustee Armacost's Annual Report for 2010

Trustee Armacost has taken the lead in helping to make our Village budget more transparent and introduce processes to enable us to pinpoint areas of potential cost savings. As a result we were able to pass a very lean 2010 budget. She has also been responsible for our Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees and has been working on streamlining processes, ensuring that we are fully tapping the expertise and creativity of our current members and identifying and mobilizing additional volunteers. If you want to hear more or have an interest in volunteering for a Village activity, please reach out to her at trusteearmacost@hastingsgov.org. The section below covers her activities.

A. Goals

1. Budget:

- Increase transparency
- Find areas of cost savings
- Initiate top down budgeting (during fiscal crisis)
- Encourage culture of cost consciousness

2. Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees:

- Identify and mobilize volunteers and tap the expertise and creativity of community
- Rationalize and streamline laws governing Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees

B. Progress on Goals

Increase Budget Transparency and Identify Cost Savings

- Reviewed Village budget process and made recommendations to ensure greater transparency. Requested data is presented in form of budget vs. actuals so as to identify potential cost savings as well as consistent under budgeting. Ensured lean but prudent 2010 budget that responded to fiscal constraints tax payers and municipalities are facing caused by recession.
- Initiated top down budgeting by Board of Trustees for 2011 budget process with a suggested cap of 4% on expenditures prior to Board presentation and discussion. The goal is to begin the budget discussion at the Board level after Department Heads have already made extensive cuts.
- Throughout the year encouraged a culture of cost consciousness and financial self-sufficiency for all entities approaching the Board of Trustees on finance related questions.

Recruit Qualified Candidates for Volunteer Service to the Village

- Identified Village Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees that had members who were missing or whose terms were expiring. Created new application forms, solicited applications, collected and examined CVs to establish qualifications of candidates, and made recommendations to the Board for new appointments. During 2010, 39 persons were appointed or re-appointed to Village Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees.

Rationalize Village Laws Governing Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees

- Identified legal provisions pertaining to Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees that were not being enforced (such as term limits) and introduced resolutions to address these issues.
- Identified the need for, and scope of, procedural guidelines to govern finance related matters that affect Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees. A task force will be set up to create these guidelines in 2011.

Mayor Swiderski's Annual Report for 2010

I have chosen the area of budgeting, as well as the ad-hoc projects that don't fall neatly into the group above. This has included tackling the deer issue, restarting negotiations with Verizon, dealings with surrounding communities, and other sundry items. I cover a few below. If you are interested in an issue, always feel free to contact me at mayor@hastingsgov.org

Building 52 Commitment

As part of the negotiations with BP Arco over the disposition of the buildings on the waterfront, I secured a commitment from BP Arco for \$2 million dollars toward the remediation and renovation of Building 52. The first application of those funds was to finance a prominent consulting engineer firm (Robert Silman Associates) to review the structural integrity and general condition of this one remaining building on the waterfront.

Budget

The budget passed last year with an increase under 5%. What remains clear is how little play there is within the current structure and format given that our essential services are at minimum staffing. Furthermore, it's clear how vulnerable we are to increases in the mandated costs imposed by New York State (pensions and health insurance). This budget cycle remains an exceedingly difficult one, with union negotiations, mandatorily increased pension costs, and necessary capital expenses. Even with this, we have asked the Village Administrator to develop an operating budget that will keep property taxes as low as possible, and will cap any necessary increase at a maximum of 4.5%.

Ongoing efforts to push for shared services has resulted in an ongoing shared asphalt repaving program with all other Greenburgh villages, as well as shared cleaning services. Savings to date have been tens of thousands of dollars.

Deer

The white-tail deer overpopulation problem we face in Hastings is one that endangers public health through Lyme's and other diseases, degrades our environment through the destruction of the understory in our woods which reduces diversity and the next generation of trees, endangers drivers and finally, damages gardens and property. While this is a seemingly intractable problem that no community with our density or geography has successfully addressed, we've explored several avenues to addressing the overpopulation. After careful consideration, we examined the issues around a cull and determined that it was not a sustainable solution to the problem, demanding culls every year or two to keep numbers down. We are pursuing an approach that relies on delivering natural formulations known as immunocontraceptives that will stop reproduction and bring the numbers down over time. We are working with national experts in this approach, but it may be a while before all approvals are granted.

Verizon

We finally came to terms with Verizon and concluded negotiations over a stalled contract for FIOS TV. The terms were not as favorable for the Village as I had personally hoped to secure, however the value of providing residents with a choice overcame some concern over the richness of terms.

Comprehensive Plan

A volunteer-led effort to devise a comprehensive plan for the Village wrapped up in 2010 and the Board of Trustees held a series of line-by-line reviews of this detailed 130-page document. This effort consumed great energy and time from the eleven volunteers on the Committee and we are grateful for their civic contribution to the Village's future.

Communication Issues

I've also focused on ensuring the community remains informed via a steady series of emails from me which focus on topical events, developments in the Village and historical references where appropriate. We've worked to greatly improve our outreach to the Village during emergency events, and our daily updates during the storm events of last March provided information and guidance to many residents discomfited by the storms. I also worked with a resident to create a professional-quality periodic news show called "The Current" that interviews local residents on topical events. (Six episodes have run and can be accessed on www.whoh-tv.org.)