



Westchester County Legislator
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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2021/2022 Newsletter



Legislator Catherine Parker

District 7 ~ Mamaroneck, Rye, Larchmont,
part of New Rochelle, part of Harrison
Chair ~ Planning, Economic Development & Energy



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's been another year with extraordinary circumstances punctuating our days. As I recap this year at the Westchester County Board of Legislators and the work that we have accomplished, I send you hope for good health and wish you and your family all the best for 2022.

COVID-19 remains among us, even as 93% of us are vaccinated. My thanks to each and every one of you who got your shots to keep all of us as safe as possible. If you received your vaccinations at the Westchester County Center or one of the many pop-up centers that our Health Department set up, I hope that you will agree with me that they were well run. I was very glad to assist in the coordination of the pop-up at St. Thomas Church in Mamaroneck so that folks who might not be able to get to White Plains easily were able to get their vaccines close to home.

2021 brought additional challenge to my district in the form of Hurricanes Henri and Ida. To those of you who experienced loss of property or home, my sincere sympathies for all that you have had to go through. As a flood victim myself, I know the trauma and fear that those events create. Westchester has worked to provide assistance with FEMA, even having a FEMA office set up in the district.

Just as we did in 2020, 2021 was a year where we heard from so many of you who needed help with a variety of issues. It is always my honor and privilege to serve. Special thanks to my Legislative Aide, John Filiberti, who has answered so many of your calls and emails, and generally has started the ball rolling towards a solution.

And there's more! We completed work as part of the police reform task force mission, and now some of what was recommended has come to fruition. I am excited to share with you that a team of eight mental healthcare professionals will be deployed throughout the County to assist in 911 calls with other first responders. This has only been done in a few places in the country, and Westchester once again leads the region with this de-escalation technique.

Lastly, Westchester County's finances are in excellent shape. Turn the page to learn more about the 2022 budget. Special thanks to County Executive George Latimer and his team for amazing leadership to bring us to where we are today.

Wishing you all the best in the New Year,

Catherine F. Parker

JOIN ME IN A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW HOME IN WESTCHESTER

Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 10 AM

Join me for a virtual discussion of frequently asked questions about quality of life and environmental issues that are common to homeownership. Learn about leaf blowers, wildlife annoyances, what to do with your old kitchen when you remodel, Con Ed vs. Westchester Power, among many other topics.



WHAT IS COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT?

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 8 PM

To register to join one or both Webex meetings, register by sending an email to JohnF@westchesterlegislators.com

For more information, sign up to receive my E-News at www.westchesterlegislators.com.

Highlights of the 2022 Budget

- A reduction to the tax levy by \$7 million dollars
- \$50 million to incentivize affordable housing
- A new program through our Public Safety Department that focuses on mental health specialists as part of the 911 team
- \$25 million for economic development and specifically grants for small business, workforce development, and entrepreneurial and tech start-ups
- An increase from \$65 million in 2018 to a projected \$300 million in general reserve funds in 2022
- \$33 million that will be shared with local municipalities and school districts

And specifically for District 7:

- \$11 million in reserve to fund Army Corps of Engineers flood mitigation project in Mamaroneck, if local share is required
- Community Resource Center's workforce development program
- \$60,000 for the Rye YMCA
- \$22,000 for Digital Equity Now
- \$20,000 for the Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle for after school program in Larchmont
- \$18,000 for Coalition for Understanding Racism through Education in conjunction with the district's five libraries for Community Reads program with Heather McGee
- \$47,000 for the Youth Shelter of Westchester for an expanded program with the New Rochelle Court



Now is the Time to Make Sure you are Receiving Crucial Information by Email

During the course of the year, we have sent out important notices on a regular basis. Many of the announcements are also provided in Spanish. Topics have included:

1. A Landmark Transformative Budget for 2022
2. Mental Health Speakers Forum for Veterans, Families, and Friends
3. Sign Up Now for the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge
4. Webinar for MBE business grants – deadline to sign up is 2 PM today!
5. Westchester Seeks Diverse Applicant Pool for Upcoming Police Civil Service Examination
6. Westchester Seeks Public Comment on its Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan
7. COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots Now Available
8. Hurricane Ida Relief for NY Residents & Small Businesses
9. FEMA Recovery Centers Open in Westchester
10. All New Yorkers 30+ Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine Beginning 3/30; 16+ Eligible Starting 4/6

Sign up at [Westchesterlegislators.com/subscribe-to-district-7-enews](https://www.westchesterlegislators.com/subscribe-to-district-7-enews) to make sure that you and your family are in the know.



Tour of “Passive House” Affordable Housing Site in Chappaqua

Westchester has brought 2,000 units of affordable housing online since January 1, 2018. Combining both the issue of affordable housing and the need to encourage renewable energy, I arranged in my capacity as Chair of Planning, Economic Development and Energy for an offsite committee meeting on April 8, 2021. This was to introduce fellow lawmakers to the concept of “passive house,” a highly energy efficient means of reducing carbon emissions to virtually net zero. Jim Killoran, Executive Director and Project Manager of the Fuller Center, showed Legislators insulation made from recycled textile, triple paned glass, heat source pumps, and the outstanding construction being implemented. The construction being implemented for this affordable housing project will benefit the future families that call 8 King St. home. It is a model for other homeowners as well. Not only do we see today that it is possible to achieve net zero, we know that homeowners will save significant dollars on their utility bills. ■



Army Corps of Engineers Project is Back on Track!



Last March, I decided to send our federal representatives a letter advocating for their intercession to move the Army Corps of Engineers project for the Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers from the dustbin of the last administration to the forefront of action to tackle the Climate Crisis. I didn't know at the time that only six months later those rivers would show once again that in a matter of hours their banks would not be able to hold the raging waters back. My thanks to Senator Schumer for taking the lead. In a recent meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers more good news followed – the need for the Village of Mamaroneck or Westchester County to pay the local share will not be necessary. However, always believing that until it's in writing, we'll assume that the possibility for local costs still exist, I added \$11 million dollars to the 2022 budget just for this project. If we don't need to use, even better! ■

Other Flood Mitigation News

In 2019, Westchester County completed its plans to resize (enlarge) the detention basins on the grounds of Westchester County Airport. This had been a project recommended by the City of Rye in conjunction with New York Rising as part of their flood mitigation strategies. During Hurricane Ida, the ponds never crested. That being said, more work is needed both inside the City of Rye's borders and with their neighbors upstream to help significantly reduce flooding. I participated in a meeting with the Purchase College Sustainability Coalition in early December. The college seems open to working together to look at solutions to retain more water on the campus. When the city is ready to request matching funds, I look forward to assisting.

On the Harrison front, I have been impressed with the work of a local group of homeowners who have come together to advocate for flood mitigation. It reminded me so much of work done by a citizen's group I had participated in after the storms in 2007. To that end, I introduced the organizers, Alexis DiMarco and Mariana Marcki to Rye City Councilwoman Carolina Johnson. Councilwoman Johnson and I met with the group on Zoom, and I was able to highlight that Westchester County has a fund for municipalities to apply for matching fund(s) for flood mitigation. ■