

From the Supervisor

Working Together for Continual Improvement

The cooperative relationship between our Town government and the State yields significant benefits for our quality of life in Pittsford. The State Department of Transportation's recent work in improving significant intersections in the heart of the Town, with new traffic lighting, is just one example. The State's major repaving projects in the past few years, especially on Jefferson Road and Pittsford-Palmyra Road, represent another. The two recent bridge refurbishing projects in the Village should be cited as a model for engineers and highway departments in other places.

The significant grant funding we've succeeded in obtaining from the State during the years I've served as Supervisor, and earlier, have helped us to keep Town taxes (8 cents of every dollar you pay in property tax) under control. In particular, these have made a major difference for the Town's ongoing environmental initiatives. Most recently we won a State grant to install two additional electric vehicle charging stations. These are planned for Thornell Farm Park.

From my own direct experience I can tell you that in working with people in various departments of State government, for the most part I deal with professional, knowledgeable people who are committed to helping the Town accomplish its goals. Their advice and suggestions make a difference for the better for the people of Pittsford.

As in any professional relationship, sometimes it's we, on our end, who have advice, suggestions and words of caution for our governmental partners. There can be policies or initiatives, born of good intentions, about which local governments such as our Town government can offer insight into unintended detrimental consequences and even outright harm. In these cases we owe a duty to you, our residents, to share with our State partners our views and knowledge with the same clarity and purpose as we do in applying for grant funding, for example.

There are several such matters we're watching closely.

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Bill Smith
Town Supervisor

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A Fond Farewell to Suzy Reddick

We offer congratulations and many thanks to Suzy Reddick, who retired in February from her position as Assistant to Town Supervisor Bill Smith. Throughout her tenure with the Town, Suzy provided a range of essential administrative support to Supervisor Smith and served as a caring and cheerful "front line" contact for residents and staff alike. Our sincere appreciation, Suzy, for your dedication to our residents and to our community. We wish you well!



Town Supervisor Bill Smith presented Suzy Reddick with her retirement commendation from the Town Board.

Welcome Kelly Eldred, Assistant to the Supervisor

We welcome Kelly Eldred as the new Assistant to Town Supervisor Bill Smith. Kelly brings to the position extensive experience in both the corporate and legal fields. As a welcoming point of contact at Town Hall, she'll help carry forward our tradition of approachability and effective responsiveness to Pittsford residents. She'll be a friendly and helpful resource in the Supervisor's Office. Welcome Kelly!



Welcome to Kelly Eldred, our new Assistant to the Supervisor.

From the Supervisor

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1. Proposed State Override of Town Zoning Laws

A disturbing proposal appeared in the Governor's State Budget message this year. Similar to a proposal from last year, it would have taken away from every town and village in the State a central component of the right of local Home Rule, by empowering the State to override local zoning and land use permitting.

Specifically, it would have empowered the State to issue local land use permits and override local zoning if municipalities do not meet certain housing growth targets. The plan would force a mandatory quota for new development on every municipality in the State. If a town or village didn't make the quota, then the State could override the local zoning code. In that event:

- Every existing house could be turned into a duplex, in every neighborhood.
- A separate, detached residence could be built on every existing neighborhood lot.
- Every residential lot could be subdivided in half, in every neighborhood.
- The Town could no longer protect neighborhoods consisting of single-family homes.
- These provisions would apply to every existing neighborhood – not just those to be built in future.
- This would all be done without consideration of our zoning laws or the specific impacts on the environment, infrastructure, parking, emergency services, water and sewer and schools in our community. The same environmental review normally required for any residential building or accessory building would be prohibited.
- For Pittsford, this year's proposal would at least have placed into question the perpetuity of the Town's Greenprint lands.

If Pittsford keeps adding housing at its current rate, we'd likely meet the proposed state quota for about another ten years. But then we'd hit what planners call "buildout" – where there's no more land left suitable for building. At that point we couldn't meet the housing quota. We'd be subject to the State stepping in to make local zoning and planning decisions for us.

Though ten years away, when that day comes it will be important to us.

Would the consequences described above happen to every house in every neighborhood? Of course not. Not everyone will want to subdivide their lot, or turn their house into a duplex or build another residence on their property. As is the case now, the homeowner would have to make an application to do any of these things. But for those who want to, including corporate buyers of residential properties, although the Town's Zoning Code may say "No," the State could then say "Yes" – and has indicated clearly its intention to do so in most such circumstances.

This makes it a certainty that in some neighborhoods, at some locations, next to other houses and whether the neighbors like it

or not, these consequences would occur. And **all** neighborhoods would be susceptible to this, without exception. None would be immune.

As with a similar proposal a year ago, the proposed State takeover of local residential zoning approvals faced a strong, bipartisan statewide push to stand up for the people of our towns and villages and against the override proposal. For example, the State Association of Towns, in a unanimous, bipartisan vote of its members, opposed any such abrogation of Home Rule. The people of each town are in the best position to address their town's housing needs.

You, the residents of Pittsford, have made choices through your Town and Village elected boards, through the Village Mayor and Town Supervisor, through your participation in our Comprehensive Planning processes, about the zoning and land-use decisions that affect where you live. That affect your own neighborhood. That shape the town you live in and affect your quality of life.

Under current law you have the right to do that. It's a central principle of representative local government: the right of the people who live in a municipality to make the zoning and land-use decisions that affect where they live.

For this reason the State's long-standing Home Rule Law and other relevant law guarantee to the people of the State the right of home rule for their respective municipalities, including the power of adopting and administering zoning law, in order to allow local government to act in the best interests of the community's residents, who know their community best.

Faced with the new proposal, Pittsford, like nearly every other local government in New York, sought the help of our representatives in the State Senate and State Assembly. They listened.

In response to the Governor's proposal, both the Senate and Assembly stood up for Home Rule, proposing alternative legislation eliminating the State override of local zoning and instead creating incentives to pursue the goal of building more housing in the State.

As I write this the State budget has just passed.

The good news is that the Governor dropped the proposal to override local zoning. The bad news is that the Legislature's incentive-based proposals didn't make the cut either. It didn't make the cut, because, as the Governor has made plain, her administration intends to continue pushing instead for the State to override local zoning.

So the State's towns and villages dodged the bullet for a second consecutive year. But we're still under fire. The forces and influences behind the effort to reshape local communities as *they* wish, rather than as community residents wish, aren't going away. They have powerful allies in Albany. It's most likely we'll have to confront this issue again.

The Town of Pittsford's Comprehensive Plan calls for promoting a wider variety of housing choices to make it easier for people to continue living here after retirement and for people getting their start here. These concepts will help

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shape the updates to our Zoning Code currently under way, as we work to increase and diversify housing stock in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Town will continue to support these efforts through our local boards and with the community’s input. The point is that these decisions on such a granular level, house by house, neighborhood by neighborhood, are for us, the residents of Pittsford, to make. Not decisions to be made for us by a distant bureaucracy that doesn’t have, and can’t have, the same detailed knowledge of our town or our neighborhoods as we have.

The Town Administration will maintain a close watch on any further attempt to compromise Home Rule. To all of you I

reiterate the pledge I made regarding the similar proposal a year ago, to do everything within my ability and authority to stop further attempts to override our local zoning and to protect your right to make the decisions that shape your community.

2. Canal Trees

By now you’re likely to be familiar with Pittsford’s efforts regarding the State Power Authority’s proposal to cut trees along the Erie Canal, pursuant to what it calls its *Earthen Embankment Integrity Program*. The State Canal Corporation has operated under ownership of the Power Authority since 2017.

Pittsford, joined by Brighton and Perinton, in a case litigated by our Pittsford Town Attorney Robert Koegel, succeeded in preventing the Power Authority from cutting canal trees in our

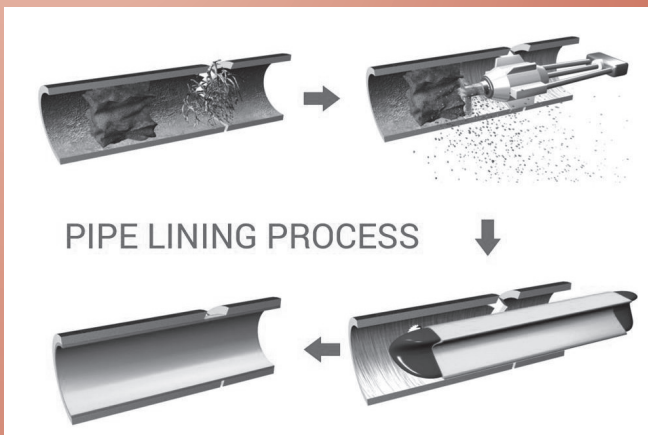
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Sewer and Road Work

Our Sewer and Highway Departments have a full schedule of improvements this season. Among the projects, Town Sewer crews will **reline 6,290 feet of sanitary sewer pipe** that serves homes in the East Ave Manor neighborhood. Relining pipes clears debris, prevents leaks and adds 40-50 years of additional use of the pipelines. The relining process avoids inconvenience to residents, who don’t need to shut off their water or change household routines during the work. Our crews also will **reline 170 feet of storm sewer pipe** on Bromley Road, to help prevent overflows in heavy rains. Throughout the season and throughout the system we’ll conduct sewer structure checks and maintenance.

This year’s **road improvements** include a full milling and repaving of streets in 10 residential neighborhoods, replacing gutters as well. We’ll undertake preventive maintenance on an additional 14 residential streets. Through it all, our Highway Department will carry on with Town-wide maintenance including pothole repair, patching, filling cracks, street sweeping and catch basin cleaning.

Find details about our 2023 sewer and road projects on the Town website at www.townofpittsford.org/dpw/highway.



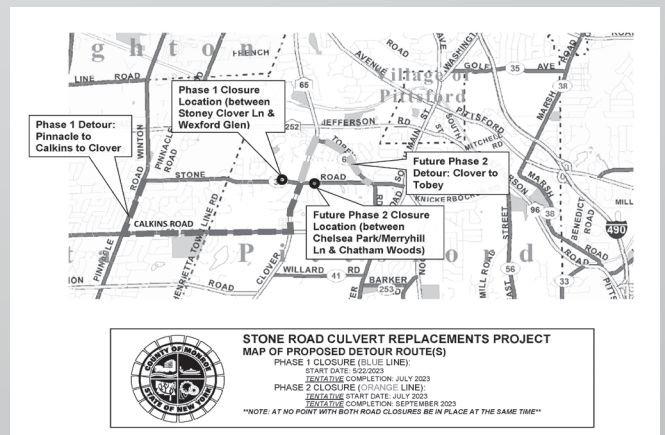
New Culverts for Stone Road

A portion of Stone Road was closed temporarily, beginning May 22, as the County Department of Transportation began work on its project to replace culverts along the road, which is a County road. The project will be done in two phases and is expected to be completed by the end of September.

Phase 1 is under way. It will replace the culvert between Stoney Clover Lane and Wexford Glen. Completion is expected by July. **Phase 2** will follow immediately, to replace the culvert between Chelsea Park/Merryhill Lane and Chatham Woods.

Stone Road will be closed at each location while County crews build the new culverts. Detours during each phase will be marked with signs and message boards. You can see the **detour map** and find other information at www.monroecounty.gov/dot-construction. Scroll down to find the Construction Project Newsletter for Pittsford - Stone Road.

Throughout the project you’ll have full access to local side streets and properties. You can address questions to the project’s Resident Engineer, Tom Poletta, at tpoletta@bergmannpc.com or **(585) 454-9641**.



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towns without undertaking the environmental reviews and processes required by law.

Consequently the Authority went back to the drawing board and undertook the necessary environmental reviews. Last year it released its Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the plan to cut trees along the Canal. At the same time it released its Final Guidebook detailing how it will carry out the project. You can see these documents at canals.ny.gov.

Now we await the Power Authority's published findings, a step required by law. We can expect that these will support the provisions of the Environmental Impact Statement and the Guidebook, which would allow it to proceed with cutting down trees.

Pittsford has in place a Local Waterfront Redevelopment Program. The Power Authority must make a finding that its tree-cutting project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the Town's Waterfront Program.

I've consulted with Supervisors of the other towns involved, with the Town Attorney and the County Executive. I've also met with representatives of the Canal Corporation and the Power Authority, who reviewed for me highlights of their current proposal.

I'm encouraged by the current proposal's substantially greater role for municipalities in the review and consultation process, in circumstances where proposed removal of vegetation would be deemed to have a significant impact on the community. What the Town Attorney and I do not see in the current proposal is a role for the Town in the *decision-making* process about what gets cut, where, and by how much. We continue to encourage the Power Authority to include such a role.

As with the recent housing proposal, we find ourselves having to defend our own community's voice in decisions that will affect it. We continue to watch the situation closely.

You should be aware that traditionally the Canal Corporation removes diseased or damaged trees that pose a substantial and reasonably imminent risk to people or property if they fall, or if any portion of them falls. In each case, the Canal Corporation provides advance notice to the Town. Recently it removed four trees along the Canal that posed significant risk. There's nothing unusual about this. This work was not part of the larger initiative regarding trees on the canal, but rather part of routine maintenance.

3. Refuse Districts and the Tax Cap

In 2011 the State enacted a property "tax cap," applicable to towns, villages and school districts. It provides a formula, loosely coupled to inflation, that provides a percentage of permissible increase in the tax levy – the "tax cap."

In reality it's not much of a cap, since a town or village board can vote to override it in its budgeting for any year. It's really more of a public relations device, to put local boards on the spot by having to undertake a separate vote that puts them in a position of having "overridden the tax cap." School districts that plan to exceed the cap must submit it to a public referendum.

As long as I've been Supervisor and in keeping with my fiscal philosophy, the Town of Pittsford has budgeted within the tax cap, except when residents voted in referendums in 2014 and 2016 to approve additional Town tax, to pay for the athletic field improvements that affected the 2015 budget and to pay for the Community Center renovation that affected the 2017 budget.

There's a defect in the Tax Cap law that's going to affect Pittsford, just as it's affected countless municipalities around the State. It's in the way the law defines "tax levy." The definition includes not just Town tax, but payments to special districts, such as the sewer district, lighting districts, and our increasingly popular Refuse Districts.

Remember how the Refuse Districts work. The Town contracts with a trash hauler for the service. Residents of Refuse Districts receive the service – at a cost substantially less than they were paying to private waste haulers.

The Town pays the trash hauler. If you're in a Refuse District you no longer pay a hauler directly. You pay much less than what you used to pay the hauler, but now you pay it *to the Town*.

Because it's paid to the Town, the Tax Cap law **requires it to be counted as part of the tax levy**.

Our Refuse District program has been tremendously popular. And for good reason: you pay less and you reduce garbage truck traffic in the neighborhood to one truck, once a week. As of this year we have 23 Refuse Districts in Pittsford. Another 13 neighborhoods have qualified to be added to the Refuse District program starting next January 1. Five existing districts have qualified to expand.

Because payments for trash removal under the Refuse District program must be paid to the Town, and because those payments must be counted as part of the tax levy, we're now at the point, for the first time, where we expect that Pittsford will exceed the Tax Cap **on the basis of Refuse District payments alone**.

To state the point differently: if the Town budget for next year contains **no tax increase whatsoever** (which is my goal for next year's budget) – Pittsford will bust the Tax Cap! Because of the Refuse Districts alone.

Of course towns and villages across the State are aware of this anomaly. The State Conference of Mayors advises all village boards to vote to override the tax cap every year, out of necessity. The State Association of Towns has made reform of the Tax Cap law one of its principal lobbying goals for this year, in order to spare municipalities the absurd result Pittsford now faces and that so many other places have encountered already.

Once more, you may rely on us at Town Hall to maintain focus on this and to work with our partners in State government to bring the Tax Cap law into alignment with reality and with its intended purpose.

As ever, I need to hear from our residents about any problem you may be having where we can help or about your suggestions for improvements in Pittsford. I maintain an open-door policy in the office, answer my own phone unless I'm in a meeting or on another line and have a monthly Saturday open house for residents at the Library's Fisher Room. You can reach me at **(585) 249-6200** or by email at wsmith@townofpittsford.org.

Railroad Safety in Pittsford

Railroad safety and being prepared for an emergency involving a toxic spill have been a priority of our Town administration for the past decade. It was eight years ago that the Town first asked CSX Transportation to give the Town prior notice when toxic or hazardous material would be shipped through Pittsford. Regulation of railroads falls exclusively under federal jurisdiction. Citing that, and what it described as risks to national security by publishing information about toxic shipments, CSX declined.

At the same time, Supervisor Bill Smith was in communication with U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer's office about the subject. From those conversations he learned about the requirement imposed on railroads to inspect their bridges annually. As the railroad bridge at the intersection of North Main Street and Washington Road had long been a concern, the Town was able to request and obtain regular inspection of the bridge by CSX – and earlier this year again filed the annual request for another inspection.

The recent railway disaster in Ohio underscores the importance of this issue. The Town is prepared with emergency response preparations and plans in the event of a rail accident.

Advance Planning for Railroad Emergencies

The Town's preparations include a Railroad Emergency Plan prepared, and to be carried out, in conjunction with the County Office of Emergency Management. The plan includes a Significant Events Field Operations Guide and checklists for emergency responders tailored to specific types of emergencies and hazards. Our plans are structured to first gain and maintain situational awareness. Then to support immediate life safety initiatives, to stabilize the situation, to support human needs such as food and childcare, and finally to conserve property.

These are not plans that, once made, are put on the shelf. The Town of Pittsford's Emergency Team reviews them quarterly, updating them as needed. This team consists of the Town's Fire Marshal, the Captain of Sheriff's Department Zone A, representatives of all fire departments that serve Pittsford, representatives of the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management, the County Department of Public Safety, the Town Supervisor and Chief of Staff.



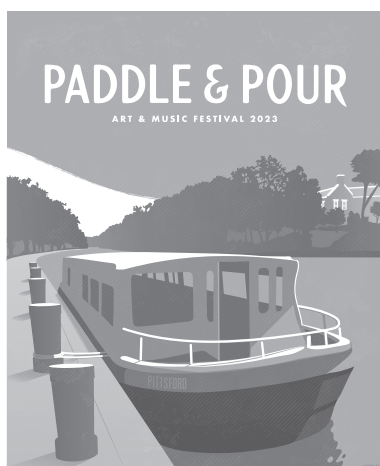
In addition, the Town keeps current at all times the binder containing all legal forms for the Supervisor to declare a state of emergency, to bring in state and federal emergency services and all forms of resolutions that the Town Board would need to adopt in a special meeting called to respond to such an emergency.

Supervisor Smith consulted with the County Office of Emergency Management to obtain data about the Ohio train accident and to get a sense of how frequently toxic materials pass through Pittsford by train. That office receives an annual report from CSX – after the fact – that reports how often that happens. However, the report is deemed by federal law to be confidential.

A right to be informed

Senator Schumer's office has been quite helpful in providing information about federal efforts for improved rail safety. There is pending federal legislation that would require shippers and rail carriers to provide advance notice to each state's emergency response commissioner. The Town's position, as stated in letters from the Town Board to our Senators and Congressman earlier this year, is that in addition to prior notice to State officials, the new federal law should require such notice to County and Town officials as well. The Town Board also wrote to our representatives in the State Legislature asking them to support review of all aspects of State preparations for a toxic catastrophe. And again, the Town sent a formal request to CSX Transportation to ask them to give us prior notice of hazardous shipments.

Come what may, Pittsford is as prepared as possible to protect our residents in the event of such an emergency. And we are working on behalf of our residents to obtain changes in the law that will assure proper advance notice of potential rail safety hazards.



Paddle and Pour Posters for Sale at Town Hall

Local award-winning artist and RIT adjunct faculty member Chris Lyons created wonderful artwork for our 2023 Paddle and Pour Art & Music Festival poster that perfectly captures the beauty and spirit of the canal. The posters are available for sale at Town Hall, 11 South Main Street, during regular business hours, from 8:00am – 4:00pm. The cost is \$10 each or \$15 for those signed by Chris. A limited number of past years' posters also are available for sale. To purchase a poster, stop by Town Hall or contact Kelly Eldred at **(585) 248-6221** or keldred@townofpittsford.org.

Be Part of Pittsford's Toxic-Free Lawn Challenge!



Lawn care season is under way – will you participate in our Toxic-Free Lawn Challenge?

This is an opportunity to have a healthy lawn and support a healthy environment by limiting or eliminating chemical treatments in favor of organic lawn care. Since we began this initiative in spring of 2019, many Pittsford residents have decided to do so. Whether you go completely organic or are seeking to minimize use of synthetic chemicals on your lawn, the Town's Toxic-Free Challenge offers tips that can help you cultivate a healthy lawn in a way that's good for the environment as well. Find information at www.townofpittsford.org/toxicfree.

If you do decide to go toxic-free, please get and display our "Organic Yard" lawn sign. They're available on the front steps of Town Hall at 11 South Main Street and at the Pittsford Community Garden at Thornell Farm Park, 480 Mendon Road.

Sustainable Lawn Care Tips

Join your neighbors and skip or minimize the synthetic chemicals this year.

Re-evaluate your lawn contract

- Avoid non-organic pesticides and herbicides
- Organic-slow release fertilizer, only in the fall
- Avoid lawn-stressing spring & summer applications
- Skeptical? Try skipping pesticides one year and see

Choose the right plants

- Fescue grasses for shade
- Blue and Rye grasses for sun
- Try non-grass ground covers

Mow correctly

- 3 inches or higher
- Return clippings to lawn
- Keep blades sharp

Develop healthy soil

- Chemical use can destroy a healthy soil ecosystem
- Add a top layer of organic material such as composted manure instead
- Aerate every 1-2 years

Water correctly

- Only in the early morning, if at all
- Deep watering of 1" weekly to encourage deep roots
- Place an empty tuna can on the lawn to measure sprinkler output

Patch bare spots quickly

- Weeds love bare ground

Consider native plants

- Try replacing some of your grass with native trees, shrubs and flowers
- Native plants need no water, very little care, and no chemicals
- For planting ideas, visit www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/factnatives.pdf, www.audubon.org/native-plant, or www.colorpittsfordgreen.org/healthy-yards-monroe-county



Yard Debris Collection Under Way

Alone among the seven lowest-tax towns in Monroe County, Pittsford collects your yard debris every week during the season. The season is *now*, and our crews are collecting both **bagged and containerized** yard debris and **loose brush and branches** from your neighborhood every week. For complete details and for your pick-up schedule, visit www.townofpittsford.org/yard-debris or consult the Town's Yard Debris Information card that we mailed to all homes in mid-March. You can also use our **online interactive yard debris collection map** – find it at gis.townofpittsford.org/YardDebris.

A Full Season of Town Events!

Our Recreation Department staff pulled out all the stops this year to kick off our events season early with the **PGA in Pittsford Family Night** on May 17, celebrating the PGA Championship with family activities, games, mini-golf, a putting green, food vendors, a hospitality tent and an amazing funk, pop and soul performance by the band *Shine*. There were plenty of photo opportunities with the PGA Championship trophy and we capped off the evening with a memorable fireworks display over the canal.

Town festivities continued on May 27 with our annual **Paddle and Pour Festival** – held at a new location, on the North Main Street bridge. It gave everyone a close-up look at the Pittsford Regatta while enjoying food, drinks, the work of local artists, family activities and music. The new location appears to have been an instant hit. If you were there, please let us know what you think.

We rounded out the weekend with our annual **Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony** – a fitting way to honor and remember those who gave their lives in wartime service to our country.



Everyone enjoyed our new North Main Street Bridge location for the Paddle and Pour Festival!

Our PGA Family Night had plenty of fun and activities to celebrate the PGA Championship in Pittsford.



Memorial Day Parade and Remembrance Ceremony – to honor and remember.

A Message of Thanks to Town Staff

From Town Supervisor Bill Smith

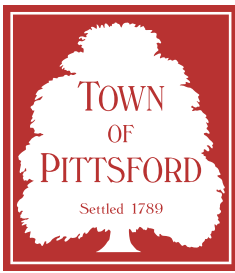
Spring portends the start of the busiest season for our Town staff – a reality that lasts all summer and through the fall. After a robust spring clean-up season, our DPW crews are at work on various roadway, sewer and parks projects, in addition to pursuing the full schedule of ongoing maintenance. Programs at the Library and at our Community Center are moving into high gear. Requests to our Historian’s Office for information increase, as do requests for assistance by our Animal Control Office. The seasonal ramp-up of building projects is keeping our Building and Planning departments busier than ever. Our Town Clerk’s Office, Assessor’s Office and all the administrative staff at Town Hall, Town Court and each of our facilities see an increase in requests for information and services. Higher traffic in all Town buildings and the seasonal opportunity to undertake exterior work has our Maintenance team going full throttle. The greater activity on all fronts means that our IT team is ramping up as well. Each member of our Town team works with skill, flexibility, creativity and dedication to assist Pittsford residents, Our Town staff assures exceptional services, programs, activities and events to maintain and improve our quality of life. This is true not just during the busy season, but every day of the year.

My sincerest thanks to all members of our Town staff. With countless others in our community, I admire your work, and your willingness to go the extra mile. Your ability to help others in need no matter the time of day or the challenge at hand and your drive to keep working until an issue is resolved. Each of you serves our residents with care and good will. You’re a distinguished group of public servants and we thank you.



A full season of Town concerts, movies and events continues – find details at townofpittsford.org/events or see the Community Events mailer sent to all homes in May.





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The Pittsford Messenger Spring 2023

www.townofpittsford.org



Clip and Save!



Tips for a Safe & Healthy Summer

With the warm weather upon us we're all eager to enjoy the outdoors. Remember to keep in mind your health and safety, and your family's.

- On a bike, **wear a helmet, follow the rules of the road, and make sure you can be seen.** Reflectors on back of the bike, a light in front and bright clothing help make you more visible to motorists. For the safest ride, the bike frame should be the right size for the rider. **Wear helmets when using scooters and skateboards, too.**
- **Protect yourself, your family and pets from high heat.** **Very** hot weather can be dangerous for anyone, especially kids and pets. Don't leave either unattended in a hot car. When it's just 70 degrees outside, the inside of a car can rise to over 100 degrees in just 20 minutes! When the air temperature is 77 degrees, asphalt reaches 125 degrees. If it's too hot for your bare feet, it's too hot for paws! Keeping hydrated in the heat is important for pets and people alike – be sure you both drink plenty of water. Know the signs of heat-related illness.
- **Pool safety** – pools should be inaccessible when not in use (locked, fenced, etc.) and should be supervised at all times when children are swimming. Be sure to use a pool alarm.
- **Campfire safety** – never leave a campfire unattended; when you're done with the fire, douse it with plenty of water, making sure all of the embers – not just the glowing ones – are thoroughly wet. Always have water available. If you don't have enough water, use dirt to bury the embers. All fires should be at least 15 feet from anything that could burn. Extinguish the fire when you retire!
- **Get active outdoors** – getting outside and keeping active is good for the mind, body and spirit. Summer is the perfect time to try a new activity or get back into the routine of a familiar favorite. It's also a great opportunity to enjoy an outdoor game or sport with family and friends.

Enjoy a safe summer!