



Town of Clifton Park

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Supervisor Phil Barrett's 2017 December Recap

Traditionally as a year ends, government and business spend their time wrapping up projects and closing out accounts. The last two weeks of the year are not spent on executing new initiatives. That was not the case however in the Town of Clifton Park.

Following passage of the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the Town received several inquiries from residents requesting the ability to make their 2018 Property Tax Payments in 2017. The reason for the request was speculation that paying their 2018 property tax bill in 2017 would allow homeowners to claim the deduction on their 2017 taxes.

I had never received a request of this type during my time in office. After receiving the initial requests however, the Town began to research the validity of this option with Saratoga County personnel. When it was established that the acceptance of early payments was possible, the Town of Clifton Park made the decision to accept the payments as soon as possible.

The Saratoga County Board of Supervisors approved the tax information and Warrants for each municipality during the monthly County Board of Supervisor's Meeting held on December 19th. The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors then certified the information. Clifton Park then requested the tax bills as soon as possible from the County of Saratoga which generates and prints the tax bills for mailing. From that point forward, it was a race to organize, review and prepare over 14,800 bills for payment by Thursday, December 28th when Clifton Park would open its doors at 8AM to begin accepting early payments. Our timely decision to accept early payments of the County Tax Bill, allowed us to disseminate information and provide people with the opportunity to plan ahead.

When I arrived at Town Hall on the morning of December 28th at my normal time of 7:15AM I was surprised to find Town Hall already full of cars with residents waiting to pay their taxes. We immediately opened the doors of Town Hall and began taking tax payments so that residents did not have to wait outside. That first day, nearly 1,000 residents visited Town Hall. Some residents had brought their newspaper or a book thinking they would be waiting for over an hour. Instead, it took only five minutes to complete the process. The following day nearly 500 more residents came through Town Hall.

We will always make every effort to implement policies that accommodate requests from Clifton Park residents. I am particularly proud of the dedicated employees of the Town of Clifton Park that executed the plan flawlessly. For over two days, employees of different departments worked and even volunteered their time to ensure that every resident that wanted to pay their taxes early were able to do so in a timely and efficient manner.

I imagine that during the past frigid month of December, most residents were not thinking of a walk outside on one of the many trails and multi-use pathways the Town has added since 2000. However, we at Town Hall

were doing just that when Clifton Park was awarded a grant from New York State's Economic Development Council for a new trail connection.

Specifically, the grant award will allow for the installation of a sidewalk along the north side of Route 146 located within our Town Center. The timing of the award turned out to be quite advantageous. During 2017, the Town had been working toward a clean air grant and official designation through a New York State program. Due to the funding source for the grant award, the work toward Clifton Park achieving the clean air designation will be a complementary effort.

The new Route 146 Sidewalk Path will be located within the Northern right-of-way boundary of New York State Route 146 connecting the Tallow Wood and Northcrest Residential Communities to the Town Center and Shenendehowa Central Schools Campus. A landscaped area will exist between the path and edge of road pavement, providing a distinct and safe distance for non-motorized users from vehicle traffic on the roadway travel lanes. In effect, this expanded network connects neighborhoods and parks, while providing easier access to businesses, healthcare services, service organizations and government facilities.

The Clifton Park Senior Community Center was alive with the sound of music as various groups including the Karigon Elementary School Chorus, Senior Chorus and the Swing Band put on individual holiday concerts for the benefit of our members and the greater community. Our Home for the Holidays monthly community dinner featuring Salty's Pub and Bistro was a hit and we look forward to our "Jumpin' into January" monthly dinner coming up on January 22nd.

It's been a busy year for the Senior Community Center since the Town assumed operational responsibility in late December of 2016. There have been the physical improvements such as new paint, lighting and carpet in addition to the return of popular events such as the monthly community dinners and day trips. We continue to grow with exciting new activities planned for 2018. Check them out by picking up a copy of the monthly newsletter at the Senior Community Center or by signing up to have an electronic copy e-mailed to you when you renew your membership in January.

Finally, the month of December saw the completion of the first year of operation for the solar array installed on the capped landfill at the Town Transfer Station. The solar power system was installed at no cost to Clifton Park through a competitive New York State Energy Research and Development Authority grant program. The one-megawatt system, which includes more than 3,000 solar panels, first began to generate energy on December 2, 2016. The power generated by the solar array, is delivered to the general electric grid through a partnership with National Grid. The Town receives credits for the energy, which results in a reduction of energy costs. Overall Clifton Park saved \$49,000 due to solar energy in the first year alone.

As we look ahead to the new year the Town board is already taking steps to further reduce energy costs. Currently, a Request for Proposals (RFP) process is underway to replace the lighting in the Prestige Services Ice Arena with LED light technology. The Town is planning to use a recently awarded \$50,000 grant to pay for this project. Other similar projects are being considered for lighting on the Common. In addition, the Town Board is working toward obtaining ownership of the street lights in Town. This initiative would include installation of LED lighting resulting in significant cost savings in the future for the Town.

Don't forget that Winter Fest is coming up on Saturday, February 10th and be sure to visit our Town webpage at CliftonPark.org regularly for more information or "like us" on Facebook to keep up to date on the great happenings in the Town of Clifton Park.

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