

NCVOA FEBRUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

Published by the Nassau County Village Officials Association
Post Office Box 484, New Hyde Park, NY 11040

NCVOA February 2016 General Membership

Tuesday, February 9, 2016- 6:30PM

Westbury Manor **

1100 Jericho Turnpike

Westbury, NY 11590

*****NEW VENUE FOR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING***

WESTBURY MANOR

1100 Jericho Trpk.

Westbury, NY

Cocktails: 6:30pm

Dinner and Presentation: 7:00pm

THE INS AND OUTS OF ASSESSMENT

Come get a better understanding of the assessment process and how it affects our budgets

Guest Speaker

Hon. Steven Corte



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Nassau County Deputy Assessor

"The Assessment Process"

This presentation will include an overview of the Nassau County Assessment System and how it interacts with and impacts Village Assessment Systems. A portion of this discussion will also be dedicated to the sharing of services, information and education to the Village Assessment Departments.

Steven Corte is currently the Deputy County Assessor and is responsible for the day to day operation of this Department, which provides the assessed values for approximately 424,000 properties, which have an approximate worth of 264 billion dollars.

General Membership Meetings Move to Westbury Manor:

The NCVOA Executive Committee constantly evaluates feedback from the member villages regarding the General Membership meetings, particularly pertaining to the venue and programs. After many years at La Marmite Restaurant in Williston Park, a change in restaurant ownership required us to find a new meeting location. This past year we held several meetings at City Cellar in Westbury, where we received mixed reactions from members. As a result of this feedback, the Executive Committee investigated several alternative locations and decided to return to Westbury Manor in Westbury, where meetings were held prior to La Marmite. Westbury Manor is located at [1100 Jericho Turnpike](#) in Westbury, just east of Glen Cove Road. The restaurant has been renovated and provides an environment more conducive to our meeting requirements.

Please remember our February 9th General Membership meeting will be held at Westbury Manor. The reception begins at 6:30 pm, followed by the dinner/program at 7:30 pm.



Barbara Donno

From the President's Desk:

Dear Colleagues:

Just when we were hoping for a mild winter, on January 23, 2016, we were hit with our first major snowfall of 2016. The blizzard-like conditions made it anything but a typical winter storm as it wreaked havoc on the East Coast and Long Island. Our village personnel worked long hours under adverse conditions clearing more than 2 ft. of snow from our roadways, many of which were town, county or state. Once again, this is another stellar example of villages ignoring geographic boundaries to do whatever is necessary to serve residents.

Challenges Mounting

Last month I mentioned we would be facing another year filled with many difficult challenges. They already began surfacing as NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli announced the tax cap for villages with a June 1st budget deadline is 0.012%. This is a far cry from the original 2% tax cap legislation passed in 2011 and basically keeps municipalities and school districts at a zero spending increase for 2016-17. Governor Cuomo continues his relentless assault on local governments as this year's spending restrictions are extremely difficult to achieve, given the rising costs of insurance, equipment, utilities, general overhead and, most likely, new unfunded mandates. While the tax cap fanfare makes for good headlines, it merely is postponing, until later years the inevitable reality of substantial tax increases. Many elected officials across the state believe this inequity will have a more detrimental long-term effect on residents than controlling spending at a consistent 2% annually.

The tax cap is just one of several highly visible and controversial issues. As you know, the LIRR is renewing its three decade-old attempt to build a third rail to run through several villages to the Hicksville station. The governor is championing this project, which has gone nowhere in 30 years. The detrimental impact on several villages is not offset with any facts supporting greater benefits. The demand for reverse commuting has not materialized. Until these projects are driven by facts, we will continue to support our villages and many key state and local legislators in their opposition.

The federal government is the latest to invade Long Island with grandiose and idealistic plans as the Federal Railroad Administration revealed its desire to construct a \$290 billion high-speed intercity rail line that would run through Long Island. The proposed line would run from Boston through Washington by 2040. It would require building two new train tracks extending through Nassau County, to Ronkonkoma, and then under a tunnel under the Long Island Sound to New Haven. Much to our dismay, the proposal had not been discussed with any local elected officials and the January 12th public hearing held in Mineola was the only one planned for Long Island. We will continue to monitor the development of this proposal.

Minority Leader Wants Local Governments to Work Together

I would like to thank Nassau County Legislature Minority Leader Kevan Abrahams for being the guest speaker at our January General Membership meeting. Legislator Abrahams echoed the sentiment of Majority Leader Norma Gonsalves when he told our members he is aware of the issues facing villages and that “each level of local government is a tremendous asset and we need to partner to avoid jeopardizing the County’s quality of life.” Following his presentation, Legislator Abrahams fielded questions from the audience pertaining to problems some villages are having with county services and the legislature’s decision to increase the legislators salaries. . We look forward to having Minoity Leader Abrahams at future meetings.

Learn How to Save Your Residents Thousands in Taxes

Our February 9th General Membership meeting will feature Steve Corte from the Nassau County Department of Assessment. Steve, who also serves as a Westbury trustee, is an expert on tax certiorari issues. He will update us on the current status of the county’s tax assessment and provide valuable advice on how to best protect your village and residents. You will not want to miss his presentation. We are looking forward to hearing Steve at our new meeting location- the Westbury Manor, Jericho Tpke. in Westbury, just east of Glen Cove Road. The meeting at Westbury Manor begins at 6:30 pm with a cocktail reception, followed by the meeting and program at 7:30 pm. I look forward to seeing you February 9, 2016.

Sincerely,

Mayor Barbara Donno,

President

Mayor Responds to Legislature’s Salary Increase:

Susan Lopatkin, mayor of the Village of Kensington, wanted to address the Nassau County Legislature at its December 21, 2015 meeting to express her opposition to the proposed substantial salary increase introduced by outgoing legislator Fran Becker. She waited in the audience over two hours to be called, and left when the public comment period was closed before being called on to speak. The proposed increase subsequently passed.

My name is Susan Lopatkin and for the past 8 years I have been the Mayor of the village of Kensington. I am here today as a citizen of Nassau County (NC), not as an elected official however, dismayed and outraged by the proposal to raise legislative salaries by 90%.

With NC under NIFA control and continual pressure on spending, I find it unconscionable that you as legislators would take this opportunity to propose a 90% raise. And to couple that with a potential 4% annual increase is simply adding insult to injury. Let me tell you what it’s like to struggle within a NYS mandated tax cap of 2%, which this year is down to .12%. It’s pretty tough. I run a small village and my employees work

really hard. One reason is because there is no large bureaucracy to hide behind. I'd love to give them more money because they really do deserve more. But I can't. I think you need a reality check, there is no one who works in a municipal setting who gets a 4% raise, certainly not for a part time position and certainly not annually!!

But the NC budget is different perhaps. In this budget, as an example, you've increased the document recording fees to stratospheric levels. Whereas in virtually anywhere else in the country, the cost to record a new deed is \$25-\$50, here in NC it is now proposed to be \$700. Yes, \$700. This is an incredibly high fee created merely to add revenue to a function that is ministerial and bears no relationship at all to the cost. What other obscene "fees" have been added to the budget, below the radar? Yet, you have proposed enormous raises for yourselves. I would think it is hard for you to justify that.

Did you know the cost of a family plan for health insurance is going up next year to \$1,900 a month? So add that \$23,000 cost to your proposed salaries of \$75,000 and you are at \$98,000 of tax payer cost for a part time job. Doesn't that strike you as over the top? What we need instead is new legislation to bring NC finances under control and provide transparency and accountability to the government that you represent.

I understand that you want a raise—that you haven't had one in many years: I agree, that's a fair point... Go up 5, 10 even 15%. Go up a reasonable, not eye popping number. Be appropriate, be modest and humble as public servants are supposed to be. But for goodness sakes, don't raise your salaries 90%! What is your message to the voters? They are who you represent! By every standard that we can measure this proposal, it is just plain wrong.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider this piece of legislation and amend it to reflect the realities on the ground for people in this county. The raise you seek and the annual increases you want to legislate must be in keeping with both the nature of your job and the state of the county finances. A 90% raise and 4% annual increases are simply not warranted, not here in NC, and not now. Thank you.

[Thank you Mr. Goodwin!](#)

Looking out at the blazing sunshine makes us forget that not too long ago we were straddled with two feet of snow.

How quick we forget. But what we can't forget is that we owe **Roger Goodwin** the NCVOA Emergency Manager a deep debt of gratitude for the yeoman's job of manning the NC OEM direct village telephone lines for a 12 hour period when we were all home enjoying the warmth of our homes and hearths.

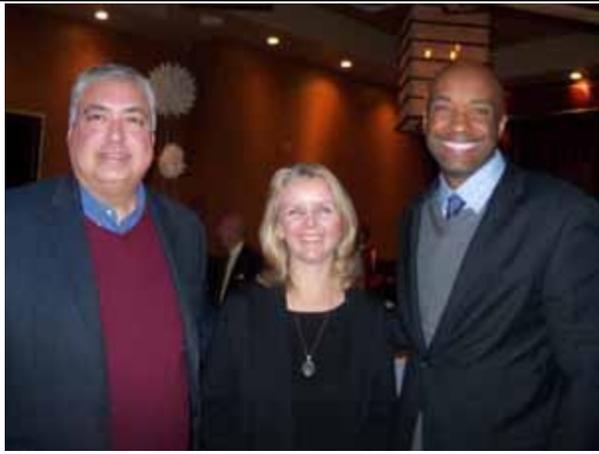
In our next newsletter we will tell how that system works and the need for other concerned citizens to help Roger out in manning the lines when another crisis strikes.

In any event, the Executive Board thanks Roger for a job well done.

January 2016 Meeting Attendees



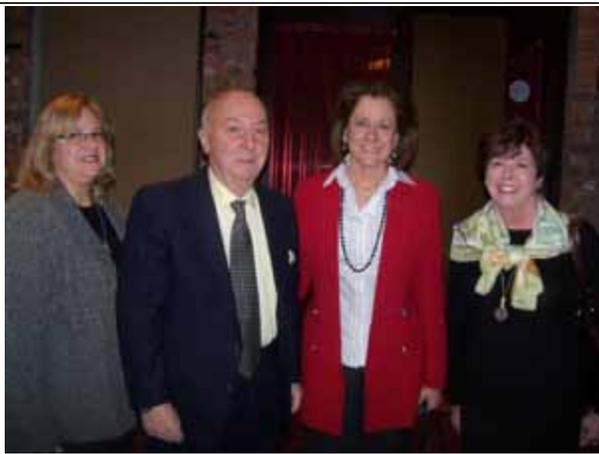
Guest Speaker Kevan Abrahams, Nassau County Legislature Minority Leader, addresses the membership



Plandome Manor Mayor and NCVOA President Barbara Donno with Legislator Abrahams



Freeport Deputy Mayor Jorge Martinez, Trustee Debra Mule', and Legislator Abrahams



Freeport Mayor and NCVOA 2nd Vice President Bob Kennedy, Nassau County Legislature Minority Leader Kevan Abrahams, Plandome Manor Mayor and NCVOA President Barbara Donno, and Old Brookville Mayor and NCVOA 1st Vice President Bernie Ryba



Great Neck Plaza Trustees Pam Markshied and Jerry Schneiderman with Mayor Jean Celender and Baxter Estates Mayor Nora Haagenson



Kennedy Connection - Sea Cliff Mayor Bruce Kennedy and Freeport Mayor Bob Kennedy



Mineola Village Administrator Joe Scalero and North Hills Village Administrator Marianne Lobaccaro

NCVOA Counsel Gary Fishberg, Westbury Trustee Steve Corte, and Westbury Mayor and NCVOA Past President Peter Cavallaro



NCVOA Executive Director Warren Tackenberg, North Hills Deputy Mayor Dennis Sgambati, Westbury Mayor and NCVOA Past President Peter Cavallaro



Old Brookville Mayor and NCVOA 1st Vice President Bernie Ryba with Freeport Mayor and NCVOA 2nd Vice President Bob Kennedy



Old Westbury Deputy Mayor Cory Baker, Mayor Fred Carillo, and Trustee Leslie Fastenberg



Westbury Mayor and NCVOA Past President Peter Cavallaro, North Hills Mayor and NCVOA Past President Marvin Natiss, and Westbury Trustee Beaumont Jefferson



The Last Word:

"Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile ".

Vince Lombardi