VILLAGE OF RYE BROOK
938 King Street, Rye Brook, N.Y. 10573
(914) 939-1121 Fax (914) 939-0242
www.ryebrook.org

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**
Paul S. Rosenberg

July 7, 2014

To My Rye Brook Friends and Neighbors:

I would like to bring you up to date on some issues that your Board of Trustees (BOT) has been working on. I think you will agree that we have had a very busy and productive winter and spring despite the horrible weather!

Before telling you about some of our accomplishments for the past 6 months, let's put last winter into perspective. The winter of 2013-2014 was one of the snowiest ever on record and dropped approximately 57 inches of snow on Rye Brook (a "normal" winter typically produces approximately 27 inches of snow). On several occasions, the Rye Brook Highway Department plowed our roads for more than 24 consecutive hours in order to keep the roads clear of accumulating snow and ice.

Going forward, our top priorities continue to be focusing on zoning code loosening/simplification, protecting our environment and quality of life, as well as ensuring that village government respects every dollar that comes from taxpayers.

We are still making progress with respect to zoning code simplification and making our regulations less restrictive. We are very proud of the recently implemented zoning code changes:

- **Residential Site Plan Review Triggers –** We have loosened the zoning code. In most cases, as long as no variances are needed and the footprint of the structure is not being increased, residents can now increase the size of their homes by up to 50% of the Gross Floor Area without triggering a costly and time consuming site plan review by the Planning Board (as long as the project meets current zoning standards).

- **Shopping Center Zoning –** We have continued to work closely with our village shopping center owners to ensure that they can fill vacancies quickly.

- **Additional code changes in progress –** A joint committee comprised of members from the Board of Trustees, Planning Board, and village staff continues to investigate:
    - Ways to simplify the code to address modifications to single family homes that currently require site plan review by the Planning Board.
    - Code changes that would eliminate reviews by both the Village Board <u>and</u> the Planning Board for certain commercial applications.

**Comprehensive Plan –** In the fall of 2012, the Village of Rye Brook began the process of preparing its first-ever Comprehensive Plan. Although the Village has a long history of planning reports and studies covering a wide range of specific topics, it has never before had in place a master planning document to guide future decisions on development, zoning and capital spending. The primary goal of the Rye Brook Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and improve the overall quality of life for village residents by:

1. Promoting sustainable development.
2. Encouraging a stable and enduring economic base.
3. Providing for safety, health and education.
4. Preserving the natural, cultural, recreational and historic assets of Rye Brook.
5. Enhancing the design of the already-built and natural environment.
6. Advocating for smart-growth design principles in the planning process.

This Comprehensive Plan builds on prior planning efforts and establishes a policy guide for land use within the village.

I am proud to announce that the Rye Brook Comprehensive Plan is complete, and was accepted by the Village Board on June 24th. A copy of the plan is available on our website at www.ryebrook.org. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee for their hard work in helping to put the plan together. In the upcoming months, you will start to see proposed legislative changes as we start to implement portions of the Comprehensive Plan. I would expect that the BOT will start discussing the potential legalization of accessory units in certain residential zones as well as potentially creating an "overlay zone" to encourage "Main Street, USA" development in the area near our commercial shopping center.

**Financial –** The Village continues to be in sound financial shape. Our debt level is very low and our fund balance (savings account) is consistent with our adopted financial policies.

Since my last newsletter, the New York State Office of the State Comptroller has published a *Fiscal Stress Summary Results* for Villages. New York State's local governments are facing a difficult fiscal situation – one that demands continued excellence in delivering services, in the face of declining revenues and increasing costs. This can be a challenging equation for local officials. In recognition of this fiscal reality, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) has developed a *Fiscal Stress Monitoring System* designed to identify municipalities and school districts that are confronting serious financial difficulties and encourage them to strengthen their fiscal position.

The *Monitoring System* acts as an early warning system, and represents a systematic and objective methodology for identifying the presence of stress conditions on a local government. The *Monitoring System* employs two types of indicators: financial indicators, which evaluate budgetary solvency (the ability of a local government to generate enough revenues to meet expenditures) and environmental indicators, which capture those circumstances and trends that are largely outside the locality's control but which have a bearing on its revenue raising capabilities and the demand for and/or mix of services.

Rye Brook did EXTREMELY well with a 0.0% fiscal stress score (and a 22.1% Environmental Indicator). We were one of the very few municipalities in the region to have such a low fiscal stress score. For more information, please visit: www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/fiscalmonitoring/index.htm

**Signature Flight Litigation –** I am proud to report that working collectively with the Blind Brook School District, the County, and the Town of Rye, a settlement has been reached which eliminated the possibility of a large payout by the village and school district to Signature Flight, and will provide guaranteed tax revenue for many years to come. I would like to thank Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino, Westchester Board of Legislators Chairman Michael Kaplowitz, County Legislator David

Gelfarb, Rye Town Supervisor Joe Carvin, and President of the Blind Brook School Board Nancy Barr for all of their tireless efforts on behalf of our village.

**Rye Town Dissolution Study –** Rye Brook has been working closely with the Town of Rye and the Villages of Port Chester and Mamaroneck (representing Rye Neck) to study governance and service options for the Town and whether it makes sense to dissolve the Town of Rye. A prerequisite for the NY state legislature to pass the legislation needed for town dissolution would be for each of the villages and the town itself to pass a resolution called a "Home Rule Request", stating that each municipality is in favor of town dissolution. Rye Brook has always been and continues to be strongly in favor of dissolution of the Town of Rye. Unfortunately, at this point it does not appear that all of the other municipalities are ready to move forward until additional questions are answered. I will keep you updated with respect to future developments.

**Get the latest news from Village Hall –** Need information? We've got it both on line and on social media. Through the village website www.ryebrook.org/alerts you can sign up for meeting and agenda notifications, emergency notifications, village news and other updates. Also, follow us on Twitter @ryebrookvillage and be sure to follow me @paulrosenberg.

**Movie Nights –** Bring your children to our two remaining FREE Friday night movies at 8:00 p.m. at Pine Ridge Park:

- July 18: Lego Movie
- August 8: Scooby Doo- Mask of the Blue Falcon

**Music in the Park –** The village will be hosting two free *Music in the Park* events this summer at Pine Ridge Park. The first event will be held on Sunday, July 13 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and will feature local performers from the organizers *'Arts in Rye Town'* who will perform *'Broadway and Popular Hits from the Decades'*. Residents are encouraged to bring a blanket and lawn chairs. Please check our website at ryebrook.org for additional information and the date of the second performance.

**Rye Brook Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up Weekend –** Rye Brook is pleased to present its first *'Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up'* event. This program is a collaboration between the Rye Brook Seniors, local colleges and students, youth and service organizations and local businesses who are seeking names and addresses for persons aged 60 and over who would like their name placed on a list for a one time Fall Yard Clean up to take place during the weekend of November 1st and 2nd 2014. Volunteers will perform general yard clean-up duties: raking and bagging leaves, sweeping porches, sidewalks and driveways and bringing light refuse to the curb for pickup. If you are a Senior Citizen living in Rye Brook and would like to put your name on our list, or if you would like to join our team of volunteers, please contact Seniors Coordinator Liz Rotfeld by phone at 939-7904 or via e-mail at erotfeld@ryebrook.org.

**Free Summer Fitness Programs** – Residents in Rye Brook have the opportunity to take advantage of morning exercise 5 days a week at the Anthony J. Posillipo Community Center located at 32 Garibaldi Place. General Fitness and Strength Training will be held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9:30 am. Treat your body to an aerobic workout concentrating on building muscle mass and stronger bones! Program begins July 1st and ends August 14th. EnhanceFitness is a proven senior fitness and arthritis management program that improves your endurance, strength, balance and flexibility. It reduces your arthritis symptoms with safe, low impact exercises led by certified instructors in a relaxed atmosphere. If you are new to exercise – this class is just for you! Program begins Monday, June 30th and ends on Friday, August 15th. Mondays at 11 a.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:15 a.m. To register please call the Rye Brook senior center at (914) 939-7904.

**Did you know?**

- **Sanitation** – You don't have to bring your trash cans to the street the night before your scheduled pick-up. The Village provides garbage pick-up outside your garage door. Either let your sanitation driver know that you will be leaving your trash cans by your garage door, or contact our Public Works department at 914-939-0753. Also, this year's sanitation calendars are available at www.ryebrook.org/sanitation.
- **Sign up for Street Trees –** You can sign up to have a street tree planted in front of your home. For more information, please call 914-939-0753.
- **Donate a book to the PCRB Library –** You can donate a book or DVD to the Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library in honor of or in memory of someone. Visit amazon.com and search for the Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library 'Wish List'.
- **Illegal Sump Pumps** – During very heavy downpours, the sanitary sewer system could back up due to illegal sump pumps being hooked up to the sanitary sewer system and adding large amounts of extra water to the system. Please ensure that your sump pumps are not connected to the sanitary sewer system. For more information, please call 914-939-0753.
- **Tennis Wall at Pine Ridge Park –** Pine Ridge Park's "Big Green Monster" (a.k.a. the Green Tennis Wall) has been recently rebuilt.
- **Flushable wipes aren't really flushable** – Increasingly popular bathroom wipes — pre-moistened towelettes that are often advertised as flushable — are causing clogs and backups in village pumping stations. While toilet paper disintegrates quickly, the strong-fiber flushable wipes wreak havoc on village sanitary sewer systems. The village is spending a tremendous amount of time and money collecting and discarding debris caught in our pump stations and replacing pumps — and nearly all of it in recent years is due to flushable wipes. So please don't flush any wipes in the toilet, even if they are labeled "flushable".

**Residents are reminded of the following green waste (grass clippings, branches, twigs) collection guidelines:**

- Place green waste curbside between 6:00 p.m. Tuesday and 6:00 a.m. Wednesday in open containers or biodegradable bags weighing no more than 50 lbs.
- Tie brush and branches with twine into bundles no longer than 3 feet long.
- Logs and stumps will not be collected and must be disposed of by the homeowner.

**Conclusion**

The Board of Trustees and village staff is committed to improving the quality of life in Rye Brook, while keeping taxes as low as possible. We welcome your feedback about our progress and initiatives. Please feel free to reach out to us with any ideas or suggestions.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Sincerely,

Paul S. Rosenberg
Mayor
Email: mayor@ryebrook.org
Twitter: @paulrosenberg

**Quick Links:**

| | |
|---|---|
| www.ryebrook.org/alerts | Sign up for Village alerts and important newsletters |
| www.ryebrook.org/sanitation | Access the Village sanitation calendar |
| www.ryebrook.org/video | Watch streaming video of Village meetings |