



Westchester County Legislator  
**BEN BOYKIN**  
*Addressing the Needs of District 5*



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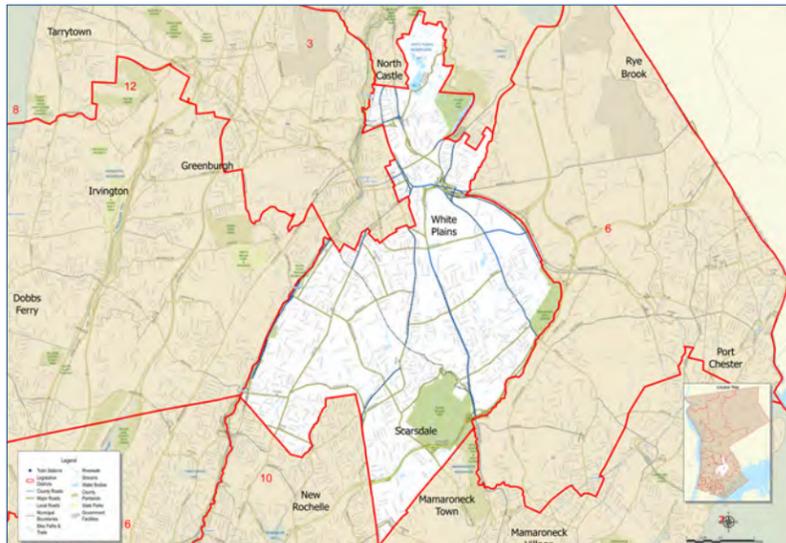
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**Completing Westchester County's Legislative Districts**

After completing the required redistricting of the County's 17 Legislative Districts, the Board of Legislators settled a lawsuit that challenged some of the District's lines. The 2023 elections for County Legislators were based on the new Legislative Districts that start on January 1, 2024 and will be valid until the next US Census in 2030. Only a few changes were made to Legislative District 5 as nearly all of this District was unchanged.

There are thousands of dollars in **UNCLAIMED FUNDS** currently being held by the NYS Comptroller's office.

Visit <https://ouf.osc.state.ny.us/> to verify if you have money waiting and, if so, file a claim!



**Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS**

*Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years*

Fall 2023 Newsletter



**Ben Boykin**

Legislator, District 5 ~ *White Plains, Scarsdale, West Harrison*  
Chair, Economic Development Committee



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It has been a busy year at the Board of Legislators (BOL) and I am pleased to provide you with an update on activities and events in District 5 and throughout Westchester County.

I serve as Chairman of the BOL's Economic Development Committee. I am committed to working with my colleagues and the Latimer Administration to implement cost-saving measures to benefit all of us. During this year, we have:

- **CUT COUNTY PROPERTY TAXES** for the fourth consecutive year.
- Provided **FREE BEE-LINE BUS SERVICE** during the summer months.
- Enacted the **SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HOMEOWNERS' TAX EXEMPTION**. This law expanded the income eligibility for property tax exemptions for those eligible by increasing the maximum household annual limit from \$29,000 to \$50,000. This law will enable more seniors and persons with disabilities to age in place within their current communities, especially for those on fixed incomes, by limiting future property tax increases.
- Passed the **ACCESS TO COUNSEL LAW** that offers legal representation to households facing eviction and other covered proceedings, as long as income guidelines are met.
- Allocated a total of **\$90 MILLION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS** in 2023.
- Supported resolution **OPPOSING CON EDISON'S PROPOSED RATE INCREASES** for electric and natural gas.

At the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Legislative Conference held in Verona, NY in September, I was elected President-Elect and will become NYSAC's President in September 2024. NYSAC assists all New York counties in identifying and addressing issues affecting our counties.

The BOL has had some turbulence this year. A new Chairman was elected by the full BOL in May, a new Majority Leader and a new Majority Whip were elected in July. Throughout these challenging times, I have continued to focus my efforts on working for you and I have not been distracted by internal issues.

I am honored to continue to serve as your County Legislator and thank you for re-electing me to another term in November. I would love to hear from you with your ideas on how I can better serve you in White Plains, Scarsdale and West Harrison.

Sincerely,

*Ben Boykin*



The African American Men of Westchester (AAMW) honored me at their 30th Brotherhood Breakfast on October 27 with the Harold Fitzpatrick Community Service Award. The picture, taken in Egypt, is by Mr. Larry Sally (deceased), who served as Westchester County's Commissioner of Transportation. Mr. Sally's pictures from around the world are on display at ArtsWestchester. I also received proclamations from NY State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NY State Senator Shelley Mayer, the Board of Legislators and Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano.



## Protecting Our Rights & Freedoms; Promoting Transparency & Accountability

Responding to issues raised by community leaders and advocates, the Board strives each year to implement innovative legislation in the areas of social and economic justice to benefit all Westchester residents:

- The **ASIAN-AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) NEEDS ASSESSMENT**, conducted in 2022 by the County's Asian-American Advisory Board and funded by the County, is the first study of its kind in Westchester's history. 800 Asian-Americans Westchester residents were surveyed. The findings, disclosed in May 2023, illustrate its value as a tool for collecting vital information to inform anti-discrimination policies for all groups within our County.
- The **ACCESS TO COUNSEL BILL** ensures legal representation to household tenants facing eviction and other covered proceedings when the household's annual income is at or below 300% of the federal poverty line, or 60% of the County's Area Median Income (AMI), whichever is higher. Approved unanimously, this new law levels the playing field and gives low-income households facing eviction access to free legal representation.
- The **TRUTHFUL DISCLOSURE BILL** establishes an effective mechanism for transparency and accountability in our elected County officials. They must complete a comprehensive Candidate Disclosure Form that captures essential biographical and financial information, as well as educational, military and employment histories. Candidates must certify the accuracy of the information provided.

## PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

THE BOARD IS COMMITTED TO PRACTICAL AND PROGRESSIVE SOLUTIONS TO STAVING OFF CLIMATE CHANGE, INCREASING SUSTAINABILITY, AND REDUCING THE PROLIFERATION OF TOXIC AGENTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT:

- White Plains initiated the **FOOD SCRAP RECYCLING PROGRAM** at the Gedney Way Recycling Facility.
- **ADDITIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS** for both County and residential vehicles, increasing the inventory from 40 operating stations currently installed, to 189 stations by the end of 2023.
- The **LEAD-FREE PARKS ACT** to prioritize the safety of our residents by monitoring and remediating drinking water in all County parks.
- The **RENEWABLE ENERGY DATABASE ACT** empowers municipalities by providing access to a database that assists in siting renewable energy infrastructure.
- The **EQUITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION ACT** guarantees fairness in our decision-making processes by considering the historical cases of environmental justice.
- **"UPON REQUEST" LEGISLATION FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FOODWARE** to lower waste in plastic usage by only including eating implements for take-out food orders when requested.
- **HOLDING HOLTEC ACCOUNTABLE** to monitor the safe decommissioning of Indian Point and protect the economic vitality of the Hudson River Region. As the result of our lobbying, the Governor signed the **"SAVE THE HUDSON"** legislation in August, to prevent dumping of radioactive water into the Hudson River.



## STONEY HILL CEMETERY



With Rev. Dr. Gregory Smith and Steward Board Chairman John Williams



Stoney Hill Cemetery Grave Stones

The historic Stoney Hill Cemetery, located at Mt. Hope AME Church in White Plains, has numerous graves of African-American Civil War veterans. Working with the Latimer Administration, outside counsel, Dr. Edythe Ann Quinn (author of *FREEDOM JOURNEY - Black Civil War Soldiers and The Hills Community, Westchester County, NY*), other interested parties and Mt. Hope, the deed for the property was unanimously approved by the

Board of Legislators. The deed has been recorded and provided to Mt. Hope. It has been over twenty years since I began working to secure this deed for Mt. Hope. The cemetery portion of the property will be surveyed and upon completion, free headstones will be placed at the graves of these Civil War veterans. ■

## ENJOYING OUR NEW AND IMPROVED COUNTY PARKS

FROM ROLLING HILLS TO SHORELINE PARKS, WESTCHESTER IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF BEAUTIFUL OUTDOOR SPACES TO ENJOY. CREATING NEW RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINING AND UPGRADING OUR PARKS FACILITIES IS A TOP PRIORITY:



- Reopening of the **WESTCHESTER COUNTY CENTER** after serving as an overflow hospital, testing center and vaccination site during the pandemic. The County Center has returned to its regular operations – including Section One Basketball.
- A **NEW PICKLEBALL COURT** has been installed at **TIBBETTS BROOK PARK** so that Westchester residents can enjoy this latest sports trend. It's first come, first served, no reservations.
- **WILLSON'S WOODS POOL COMPLEX** is back open this summer after extensive repairs and improvements were made last year, just in time to provide cool relief from this summer's scorching heat to wave-seekers, sun-seekers and swimmers of all ages.
- Important upgrades have been made to the **SOUTH COUNTY TRAILWAY** for a smooth, safe ride for bikers, hikers and roller bladers, as well as improvements in landscape maintenance and the re-installment of the beloved birdhouses!
- Restoration planning for the **KINGSLAND POINT LIGHTHOUSE**.
- The County's first full **CRICKET PITCH** is up and running at Croton Point Park and can be rented hourly or daily. Reservations and fees are required and available through the Parks permit office at 914-231-4575.

## AROUND THE DISTRICT



**1.** At the Harrison Recreation Hot Rod Heaven Car Show, in West Harrison, 10/8/23; **2.** With Asian-American and Pacific Islander Honoree, Scarsdale Trustee Sameer Ahuja; **3.** At the newly renovated Coachman playground grand opening; **4.** With Scarsdale Rotary members (during the Scarsdale Sidewalk sale). The Scarsdale Rotary celebrated its 100th anniversary on 10/12/23; **5.** At the 3rd Annual West Harrison Italian Heritage Festival, 10/22/23; **6.** Fighting Food Insecurity with high school senior Jonah Goldberg at one of the Slater Center Food Distribution Programs