From the Supervisor

Sustainable Policies for a Sustainable Community

Sustainability is a principle that in its many manifestations shapes our lives, our community and our public policies.

It commits us to protect our environment. To use public resources wisely. To preserve the historical inheritance visible in our architecture and open countryside. It commits us as a community to the fiscal responsibility that maintains the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and services. To supporting our neighborhoods and their quality of life.

This commitment underpins the Town’s efforts, and mine, in so many different ways.

Sustainable Budgets

Providing the municipal services on which we all depend begins with being able to pay for them. I believe strongly that it must be done in a way that is sustainable for the people who pay the bills – you, the residents and taxpayers of Pittsford.

Accordingly, the budgets I’ve prepared as Town Supervisor have reduced the Town tax rate by 9% over the course of the past three years. No more than nine cents of every dollar you pay in property tax is Pittsford Town tax. My Town budgets have held that line for years, all the while maintaining Pittsford’s Triple-A credit rating.

I’m now working with our Department heads to prepare the Town Budget for 2022. We have in place a well-established process that you’ll see detailed on the Town website. My goal, which I expect to accomplish, is to continue to improve our municipal services with no increase in the Town tax rate.

Of the 18 towns in Monroe County, Pittsford still has the 7th lowest Town tax rate. If you exclude from the comparison those towns that receive revenues from landfills, and those that have commercial areas much more extensive and intensive than Pittsford’s, we’re the 5th lowest. And Pittsford provides municipal services that not all of the other lower-taxed towns do, such as leaf pick-up, yard debris pick-up, extensive recreation programs, Town events, and a Town-financed library. My goal for the budget for 2022 is to maintain and improve the services that contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by Pittsford residents; this builds stronger neighborhoods, drives continual improvement and supports services of importance to youth and seniors.

In addition to the public hearing or hearings for the budget for next year, I welcome comments and suggestions from residents about what you think should go into our budget. Please contact me at wsmith@townofpittsford.org.

Sustainable Spending

In my last column I reported that the Town is aggressively pursuing additional grant funding for significant projects to benefit our residents. Every dollar in grant funding obtained is one less dollar we spend from taxpayers. I’m pleased to report that since April, we’ve planned and applied for nearly $1.3 million in grants. Some of the major projects we seek grant funding for include:

Leaf Collection Begins October 18

Town of Pittsford leaf collection services will begin October 18. Leaf crews will be picking up in each neighborhood approximately every three weeks. See our online leaf collection app for the real-time schedule at https://gis.townofpittsford.org/LeafCollection.

Bagged and containerized debris collection will continue on your regular pick-up day until the end of the week of December 6. See the Yard Debris Collection Day interactive map at https://gis.townofpittsford.org/YardDebris.

Afer the week of December 6, crews will continue to pick up loose leaves, loose brush and branches but not on a set schedule. Find complete information about our yard debris and leaf collection services at www.townofpittsford.org/leaf-collection.
Sustainable Policies
Continued from front page

- A major “Safe Routes to School” sidewalk to connect neighborhoods in the vicinity of Pittsford Mendon High School and Thornell Road Elementary School with both schools and with Thornell Farm Park, which is the Town’s most active park. The project will complete a contiguous ADA-compliant sidewalk all the way into the Village.
- Reconstructing a 150-year-old historic local barn off the Canal Path and near our Erie Canal Nature Preserve. This represents Phase 2 of the Nature Preserve project. It places a barn on a site that historically had a barn, when the area was part of a farm. The barn will be available for public meetings and events, offering beautiful views of our Canal and our Pollinator Garden in a unique location.
- A video conference system for the Senior Center, to accommodate participants unable to attend programs in person due to health issues or transportation limitations.
- An outdoor pavilion for Senior Center lunches and programs; a safe venue for enjoying the outdoors, not just for lunches, but for musical performances, guest speakers, dance and wellness activities.

Sustainable Neighborhoods

More Trails & Sidewalks
Making our community even more walkable and bikeable is a sustainable option with tangible benefits. More trails and sidewalks reduce dependence on motorized vehicles. They're conducive to the outdoor activity that contributes to our physical and mental health. These are among the reasons the Town adopted its “Active Transportation Plan” – a blueprint for sidewalks, trails and pedestrian safety improvements.

We’re moving forward, with sufficient grant funding in place for several new sidewalks and Safe Routes to School projects. We have applications pending for more, in order to spare Pittsford taxpayers the cost in their Town taxes.

Our Parks Department is planning for new trails, based on public requests and on our Active Transportation Plan. As ever, we seek to increase community connectivity and access to our natural spaces. Among the things the pandemic has taught us to appreciate more than ever is the pleasure and importance of getting outdoors.

Zoning
Our Zoning Code is the foundation for the health of our neighborhoods. As the Town Board undertakes revising the Zoning Code based on our updated Comprehensive Plan, I’ll continue to do my utmost to ensure that stability, integrity and the quality of life in our neighborhoods remain at the center of our planning, as we update the code.

Zoning to create neighborhoods consisting of single-family homes has shaped most residential neighborhoods in Pittsford, as it has throughout the country. It’s been on this basis that so many Pittsford residents have chosen their homes, making what for many is their single most important financial investment. The overwhelming majority of neighborhood residents do not want that basis compromised. I support them. Among my goals as Supervisor has been to support Pittsford neighborhoods and their residents.

This doesn’t mean that all future residential construction in Pittsford in every location will use this model. One size never fits all. It means that as Supervisor I’ll continue to insist on respecting the wishes of our residents when it comes to the zoning – the “ground rules” if you will – that shape and define the character of their neighborhood.

Our recently updated Town Comprehensive Plan calls for mixed-use development along Monroe Avenue. Combining housing with new commercial development along this corridor – the traditional concept of the apartment over the storefront – promotes re-use of areas already within the footprint of existing development, sparing open space and trees. And housing within walking distance of shops and services cuts down on automobile use.

As I ride my ancient, 3-speed Raleigh bicycle around Town, one of the things that jumps out at me is the number of young families moving into Pittsford. Of course at Town Hall we’ve been aware of this trend for some time. But there’s no substitute for being there. I’m seeing this trend in our older established neighborhoods as well as in our newest neighborhoods in Pittsford, and have visited neighborhoods recently with so many young children that it attests to the vitality of our community in a unique way.

So does the contribution toward community life represented by residents in their retirement years. Some have downsized or plan to, some remain in their homes of many years. Our programs and policies are oriented toward supporting them with services, recreation and information that continues to make Pittsford a place for lifetime living.

Toward Reliable Electric Power
Of everywhere I’ve ever lived, I’ve never known any place where the electric power fails more frequently, or for such duration, as in the Rochester area and particularly here in Pittsford.

At our Town Board meeting on August 3, I recommended to the Board prompt and stern action on this problem, then contacted RG&E to have a person in a position of decision-making authority attend a Town Board meeting to tell us what RG&E is doing to address the issue of power outages. Three members of RG&E staff, including two Operational Managers, attended our Town Board meeting on September 21. The very day of this meeting we had another power outage in a neighborhood in Pittsford. The RG&E staffers were forthcoming about the various reasons for frequent power outages: weather, cables or other components that fail, car accidents taking down a power line pole and others. I had to point out to them that these affect electric power companies

Continued on page 4
Hailed nationally as a model for community farmland preservation, the Town’s Greenprint, enacted in 1996, protected two-thirds of Pittsford’s open countryside at the time. The Town permanently protected this farmland and the ecological resources it contained by purchasing development rights from the landowners. Farmers can keep farming their land, which can never be sold for development.

In 2021 we commemorate the 25th anniversary of this forward-looking program. We’re celebrating the farms it preserves, and honoring the families who farm them today. Among the properties the Greenprint preserves are the Lehman, Snyder, Powers and Sweeney farms.

The 80-acre Lehman Farm on Mill Road was known in earlier times as the Snyder Farm. The Snyder/Lehman family began farming the land in the mid-1800s. The farm was a dairy in the 1960s and later produced kidney beans, soy beans and corn, and had a farm market on East Street. Today, the primary crop is hay. The farm is owned and farmed by Jim Lehman. It remains home to several horses and has an iconic sunset view of the horse pasture hill.

Across Mill Road is the Snyder/Lehman Farm – a 24-acre parcel originally comprising part of the Snyder Farm. The Greenprint made it possible for Jim Lehman to purchase the land. Land protected by the Greenprint must remain farmland. This keeps the purchase price at the value of farmland – not the much higher value of land that can be developed. “Nobody could pay as a high a price as a developer,” Jim says. The Greenprint keeps the purchase price of farmland attainable for farmers. This creates a critical advantage for land preservation and farming in Pittsford. As Jim puts it, “Once the land is developed, it’s gone.”

What we know today as the Powers Farm began as a 50-acre farm purchased by Samuel Hildreth in 1814. Hildreth was one of Pittsford’s prominent early entrepreneurs who operated a large stagecoach business on the property. In the late 1860s and early 1870s Jarvis Lord combined Hildreth’s property with two other farms to create “Pittsford Farms.” After Lord’s death the property was sold to Frank and Estelle Hawley who founded Pittsford Farms Dairy and bred an internationally recognized herd of Shetland Ponies.

In 1946 the farm was purchased by T.A. and T.J. Zornow. Ted Zornow used the pony barn to breed Standardbred horses while his father Theodore A. managed the dairy operation. In the 1960s T. J. Zornow handed operation of the farm to his sons-in-law Charlie Corby and Roger Powers. Corby ran the dairy while Powers devoted the farm to cash crops and opened a farm market. The property was eventually divided, with the Corby family owning the farmstead and dairy and the Powers family owning the bulk of the farmland, which they continue to farm today. Roger Powers operates the farm with his wife, Betsy, and their children, children’s spouses, and grandchildren. The 175-acre Powers Farm produces vegetables, small fruits and ornamentals for the very popular Powers Farm Market at 161 Marsh Road, that also hosts a variety of seasonal events, including hayrides and a pumpkin patch.

The Powers family also owns and farms the 75-acre former Sweeney Farm on East Street. This too has been preserved by the Greenprint. The Sweeney Farm narrowly escaped being turned into a housing development, thanks to the Town’s enactment of the Greenprint. Because of it, the Town purchased the development rights. This kept the value of the land at the level of farmland, thereby enabling Roger Powers to purchase it for farming. Roger stresses the importance of agriculture to our community. He strives to highlight its contribution to our lives and our quality of life by educating and inspiring his customers through events and activities at the farm and at Powers Farm Market.

“The Greenprint made farming possible,” says Roger Powers. “Without it, farming was on its way to extinction in Pittsford. There would be wall-to-wall development.”
Sustainable Policies
Continued from page 2

everywhere – but that nowhere else in my experience does the power fail more often than here.

Our next step will be a formal complaint to the State Public Service Commission. The Town of Pittsford has no control over the production of electric power in our area, nor any authority over the utility that provides it. To date, RG&E has committed to major upgrades of two substations that can help the situation in Pittsford. We at Town Hall will continue to pursue this problem aggressively and with all of the authority we have under law.

A Sustainable Environment
I look forward to continuing to build on the many environmental sustainability programs the Town has launched in recent years. We’ll proceed with more environmentally conscious infrastructure improvements like our Nature Preserve, solar panels on municipal buildings, our Community Solar program and planting trees and native plant species. As electric vehicle technology advances, along with electric vehicle charging capacity and capabilities, we’ll gradually be converting portions of our fleet of Town vehicles to all-electric, as prices stabilize to the point where it won’t place upward pressure on Town taxes.

The Town’s Community Solar Program continues. And we’ll continue the Town’s effort, through our Community Choice Aggregation Program, to obtain electricity for our residents and small businesses from 100% renewable sources at a cost lower than the RG&E benchmark rate. This was the promise made by the CCA Administration firm we selected to run the program. So far the Town has gone to bid twice on this, but couldn’t beat the RG&E rate. We’re going to keep at it.

The Pollinator Garden at the Town’s Erie Canal Nature Preserve represents just one of the spots throughout the Town where we’re planting and will continuing to plant native species. These in turn support the pollinating creatures whose activity and vitality is so important to a healthy environment. By the time we’re done, Pittsford will have a “pollinator corridor” through the Town, designed with the specific goal of supporting these species and their beneficial effect on our environment.

In 2017 the State certified Pittsford as a Clean Energy Community. I support pursuing official status as a Climate-Smart Community. Pittsford already has accomplished most of the goals necessary to be certified as Climate Smart. Finishing the job will make the Town eligible for even more grant funding for projects – thereby sparing taxpayers the additional burden.

Our tree-planting program has long since outpaced its original goal of planting one new tree for every tree we take down, due to safety or disease or construction of projects like sidewalks.

We’re now in a position to expand more widely throughout the Town our successful composting program. We started it nearly three years ago. It’s been a great success, composting 2,055 pounds of organic material to date. Among its other benefits it provides the compost that residents use for their garden plots at our Pittsford Community Gardens at Thornell Farm Park.

Lest we forget, a Town can do none of these things, nor respond to future opportunities to improve the environment and help mitigate climate change, if it’s not financially healthy. Pittsford is. We have the flexibility to pursue the initiatives I’ve mentioned and to cope with emergency situations related to climate change without additional burdens to taxpayers.

To be in this position takes careful budgeting, care and experience. Pittsford remains the only Town of its size in the United States to have a Triple-A credit rating. The highest rating possible. That’s our fiscal report card from an independent agency whose only interest in the matter is to subject each municipality it rates to the same brutal scrutiny. I’ll continue to maintain Pittsford’s fiscal integrity – the first step to being able to do anything to protect the environment.

A Sustainable Balance with}

After more than a year without our traditional community celebrations due to pandemic restrictions, Pittsford residents and visitors clearly appreciated and enjoyed our Food Truck & Music Fest more than ever. This year’s Fest included the ever-popular Pittsford Youth Services Duck Drop, an exhibition by our Pittsford Crew, and a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Pittsford’s Greenprint.

Save the date for Saturday, May 28, 2022, for the return of Pittsford’s legendary Paddle and Pour Festival by the Canal.
Take the 5 and 5 Challenge
✓ Allow 5 extra minutes to drive anywhere
✓ Drive 5 mph slower than you normally would

Join me and take the 5 and 5 Challenge. With each trip in your car, please consider allowing an extra 5 minutes to drive anywhere, and please drive 5 miles per hour slower than you normally would. This can make a big difference to safety on our roadways if we all do it.

Avoid distractions. Pay attention to your surroundings when driving. It bears repeating: drive like your loved ones are on the streets and sidewalks, wherever you are – because somebody’s loved ones are there! - Bill Smith

Self-Guided Farm Tour Celebrates Greenprint’s 25th Anniversary

Drawing for Free Week of Youth Summer Camp

The Town of Pittsford approved its award-winning “Greenprint for the Future” in 1996, preserving in perpetuity over 2,000 acres of open space in Pittsford, by purchasing development rights to 10 local farms. To mark its 25th anniversary year, we’ve put together a self-guided tour to celebrate the farms the Greenprint preserved and to honor those who farm them today. You’ll find an interactive map of the tour at https://gis.townofpittsford.org/greenprinttour. If you do the tour and fill out a Greenprint 25 Passport Sheet, you’ll be entered in a drawing to win a free week of youth summer camp! You’ll find the passport sheet online online or you can pick it up at the Spiegel Community Center. For the passport sheet and complete information about the tour and the drawing, visit our Greenprint 25 web page at www.townofpittsford.org/greenprint25 or use the QR code on this page.

Pittsford - for Retirement Living

A key priority at Town Hall is encouraging more moderately priced housing choices for seniors who want to downsize and stay in Pittsford. Our updated Comprehensive Plan calls specifically for changes to the Zoning Code to make this possible, so builders can offer single-floor homes of new construction at a lower price, requiring less maintenance, and other housing options for seniors as well. The Town is updating the Zoning Code now.

Our goal is to make sure Pittsford is a place for lifetime living – through housing choices and otherwise. The Town website highlights some services and opportunities for making life easier in retirement; you’ll find them at www.townofpittsford.org/seniors or call our Senior Program Office at 248-6235.

Pittsford’s commitment to those of us in or approaching our retirement years includes our many Senior Center programs. For this fall these include luncheons, Craft Club, Euchre and drop-in card games. And don’t forget our on-site health and exercise classes!

We’re Hiring!

The Town of Pittsford posts various job openings throughout the year. You’ll find complete information about current opportunities on our website at www.townofpittsford.org/hr/pittsford-employment-opportunities. For details about applying, visit our Human Resources web page at www.townofpittsford.org/hr.
September 11: Honoring the 20th Anniversary

Pittsford joined communities around the country in recognizing the September 11, 2001 attack on our country. American flags lined Main Street and the Four Corners in the Village, installed by the Boy Scouts of Troop 167.

At the Library, the Community Center and the Veteran’s Monument, the Town placed a 9/11 Flag of Heroes that included the names of all who were killed in the attack.

At Thornell Farm Park we put up a large American flag in honor of Pittsford Mendon High School graduate Todd Pelino, whose life was cut short in the World Trade Center in 2001.

On the evening of September 11 we shined two pillars of light from the Powers Farm hill behind Schoen Place.

We hope these acts of remembrance, in some small way, reminded all who saw them of the real meaning of this year’s 20th anniversary. It was a time to pay tribute to those lost, and to the selfless courage, the kindness of strangers, and the inextinguishable spirit displayed by so many, in so many different ways in the wake of 9/11/01.

Town Clerk Linda Dillon Retires

After 26 years serving the people of Pittsford, Town Clerk Linda Dillon has retired. Throughout her career with the Town, Linda has been a helpful and knowledgeable resource for our residents and her colleagues alike. She served as Assistant to the Supervisor for over 13 years and as Town Clerk for the past eight. For all of it, she demonstrated her commitment, integrity and courtesy every day. She had a major role in making Pittsford the successful community it is. Thank you, Linda. We miss you and wish you well.

Welcome New Town Clerk Renee McQuillen

We welcome Renee McQuillen as our new Pittsford Town Clerk. Together with a wealth of administrative knowledge and experience, Renee brings to her new role an exemplary commitment to public service. As a staffer in our Department of Public Works she took the lead in the Town’s Refuse District program, organizing the process for each neighborhood requesting a district – 15 in all, over in the past three years. We are fortunate to have a Town Clerk of her level of capability and commitment. Welcome, Renee!

Our summer events have come to an end, but we all had a great time together!

To complement our Erie Canal Nature Preserve, in May the Town’s Parks staff planted a Pollinator Garden consisting of plants native to our region. It’s part of our program of siting pollinator gardens throughout the Town, to support insects and birds that contribute to a healthy environment. Whoever said, “Build it and they will come” knew what they were talking about. The garden is now thriving with birds, butterflies and the other tiny creatures who now have Pittsford’s Nature Preserve as their home.
Sustainable Policies
Continued from page 4

Our Town-wide Community Survey in 2019 showed a large majority in favor of protecting more farmland and open space through the Greenprint. Now is the time for a community conversation on what we might do, and to understand what it might cost.

Making this evaluation will require a principled and deliberative approach. It would begin with a representative committee of residents reviewing significant parcels of open land not yet protected by the Greenprint. Then evaluating them for location, aesthetic quality, visibility, quality of soil for cultivation and other relevant factors, and from among these ranking the properties in order of importance. After evaluating the cost, we would have public workshops to take into account the advice of residents, in order to shape any final proposal and as a reality check on whether the idea still commands public support. Any proposal would be put to a public vote in a referendum.

Too many communities around the country only wake up to protecting open land when their last square foot is about to be paved. Pittsford got it right 25 years ago. We’re now living in the future that our “Greenprint for the Future” contemplated, in a community renowned among its other qualities for the beauty of its open countryside. The time is now to decide whether to protect more. As one Pittsford farmer put it recently, “Once the land is developed, it’s gone.”

A Sustainable Waterfront –
Update on the Canal Clearcut
In 2017 the Town took to court the New York Power Authority (NYPa), which owns the State Canal Corporation that oversees the Erie Canal, to stop the Authority’s plans to clearcut trees along the Canal. Town Attorney Robert Koegel prepared and argued the case, thereby sparing Pittsford the expense of legal fees.

We won.

Now the Power Authority is back at it. At a public hearing in July I stated the Town’s opposition. The Town Attorney submitted the Town’s extensive written comments in August. On September 21 I stated Pittsford’s position once more at a Public Session held by the Power Authority. You can read all of these comments and find updates on the situation here: www.townofpittsford.org/save-our-canal-trees.

We seek a reasonable accommodation. The Town will continue to assert its rights in this matter as vigorously as we have in the past.

Let me hear from you!
When we’re doing things right, here at Town Hall, it lets you and your family get on with your lives without having to worry about local government. Because we’re doing what you expect and what we’re supposed to be doing.

I get it! But in order to keep running Town government as most of you want it, I need to hear from you.

So please – remember that I answer my own phone and keep an open door policy here at Town Hall. I hold an Open House “Supervisor Saturday” with residents at the Library every month. You can reach me at 248-6220 and by email at wsmith@townofpittsford.org. Please let me know what matters to you!

Food Cupboard Offers Delivery for Seniors
Advance Sign-Up Required
The Pittsford Food Cupboard continues to offer delivery of groceries and supplies to senior citizens age 65 or older who reside in the Pittsford. There are no income requirements to participate. Seniors interested in receiving home delivery must sign up in advance for the program in person at the Pittsford Food Cupboard offices. The Food Cupboard will offer fresh produce, wholesome breads, frozen meat and dairy items in addition to non-perishable canned goods. Deliveries will be available on the second and fourth Friday of each month. For more information, call (585) 264-9860 and ask for Claire or visit www.pittsfordfoodcupboard.net.

Pittsford Food Cupboard, located at 3800 Monroe Avenue, Suite 26, is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9:30am – 1:30pm and the first and third Saturday of each month from 9:30 – 11:30am.

Fall is a Great Time to Enjoy Our Trails and Parks
Pittsford features over 90 miles of recreational and public pathways, including more than 50 miles of trails and 40 miles of sidewalks. Residents and visitors can enjoy Pittsford’s 255 acres of parkland, including Thornell Farm Park, Hopkins Park, Great Embankment Park, Carpenter Park at the Port of Pittsford and our Pittsford Dog Park.

Visit our www.townofpittsford.org/parks-and-trails web page for information about all of our Town parks. Check out our www.townofpittsford.org/trails-and-walkways web page for suggested hiking and walking routes and maps, and a link to our online interactive Trails and Sidewalks map.

Planting for the Future – Copper Beech Trees
In the years before Pittsford’s iconic Copper Beech tree on State Street had to come down because of disease, our Town Parks Department took cuttings from healthy portions of the tree. We cultivated them at a local nursery. They’re thriving. Earlier this year we planted the first sapling ready for planting. You’ll see it in the grassy area next to the North Main Street entrance of the municipal parking lot. The Town has consulted with the same landscape designer who did our Erie Canal Nature Preserve, to create a new Copper Beech Park in this space.

The rest of the young trees will be ready for planting in 2022. You can learn more about the old Copper Beech tree and its progeny – including a video of the grafting process – at www.townofpittsford.org/copperbeech.
Save the Date - Family Halloween Fest on Sunday, October 17

A Pittsford tradition continues! The Town Recreation staff is now planning for the return of our Family Halloween Fest. It will be held on Sunday, October 17. Time and location will be announced – but save the date for an event that’s always brought a smile to the face of kids and their parents. You’ll find updates on details for the Halloween Fest at www.townofpittsford.org/halloweenfest.

Stroll-Through Stories at the Community Center

Kids can enjoy the outdoors and a fun story at our Spiegel Community Center. We’re presenting three more Story Strolls this fall. It’s Pumpkin Day, Mouse! runs from October 25-31, Animals in the Fall from November 15-21 and Snowmen at Night from December 13-19. You’ll find Storyboards telling the tale in each of these engaging children’s books posted in sequence behind the Community Center. You can walk them any time during the dates mentioned. Once you’ve gone through the story and complete your walk, pick up at the Community Center’s front desk a free story-themed craft pack to take home. For more information, visit www.townofpittsford.org/recreation or call 248-6280.

Report Lost/Found Cats

Our Animal Control Officer Carolyn Casey often helps reunite owners with their dogs. But did you know that she keeps track of missing and lost cats in our area? If you think you have a stray/lost cat in your area, please send a picture to ccasey@townofpittsford.org or call the Animal Control office at 248-6240. You’ll help Carolyn reunite missing cats with their owners! You can also send her information about missing and found dogs and other pets.