



Volume I Issue 9

Town of Bethlehem e-Newsletter

October 2007

445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054
518.439.4955

www.townofbethlehem.org

Town Board

Jack Cunningham, Supervisor
Dan Plummer, Board Member
Sam Messina, Board Member
Kyle Kotary, Board Member
Joann Dawson, Board Member

October Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held at the Town Hall unless otherwise indicated

Planning Board
Tuesday, 2, 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals
Wednesday, 3, 7:00 p.m.

Town Board
Wednesday, 10, 6:00 p.m.

Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation
Monday, 15, 7:30 p.m.

Industrial Development Agency
Tuesday, 16, 8:00 a.m.

Planning Board
Tuesday, 16, 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals
Wednesday, 17, 7:00 p.m.

Waterfront Advisory Committee
Tuesday, 23, 5:00 p.m.

Town Board
Wednesday, 24, 6:00 p.m.

For agendas, please see:

www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/agenda/agenda.asp

See the Town, Seniors, Public Meetings and Parks and Recreation calendars on the Town's web site:

www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/news/showTownCal.asp

Supervisor Cunningham presented the 2008 tentative budget at the September 26, 2007 Town Board meeting. The \$37.6 million spending plan maintains existing services, for all four operating funds. Additionally, the plan provides for the expansion of service efforts for the mandated storm water management program and for the outreach services offered by the Senior Services Department.

The budget process began in August, when the Town Board held a series of meetings to meet with department heads to review their operations, priorities and funding requests. Each department was also asked to identify opportunities that might generate revenue streams including fees for service and the availability of grant funds. The town also looked for opportunities to automate and streamline operations, in order to enhance services while managing costs.

Departments have continued to aggressively control spending, as evidenced by a 3.8% increase in total expenditures, despite significant increases in key commodities that are used to provide town services, such as asphalt, road salt and chlorine.

Anticipating that the Town would need to draw upon fund balances to help control taxes during a time when the local economy was impacted by declining mortgage tax revenue and flat sales tax receipts, the plan draws upon the Town's savings in order to limit the blended tax rate increase to 2.5%. The proposed increase means that a home assessed at \$200,000 would see an increase of about \$12 on the 2008 property tax bill.

A summary of the tax dollars to be raised is as follows:

	2007	2008	2008 Est. Tax Rate	Est. Tax on a \$200,000 home
General	1,217,400	1,324,000	0.422664	84.53
Highway	3,744,000	3,889,000	1.241513	248.30
Water	1,800,000	1,770,000	0.556999	111.40
Sewer	1,563,000	1,568,000	0.308860	61.77

Note that these estimated taxes are only a part of the total January property tax bill. Your bill will also include taxes set by other jurisdictions, such as Albany County and other special districts such as fire and ambulance services.

Residents may view the proposed budget on-line on the Town's web site. A copy of the budget is also available for review at the Town Clerk's office and at the reference desk at the [Bethlehem Public Library](#). The Town Board will hold a public hearing at the October 24, 2007 meeting at 6:15 p.m., and welcomes the opportunity to hear from citizens about the proposed financial plan for 2008.

Any questions about the proposal may be directed to Jack Cunningham or to Judi Kehoe, [Town Comptroller](#).

The Department of Public Works will be doing some work around town. Improvements to the water distribution and sewer collection systems in the areas of Borthwick Avenue, Nathaniel Boulevard, Stratton Place and McMillen Place are underway. Work will be done daily from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The work is expected to be completed by November 1st, 2007. Another project, making repairs to the Sanitary Sewer Collection System along Route 9W between the Petrol gas station and the Glenmont school, is expected to be completed by mid-October. Information about these and other projects are posted on [the Town's web site](#). Along with information on Stormwater Management and Drainage issues, the Department of Public Works now has information on Septic Systems on [its Town web pages](#).

On Sunday, October 21 from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m., the 17th Annual Halloween Hay Day will be held at Elm Avenue Park. Come out in costume for hayrides, trick or treat bag decorating, face painting, games and much more. This event is FREE for the whole family!

On September 10th, Bethlehem Town Hall sponsored a blood drive that surpassed its goal. Enough units were collected to impact 165 lives. Thank you to all those who donated. If you were unable to attend this blood drive, other local drives are noted on [the Town Calendar](#) as well as [the Red Cross web site](#).

Fall Back! The end of Daylight Savings Time has changed this year from late October to early November. Please remember to turn your clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 4 as well as replace your smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries at the same time.

Economic Development and Planning News

The Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) Makes Its Findings and Recommendations

As the Town approached the two-year anniversary of the adoption of its first-ever Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board established the Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) at its meeting of April 25, 2007. In accordance with the Comp Plan, CPOC was established to assist the Town Board and help guide the Comp Plan implementation effort. CPOC held several committee meetings as well as a public meeting to obtain comment on its draft report. The detailed CPOC report was accepted by the Town Board at its meeting of September 12, 2007 and the report is available through [the Town's Agenda and Minutes page](#) on its web site and hard copies may be obtained from the Department of Economic Development and Planning in Town Hall. CPOC is currently preparing a summary report that will be distributed to all Town households during October.

The CPOC report makes findings with regard to Comp Plan implementation progress to date and also makes a variety of recommendations for further implementation of the plan. The following individuals are current members of CPOC:

Town Supervisor Jack Cunningham
 Councilman Kyle Kotary
 Director of Economic Development and Planning George Leveille
 Deputy Director of Economic Development and Planning Mike Morelli
 Town Engineer Erik Deyoe
 Town Highway Superintendent Gregg Sagendorph
 Parks and Recreation Administrator Nan Lanahan
 Planning Board Chairman Parker Mathusa
 Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Mike Hodom
 Former BPAC Member Howard Engel
 Former BPAC Member Patty Salkin
 Citizen Representative Karen Beck
 Citizen Representative Nicholas Behuniak

DEDP Directed to Undertake the Development of a Farm and Open Space Protection Program

A Tier II recommendation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Town Board in August 2005, is for the Town Board to consider the development of creating a farm and open space protection program. At the August 22, 2007 Town Board meeting the Department of Economic Development and Planning (DEDP) was directed to provide a recommendation to the Town Board regarding an approach for the development of a farm and open space protection program.

At the September 12, 2007 Town Board meeting, the DEDP recommended a process that is to be conducted by the Department with advisory assistance from the Citizen Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC). Typically, when the DEDP conducts planning studies a study advisory committee of individuals who represent interests, expertise, and stakeholders in the study area is established. Under the DEDP approach, the CACC would fulfill the role of the study advisory committee. The CACC's Existing Recreation, Conservation, Education, and Municipal Lands Map memorandum submitted to the Town Board at the August 22, 2007 Town Board meeting stated that the CACC stands ready to provide citizen advice about policies or planning. In this regard, the CACC is available to serve as an advisory body to the DEDP during the entire course of the Open Space Plan development.

The first milestone in the process will be the development of a scope of work for the development of the Open Space Plan. The DEDP anticipates a three to four month process (October to December 2007) and two to three CACC meetings being required to complete the scope. Among other things, the scope will include an outline of tasks to be undertaken, an implementation schedule, a budget and recommendations regarding consulting services, and a description of public meetings and potential topical areas. The DEDP will present its recommended scope of work to the Town Board in early 2008 and would be prepared to commence the formal planning process immediately thereafter.

Please note that the farm and open space protection program will be referred to as an Open Space Plan. It appears this is only to be used in the interim as a working title since a more inclusive title would be developed following the completion of the scope of work.

CACC Corner



In an effort to provide information about the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC) to Town residents, news of our activities will now appear in the monthly e-Newsletter in a series called "CACC Corner". Currently, we are providing articles that discuss open space protection funding opportunities and tools that are applicable to the Town of Bethlehem. The articles are derived from the CACC's, "Open Space Protection Programs – Funding and Tools Report to the Town Board", prepared in October 2006 and can be found at the bottom of the following web page:

<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/AdvisoryComs/advCACC.asp>. Drafting and refining the report was a careful and methodical process driven by many exchanges of ideas and facts; and therefore, each topic article will appear as originated in the Report. This month the Corner discusses Not-for-Profit Land



Trusts.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) & PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS (PACE)- PART A

A conservation easement is a deed restriction a landowner voluntarily places on their property to protect resources such as productive agricultural land, ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, historic sites or scenic views. They are used by willing landowners ("grantors") to authorize a qualified conservation organization or public agency ("grantee") to monitor and enforce the restrictions set forth in the agreement. Conservation easements are flexible documents tailored to each property and the needs of individual landowners. They may cover an entire parcel or portions of a property. The willing landowner usually works with the prospective grantee to decide which activities should be limited to protect specific resources. Agricultural conservation easements, for example, are designed to keep land available for farming.

A variation of this easement could include a "mutual use agreement," where a willing landowner grants access over or through his or her property to enhance or accommodate uses granted through an easement. This access could be in exchange for money or it could be in exchange for maintenance. The arrangement would allow both uses to co-exist. These easements should be reviewed with legal counsel to

assure full understanding by the landowner prior to its execution.

In general, agricultural conservation easements limit subdivision, non-farm development and other uses that are inconsistent with commercial agriculture. Some easements allow lots to be reserved for family members. Typically, these lots must be small (one to two acres is common) and located on the least productive soils. Agricultural conservation easements often permit commercial development related to the farm operation and the construction of farm buildings. Most do not restrict farming practices, although some grantees ask landowners to implement soil and water conservation plans. Landowners who receive federal funds for farm easements must implement conservation plans developed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Most agricultural conservation easements are permanent. Term easements impose restrictions for a specified number of years. Regardless of the duration of the easement, the agreement is legally binding on future landowners for the agreed-upon time period. An agricultural conservation easement can be modified or terminated by a court of law if the land or the neighborhood changes and the conservation objectives of the easement become impossible to achieve. Easements may also be terminated by eminent domain proceedings, result in higher easement values. However, the Agricultural Districts law may limit eminent domain in agricultural districts.

Generally, PDR programs target a specific area of a municipality that qualifies for participation in the program, depending on program goals. Landowners in this area may voluntarily submit applications for sale of their development rights and these applications are evaluated based on a rating system developed for that purpose. For instance, size of parcel, productivity, location and other factors would be considered. Often, PDR programs try to preserve a "critical mass" of land. Because preserved lands can and do attract development at their edges, it is important to have zoning in place that minimizes this potential and provides appropriate setbacks and buffers.

A handful of counties and Towns in New York have developed PDR programs to augment State Farmland Protection and open space protection funds, including Dutchess and Saratoga counties, the Towns of Warwick and Wilton and the City of Saratoga Springs, among others. The Town of Wilton has a joint PDR program with The Nature Conservancy. Scenic Hudson has a PDR program that is preserving a critical mass of farmland along the Hudson River.

Note to Reader: The discussion of these tools has been separated into two parts so as to maintain the text as it originated in the Funding Report. Part A (as provided in this issue) defines and discusses the procedures, while Part B, which will be provided in the November e-Newsletter issue, discusses the tax and financial matters of this tool.

CACC Corner is an ongoing series of articles by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC) discussing its recent activities. Look here each month for a new conservation topic of interest.

**Town Offices Will Be Closed on
Monday, October 8**



Did You Know?



Roundabout Information Available

The New York State Department of Transportation has a web site dedicated to information and education regarding roundabouts. Please visit <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/main/roundabouts>

The booklet, "A Citizen's Guide to Roundabouts", is available in the Senior Services Office at the Town Hall.

Senior Services News

Bethlehem Food Pantry Gets Needed Help From Delmar Florist

Residents of Bethlehem had a unique opportunity on September 5th and 6th to meet each other and develop new friendships when Delmar Florist hosted an FTD Good Neighbor Day event. Over 100 dozen flowers were given away in exchange for a donation to the Bethlehem Food Pantry. Barbara Ostroff, the owner of Delmar Florist, asked that each person who picked up a dozen flowers share them with others, thus spreading goodwill and friendship in the community. "We hope this worthwhile project helped create a friendlier, more caring and compassionate world, starting right here in Bethlehem", said Barbara. In addition to Delmar Florist, other sponsors of the event were Marty DeLaney of the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Jerry Pittz of Edward Jones Investments. The Bethlehem Food Pantry benefited from a large variety of canned goods, personal care products and monetary donations.



Community Churches Contribute Funds for Vans



Community Ministers (from right to left) Darius Mojallali, Dirk Geiser, Ginnie Ogden, Dave Gericke, Dave Corlett and Frank Wray present a check to Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc. President Charles Tobin for \$9,000, while BSP board member Alan Lewis, Bethlehem Senior Services Director, Karen Pelletier and Bethlehem Town Supervisor, Jack Cunningham, look on. The money was donated at the July 15th Community Ecumenical Service in support of Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc.'s drive to raise \$100,000 to replace two vehicles in the Senior Transportation fleet.

To see all of the interesting activities, events, programs and services provided by Town's Senior Services department, pick up a copy of the bi-monthly Senior Services newsletter at the Senior Services Department, Room 110 at the Town Hall, on Senior Services transportation vehicles or on the Town's web site at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/depServices/seniorServices.asp#Brochures> .

Some programs may have age restrictions, many do not (for example, Food Pantry, LawHelp/NY, volunteers, Caregiver programs), please call for specifics, 439-4955. In order to participate in any programs or to volunteer, an [Intake Form](#) MUST be filled out first. Intake forms are available in the Senior Services office or [on the Town's web site](#).

Department of Public Works News

Borthwick Avenue Area Utility Work



The Town of Bethlehem Department of Public Works will be making improvements to the water distribution and sewer collection systems in the areas of Borthwick Avenue, Nathaniel Boulevard, Stratton Place and McMillen Place. Work will be done daily from 7:30AM until 3:30 PM. The work is expected to be complete by November 1st, 2007.

Throughout this project, there may be times when the water will be shut off to your property. When required, we will make every effort to notify you prior to the water being shut off to your home.

Once the water is turned back on, you may notice some discoloration in your water, which could result in staining of laundry. Run water until it clears before washing any laundry.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Town of Bethlehem Call Center @ (518) 439-4955.

Route 9W Utility Work

On Monday, September 24, 2007, the Town of Bethlehem Department of Public Works began making repairs to the Sanitary Sewer Collection System along Route 9W between the Petrol gas station and the Glenmont school. This work is expected to take approximately 2 weeks to complete. During this time you will notice construction equipment, other utility vehicles and some possible traffic congestion in the area.



If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the Field Operations Division at 439-4955 ext.1706.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this necessary repair!



Did You Know?

A Swimming Pool Permit is required to remove a pool

Concert Series to Benefit Fund-raising for Senior Vans

"Music In the Key of Friendship", a series of three concerts to benefit Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc.'s fund-raising efforts to replace two vans, wraps up on the 26th.

The third concert, on Friday October 26, 2007 features the Pacemakers, an eight piece local dance band that plays "swing music", WWII songs, plus some country western tunes.

Bethlehem Senior Projects, Inc., a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, partners with the Town of Bethlehem Senior Services Department to supplement programs and services for older residents within the community. For more information, call 439-4955 x 1168.



Town Clerk's Office News

Register to vote by mail: Last day to postmark - October 12 and received by Board of Elections no later than October 17, 2007.

Absentee Ballot Application: Last day to postmark application - October 30, 2007

Dog Park Permits Price Reduction As of October 1, 2007 permits may be obtained for \$15 for the period October 1 through December 31, 2007. Permits are good for the calendar year, January through December.

Deer Management Permits Last day to apply - October 1, 2007 for the Game Season Year 2007-08. Watch for announcement of first come-first serve notice in newspaper around November 1, 2007.

Parks and Recreation Department News

Fall Lifeguard Positions Available

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently looking for lifeguards for two morning aquatic programs, Adult Water Workout and Lunchtime Lap Swim. These programs meet at the High School pool Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. – 12 noon through mid-December. For further information, please contact Jason Gallo at 439-4955 x 1604 or email at jgallo@townofbethlehem.org.

Aquatic Fitness Instructor Needed

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently looking for an experienced aquatic fitness instructor to lead our Adult Water Workout program. This program meets at the High School pool Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. through mid-December. For further information please contact Jason Gallo, at 439-4955 x 1604 or email at jgallo@townofbethlehem.org.

Fall Program Registration

We are currently accepting registrations for the following programs that begin this month: Create Waves, Introduction to Competitive Swimming, Scrap Booking Workshop, Tiny Tot Swim, Toddler Splash and Water Works. To register for any of these programs, please call 439-4955, option 3. Inside the Parks & Recreation brochure you will find the complete fall schedule of programs, activities and special events. The fall brochure can also be accessed thru the town web site at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/images/parks/2007FALL.pdf>.

New Pavilion at Maple Ridge Park

The Parks and Recreation Department has a new pavilion at the Maple Ridge Park that is available for rental. Town of Bethlehem residents may call 439-4955, option 3, to check availability this fall. The pavilion seats approximately 50 people and has a large hibachi-type grill.

Special Events

17th Annual Halloween Hay Day



On Sunday, October 21 from 1-3:30 PM the 17th Annual Halloween Hay Day will be held at Elm Avenue Park. Come out in costume for hayrides, trick or treat bag decorating, face painting, games and much more. This event is FREE for the whole family!

SCREAMS – Corn Maze

Students Craving Really Exciting Activities at the Middle School (SCREAMS) will be going to the Liberty Ridge Corn Maize on Friday, October 26. Registration open to all students grade 6-8 who reside in the Town of Bethlehem or the Bethlehem School District. Flyers will be distributed at the Bethlehem Middle School in early October or visit the town's web site at



<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/parks/parksPgms.asp#SCREAMS>.

See the fall brochure, on-line at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/images/parks/2007FALL.pdf> or the Parks and Recreation web calendar at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/news/showParksCal.asp> for more information

Did You Know?

“Community Caregivers” provides free short-term assistance by trained volunteers for acute and chronically ill people of all ages. The program can provide short term assistance with such services as shopping, assistance to family caregivers, meal preparation and delivery, light housekeeping, home repairs, yard work and visits to the homebound. For information, call the Community Caregivers at 218-1167.

Police Department News

Bethlehem Police Implement TraCS System (Traffic and Criminal Software)



The Town of Bethlehem Police Department obtained a NYS grant that provided for funding of equipment and training associated with the New York State TraCS (Traffic and Criminal Software) system.

For the past five years, New York State has been continuously improving its traffic ticket and accident reporting system. The old paper-driven system relied on a costly, time-consuming, and inefficient manual process. Timely and accurate data is essential to effective strategic highway safety planning. Prolonged traffic stops place the motoring public and police officers at a greater risk of vehicle collisions. To remedy this, the New York State Police partnered with a coalition of state and local agencies to bring the TraCS system to New York State.

TraCS is an automated data collection computer application used for traffic ticketing and accident reporting from the patrol vehicle.

TraCS increases highway safety by significantly decreasing the amount of time it takes an officer to write a traffic ticket or collect accident report information. The less time officers and motorists spend parked along busy roads, the less chance of accident, injury or traffic disruption.

The system also greatly improves the accuracy of accident and ticket data that police collect electronically by means of drop-down boxes, bar code scanning and automated population of static information.

Government efficiency is enhanced by reducing duplicative data entry by police, DMV and the justice courts, which will save time and minimize errors.

Ticket and accident information can be scanned by the officer directly into the TraCS system from the 2D bar code on the back of driver licenses and vehicle registrations. This scan feature is also very valuable for detecting fraudulent documents because it is so difficult to reproduce a “valid” 2D bar code that will scan properly into the system.

The State Police is the lead agency in New York for development and support of the TraCs system. Jeff Dammeyer and Jean Cunningham, of the Town’s MIS Department, installed the system in all Town patrol vehicles and also integrated the system into the existing Police Records and Justice Court systems. Sgt. Bill Dobbs, of the Albany Police Department, and Deputy Chief Tim Beebe (pictured), of the Bethlehem Police Department, also assisted with the implementation.



At the current time the Bethlehem Police Department is using the electronic ticket portion of the TraCS program and anticipate rolling out the accident module in 2008.

Tax Office Information

Tax Bills Not Yet Paid Have Incurred a Penalty

If your school tax bill was not paid or U.S. postmarked by September 30, you now owe a penalty in addition to your tax bill. When paid in person or U.S. posted (postage meter indicia or foreign postmarks are not acceptable for determining timeliness of mailing) October 1 - October 31, the penalty is 2%. Those remaining unpaid after October 31 are re-relieved on the January Property Taxes and include percentage penalties. Bills cover July 1 to June 30.

Please contact Nancy Mendick, Receiver of Taxes, for any questions or concerns at 439-4955, extension 1177.

Blessing Road at Route 85 closed



Beginning Friday, July 27, 2007, at 9:00 a.m., Blessing Road at Route 85 was closed with the closure expected to last for approximately 8 weeks. A signed detour is in place that uses the Krumkill Road exit of Route 85 and follows Krumkill Road to Blessing Road. Through traffic is not permitted on Blessing Road. See [Community News](#) on the Town's web site for a printable copy of the detour map. Please note, this is a NYS DOT project, not the Town's. For more information on the project, please visit the [Links page](#) on the Town's web site, select Road/Weather Conditions, and then select NYS Department of Transportation - Road Construction. This will take you to the NYS DOT's web site where you can get more detailed information on this, and other, area road projects. Please note: the Bypass project is listed under Region 1, Road Work.

Did You Know?

- If you have a question that may pertain to Town government or operations, you can visit our [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on our web site to look for quick references.



We'd like to hear from you

Let us know what you think of this newsletter. Please use the feedback form on the Town's web site, www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/about/contact.asp

[Click here for a printable version of this e-Newsletter](#)

You are receiving this e-mail because you have subscribed to our e-newsletter. If you wish to be taken off our monthly mailing, click here to [unsubscribe](#).

Town of Bethlehem | 445 Delaware Avenue | Delmar | NY | 12054

web: <http://www.townofbethlehem.org>

disclaimer: <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/includes/disclaimer.asp>