

From the Mayor's Desk...February 2, 2017

It seems many residents are feeling great anxiety about what is going on in the world and especially our nation. While I have little to offer in the way of reassuring words as I share many of these same concerns, I can assure you that Irvington will continue to be the safe and welcoming place it always has been. Closer to home we have two important issues on the front burner that I wanted to ensure you're aware of, as well as an update to the permit parking situation the Ardsley-on-Hudson train station.

Solar Panel Law and Guidelines

The Board of Trustees has been working for months on solar panel installation guidelines for the Architectural Review Board ("ARB") and the associated legislative changes. The majority of the Board of Trustees feels that expanding the availability of solar panels is in the interest of both Irvington residents and the environment. Since recent front-facing solar installation applications have been denied by the ARB, the Board has drafted a local law that exempts the "impact on neighbor character" provision of the ARB law when it comes to solar arrays. The guidelines still include many criteria for the ARB to apply that will minimize visual impacts of the arrays as well as protect character defining structures on individual buildings, but the character of the overall neighborhood will not be considered.

Personally, I am large proponent of solar power and I feel passionately that we should make it as easy as possible for residents to be able to install arrays. Not only is solar power good for the environment, it also allows residents to save a considerable amount of money on their electric bills. Not everyone shares my view. Some of my very respected and thoughtful colleagues have a very strong view that, while they may support solar in general, front-facing solar arrays should simply not be allowed as they are "not attractive." There has been a strong difference of opinion on this issue between the Board of Trustees and ARB. However, despite having a third public hearing scheduled for Monday on the issue, we have not heard from many residents. So, if this is an issue that you care about – please come on Monday or send us an email.

Comprehensive Plan Update

A Comprehensive Plan dictates public policy in important areas like commercial development, land use, recreation and residential housing options. We are very lucky in Irvington to have an excellent Comprehensive Plan from 2003 that has guided us well for over a decade. I am happy to say nearly all of the recommendations from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan have been completed. Additionally, the world has changed in the last 13 years and thus it is time for an update to the plan. So, if you are interested in having a say in how the next decade of development of Irvington proceeds, please get involved in this important project. The first public meeting will be held in Village Hall on Wednesday February 15th at 7:00 p.m. and there will be many other meetings in the next year, so please stay tuned. Our goal is to complete the update by the end of 2017.

Ardsley-on-Hudson Train Station Parking Permits

One of the clearest signs that the NYC area economy has fully recovered from the recent Great Recession is the long waiting list at the Ardsley-on-Hudson train station parking lot. I am happy to report that after a lot of hard work from our Village Administrator's office and the Police Department, we will be issuing additional permits for the first time in several years. We appreciate the patience of residents that have been on the list, but we did not want to issue permits if there was not the expectation that there would actually be open spots for permit holders. Parking is a very fluid issue and we will continue to make adjustments to ensure we are maximizing all available parking.

Dogs and Sugarless Gum

Lastly I wanted to share the unfortunate story of my dog Lucy that, luckily, has a happy ending. Last week Lucy, a Boxer-mix with an insatiable appetite for almost anything, grabbed a bag of sugarless gum off of our kitchen table that had been left there by my daughter who was deep in a midterm studying-related haze. Returning to the kitchen, my wife Keira noticed the remains of the bag and quickly realized that the thief was Lucy who was standing guiltily in the corner, tail tightly between her legs. Keira put Lucy outside believing the contents of the bag might not last too long in her stomach. As she was letting her out Keira remembered reading that the ingredients of sugarless gum, specifically xylitol, can be toxic for dogs. A quick call to the emergency veterinary hospital confirmed her fears and as she brought Lucy back inside the house, she was already showing the effects, starting to lose her balance and eventually collapsing. Making a long story short, Lucy received amazing care at the Animal Specialty Center in Yonkers and she is expected to make a full recovery. For 24 hours though, we were afraid that we were going to lose our furry friend. So, if you have dogs in your house, please consider either keeping sugarless gum well out of reach or make your house a “sugarless gum free house” altogether. Since I was unaware of the poisonous nature of xylitol on dogs, I thought it was important to share the story with you.

I look forward to seeing you around the village and never hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, complaints or compliments.

Brian C. Smith, Mayor
bsmith@irvingtonny.gov