

The Town of Ballston's second annual State of the Town address was held by the Town Supervisor on Thursday evening, January 19, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall on Charlton Road.

PRESENT: Tim Szczepaniak Supervisor
John Antoski Councilman
Kelly Stewart Councilwoman
Carol Gumienny Clerk

ABSENT: Bill Goslin Councilman
Chuck Curtiss Councilman
James Walsh Counsel

Supervisor Szczepaniak called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Szczepaniak stated 2016 was a great year for the Town. He feels a lot has been accomplished.

TOWN FINANCES

Supervisor Szczepaniak stated the Town is under the tax cap and all audits for 2012 through 2015 are complete. He hired a budget officer/financial administrator that greatly improved the budget process. The Town Board will have a new financial monthly report. Ballston is one of only two towns in the county that does not have a town tax or highway tax.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The enhancement of the Route 50 corridor consists of:

- Integrating business growth with the agricultural sector.
- Establishment of a heritage corridor that may include an agricultural/town museum and heritage site and agriculture market hub along with neighborhood business, while preserving and enhancing the agricultural brand for the Town. The new casino is coming. We want people to stop and shop in our Town.
- Establishment of Town Center hub – Lakehill Road/Route 50 intersection that would include mixed use retail/residential and neighborhood business.
- Possible historic “market street” district along the Kingsley Road/Lakehill Road south to Blue Barns Road.
- Review alternatives for Route 50/Lakehill Road.
- Market the area to varied business segments: B&Bs, independent restaurants, unique shops and grocery. These establishments will arrive with the addition of water and sewer infrastructure.
- Attention is needed to the comprehensive plan and zoning to ensure the ability to establish such business types is in progress.

SEWER AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN:

- Plan adapts to the eventual extension along the Route 50 corridor and beyond, with particular attention to the land – use controls within the agriculture district.
- Long term goal: the removal of Ballston Lake from the State's list classifying it as an impaired water body.

AGRICULTURE EDUCATION:

- Inclusion of bio-technology, more specifically green bio-technology. This would promote healthy living in our Town and help us trend toward non-GMO and organic foods.
- These steps that are taken will support our town's desire to have a next generation of farms and other agricultural business professionals.

PARKS AND TRAILS:

- Working with the County and State to fund and build sidewalks that would provide safe passages to schools and increase access to fitness trails (Ballston Lake trail would likely be extended south to Blue Barns Road, past Fireman's Grove.)
- Working with neighboring towns and county on the interconnections of on/off road trails and signage.

- Develop park lands for passive/active enjoyment and fitness along with “village greens” within the business district.
- Anchor Diamond Park at Hawkwood is a 247 acre park donated to our Town through the Frank Schizdick estate.
- Active recreation. The Parks and Rec Committee will look for a potential location.

NEW BUSINESS POTENTIAL:

- CVS has the approval for their project. The fire department will benefit.
- USA Gas Station is slowly moving forward.
- New medical complex (part of the Schenectady-Saratoga Gastroenterology) across from the post office is currently constructing a 35,000 sq. ft. additional medical building. This will bring approximately 100 new jobs.
- The fire apparatus maintenance vendor on Route 50 is complete.
- The expansion of Stewarts on the northern end of town has been completed.
- Stewarts is in contract talk with the white building plaza on the corner of Route 50 and Lakehill Road.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

- The Emergency Plan has been updated and presented to the Town.
- Emergency training and drills will be planned and interfaced at the county level.
- There are grant funding opportunities.
- The Committee received full Board support during the budget cycle.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 2017 Budget under tax cap
- Town Financials - Major improvement with financials including budget process
- Major grant received for Ballston Lake Sewer Project
- Ballston Lake Sewer Project Design Contract is completed
- Route 50 Sewer Project Review has been initiated
- Carpenters Acres Sewer Project is in progress.
- \$200,000 Microenterprise Grant received - 1st ever
- Purchased new Western Star Highway Truck under budget
- Hired new Building Inspector, Stormwater Mgmt. Officer, and part time office staff
- Succession planning to fill vacancies - A lot of experience “walked out the door”.
- Contracted zoning consultant to update comprehensive plan (in progress)
- Implemented Monthly Recognition Program
- Conduct monthly staff meetings
- Highway contract signed
- Brine system researched and purchased by Highway Superintendent
- Continue with two water sources (SCWA/Glenville)
- Volunteers - could not exist without them
- Town, Planning & Zoning Boards and ALL Departments continue working hard for YOU!!!

The success of teamwork is best stated by Henry Ford:

“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success”

Supervisor Szczepaniak opens the floor to questions and/or comments.

Rob Davis of the Emergency Management Committee stated an intricate part of volunteers is to keep new ideas and a momentum going for the Committees.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Gumienny
Town Clerk