

Town of Hammond Newsletter

Fall 2011 Edition

~ FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR BERTRAM ~



To the Hammond Community:

I received many positive comments on my first attempt at a newsletter that was mailed to you in the spring. Due to that response, I felt it was important to keep you informed on the issues and events that have transpired since that first communication with you. I also feel this line of communication will lead to increased participation in the local government process. An informed public is important to the success of any administration and I am encouraged by the number of residents who appreciate the information they have received and have voiced their support for the progress that has been made since I took office. Please enjoy this Fall Newsletter and feel free to contact me with any questions.

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ADDITIONAL WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS ~

The new Hammond Town website - www.townofhammondny.com - continues to attract positive comments and has provided an avenue for those who prefer to communicate electronically with me. In addition to letting me know your concerns, you can keep track of Town business & meetings. Arrangements are being made to add emails for Town officers. Please take the time to explore the site, as it is continually being updated to better serve you; thank you, Leslie Bass, for your helpful time & efforts in maintaining the site.

MAKING THE TOWN HALL MORE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE ~

A generous grant from the Hammond Free Library will help us install a wheelchair lift in the Town Hall. An additional grant has been applied for through the Justice Court Administration. The Town has also committed funds to the project that will make the library, court & trial area, assessor and code enforcement offices, town and planning board meetings, and upgraded bathroom, all wheelchair accessible.

SINGER CASTLE PUTS HAMMOND ON THE HOLLYWOOD MAP ~

On September 14th, Hammond was invaded by Hollywood as Dark Island's Singer Castle was the setting for a reality TV show pilot called "The Great Escape" which will appear on the TNT Network, possibly in late fall. Bertram Van Munster, co-creator and executive producer of "The Amazing Race," teamed up with Academy Award-winning director and producers Ron Howard and Brian Grazer to create this "Amazing Race"-meets-"Prison Break" competition series. This event is a good example of why we should be aware of the natural resources and possibilities our area holds. The project resulted in a lot of activity and financial opportunities for businesses in our Town and it was estimated to have brought in over \$100,000 to the Thousand Islands Region.



Photo Credit: Ian Coristine
Singer Castle at Night ~ Summer 2011



TENTATIVE BUDGET ~

The Town Board is currently working on the 2012 tentative budget and will be meeting to discuss ways to keep the tax levy as low as possible. In years past we have experienced both planned and unplanned expenses, as all towns do, and we have worked extremely hard to keep the budget balanced. We participate in this decision-making process with sharpened pencils and are very aware that our residents work from tight budgets themselves. A budget hearing will be scheduled for November. **The fund balance has increased from last year and continues to remain stable; present funds exceed \$875,000.**

SALT & SAND STORAGE BARN ~

For the past several months, the Town Board has been dealing with the issue of constructing a salt and sand storage barn. The need for this structure is the result of on-going litigation prior to the time I took office in January, 2010. Accumulated runoff was creating a problem on a neighboring property and the solution was negotiated from an out of court settlement by our Town attorney to build a new storage barn for the future. To protect the safety of our residents, protect our Town from liability and ensure environmental responsibility, the Town Board voted unanimously to begin accepting bids and commence the barn's construction. The contract was ultimately awarded to Aiken Construction with the lowest bid of \$246,000 and will be financed for five years (or less) in order to help keep taxes stable and not deplete the fund balance.

NEW COMMUNITY CLEAN UP SERVICES ~

After listening to the concerns of numerous residents, Highway Superintendent Don Greene and I have looked into re-opening the old Town dump located at the end of the Hyde Road by spring. Residents who do not have the capability of properly disposing of their brush, tree limbs and vegetation (no leaves however) will be given the opportunity to discard these items which can add up throughout the year, especially after storms. This drop site will be available just a few times a year and a schedule will be posted on the website as well as on the bulletin board at the Town Hall. If all works out well, and if there is extra room in the budget, we are hoping to offer curbside pick-up once a year to better serve you.

LOCAL BRIDGE GETS A FACELIFT ~

The bridge spanning Chippewa Creek on Rt. 3 was replaced over the summer and is now open to traffic. The St. Lawrence County Highway Department did another amazing job of completing the project in record time, while raising the level of the bridge almost two feet. This will allow for more boat traffic to pass under it, as well as provide greater accessibility for winter snowmobile traffic utilized by Town residents & snowmobile clubs.



WIND LAW REVISIONS & PROPERTY VALUE GUARANTEE ~

In August, the SLC Planning Board reviewed the changes made to the local Wind Law and approved them with a few stipulations. The Town Board then accepted those changes and final revisions were made. On October 3rd, the Board voted 3-0 to pass Local Law #2 of 2011, which contained revisions to a wind law that will finally provide protection to ALL residents of the community. Each Board member provided their reasoning as to the passage of the law (available at the Town hall and online). The Real Property Value Guarantee Agreement (RPVGA) is still being pursued to protect our residential home values and our Town's most precious assets. At the September board meeting, Town attorney, Joe Russell, told the board that the RPVGA is very close to being completed and once the board approves it, it will be added to the local Wind Law.



BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP FORMS ~

I was very happy to hear about the recent formation of the Business and Economic Development Group of Hammond & Chippewa Bay, spearheaded by two young business owners, Erica Demick and Michael Stock. I feel it is forward progress for our community and strongly support this positive endeavor. I was amazed at the long list of businesses we have in the Hammond & Chippewa Bay area. In an effort to promote this initiative, you will find a complete listing of our area businesses published on the Town website. I encourage anyone with a small business to become involved by registering their business with the group. Currently, the group is developing a website and has other plans to promote local businesses, economic growth & tourism in our area. For further information & to get involved with this effort, email: BusinessAndEconomicDevelopment@gmail.com



DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN ~

Over the years, many of the towns and villages in St. Lawrence County took advantage of the opportunity to investigate their resources and develop a plan or "vision" for their community. This is one thing I have felt Hammond could benefit from, particularly if we want to qualify for future grants and funding for community improvements. To pursue this, I asked the St. Lawrence County Planning Office to provide guidance to the board regarding the options (Comprehensive Plan vs. Community Plan). The board voted to hire the SLC Planning Office to help us develop a "Community Plan" that invites all residents to become involved in identifying our resources and creating a "vision" for Hammond.



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 8TH ~

I encourage everyone to exercise his or her right to vote on Tuesday, November 8th. Polls will be open from 6.00 AM to 9.00 PM at the Hammond Fire Hall. Registration forms & absentee ballot applications are available online from the County Board of Elections.

<http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/BoardofElections/>





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THANK YOU ~

Thank you for taking the time to read this fall newsletter and for the opportunity to serve you as Town Supervisor. I am here to answer any questions that you might have and hope you found this newsletter interesting & informative. As always, feel free to contact me with your ideas on how to improve our Town.

Enjoy the fall season & upcoming holidays with your family!

With Best Regards,

Ron Bertram

Ron Bertram
Town Supervisor



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Fall Edition 2011 ~ From the Desk of Supervisor Bertram

Visit the Town's New & Improved Website!

WWW.TOWNOFHAMMONDNY.COM

Supervisor Ron Bertram

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