



Westchester County Legislator
MARYJANE SHIMSKY
Proudly Serving the 12th District



800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, New York 10601
(T) 914-995-2806; (F) 914-995-3884
Shimsky@westchesterlegislators.com

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After Three Years, A Plan to Revitalize Playland Amusement Park is Finally in Place

After three years of dysfunction, we finally have a vendor in place to take over the operation of Playland for 2016. This June, the Board of Legislators unanimously approved a 15 year management agreement with Standard Amusements, LLC, to run the amusement park at Playland. For the rest of the 2015 season, Standard will co-manage the park with the County, and will have until October 31 to make a final commitment.


Under this agreement, the County has already received a \$500,000 deposit, and will receive another \$1.75 million when Standard makes its final commitment. Thereafter, Standard will invest \$22.5 million in capital investments in the next five years, and will pay the County an annual management fee, which will amount to \$300,000 in 2016 and will escalate by at least 2% in each subsequent year. The County also has the opportunity to receive additional profit sharing payments.

In addition to the main agreements, the Board approved side agreements to protect the jobs of the current Playland workforce, to commit to needed infrastructure repairs, and to provide for the input of local governments, environmental organizations and civic groups as plans for the park move forward.

Many of you have taken the time to let me know how much you treasure our seaside amusement park. But Playland has suffered under many years of governmental neglect, and two wasted years of negotiations with a vendor who lacked both financing and expertise in running an amusement park. With Standard, we are in the best position to insure a bright future for this shining jewel of our County's parks system. ■




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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS


Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years



Summer 2015 Newsletter

MaryJane Shimsky

District 12 ~ Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Greenburgh,
Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's been another busy year at the Board of Legislators (BOL). We are continuing the battle to repair our County's crumbling infrastructure. We have made progress on some fronts (the Crane Road and Warburton Avenue Bridges, to name two), but have been frustrated by the lack of movement on others. As Chair of the Committee on Infrastructure, I will continue to fight the good fight, and my colleagues and I plan to win as many battles as we can.

On June 2, I was given a second committee chairmanship upon the retirement of a colleague. In addition to the Committee on Infrastructure, I now chair the Committee on Labor, Parks, Planning and Housing as well. Since that time, the BOL has approved a deal that will bring in a well-funded and highly experienced operator for the amusement park at Rye Playland. We are also on the verge of approving a feasible plan for getting Sprain Ridge Pool up and running again.

Our work on protecting our environment, and on making vital services operate efficiently and effectively, also continues. We have passed landmark legislation creating a Director of Energy and Sustainability, and a law increasing emissions standards for County vehicles – both of which will save taxpayers' lungs and money. Other BOL initiatives include legislation banning heavy metals and other toxins in children's toys, and regulating e-cigarettes.

I appreciate your input. Please send your comments, questions and concerns to me. Together, we'll build a better Westchester.

Sincerely,

“Toxic Toys” Legislation Passes Board of Legislators



The Children's Product Safety Act, which unanimously passed the Board of Legislators this May, bans the sale within Westchester County of children's products that contain formaldehyde, benzene, lead, mercury, antimony, arsenic, cadmium or cobalt. These chemicals have been linked to serious medical problems, including learning disabilities, asthma, cancer, fertility

problems and obesity. Most of these chemicals are not regulated by our federal or state governments. The County Department of Consumer Protection will undertake a 12-month campaign to alert and educate retailers about the new law. ■

Sprain Ridge Pool Repairs Finally on Horizon

This is the fifth year that Sprain Ridge Pool, a much-needed recreation facility in our part of the County, has been closed. But the end of this shameful drought is in sight.

By the time you read this newsletter, the Board of Legislators will have authorized an \$8.8 million dollar bond to repair the pool complex. The project will include plans for the complete replacement of Pool 2, major rehabilitation of Pool 1, and comprehensive renovations of the bathhouses and restrooms. Once complete, the pool complex will serve as the County's premiere aquatic competition venue.

After having used this beloved facility as a centerpiece of its campaign to reduce the size of government, the Astorino Administration has finally heeded the calls of residents and elected officials of all political persuasions, and recognized the pool's unique importance in Westchester's recreation system.

Unfortunately, due in no small part to the years of neglect the pool complex has suffered; the repairs are likely to take 21-24 months to complete. This time frame means that the pool will not be open until the summer of 2017. But at least there is a strategy in place, and an end in sight. ■



New Office of Energy and Sustainability Director will Safeguard Environment and Public Health, Save Taxpayers Money

In the past decade, we have seen countless innovations in energy efficiency and alternative energy. These changes in the way we power our homes, workplaces and vehicles have the potential to reduce air pollution, mitigate global warming and reduce our energy bills. But it takes a laser focus, technical proficiency and an understanding of intergovernmental relations to apply technological expertise to a large entity like Westchester County.



Given the many tens of millions of dollars Westchester County spends on energy every year, it only made sense for us to join forward-thinking communities like New York City, Yonkers and Philadelphia, and create an office dedicated to energy efficiencies and related savings. The Board of Legislators looks forward to working with the new director on putting state-of-the-art technology at the service of our residents. ■

Compromise Reached on Height of LG Tower on Palisades; Legislators Part of Broad Coalition to Preserve Views of National Treasure



Last July, the Board of Legislators approved a resolution opposing LG Electronic's plan to construct a 143-foot tall office building on top of the Palisades. This structure was to be built about fifty yards from Palisades International Park -- and clearly visible to Yonkers and Rivertowns residents.

Eleven months later, LG and a coalition of five environmental groups have announced a compromise. The conglomerate has reduced the height of the building by over half, to just under 70 feet. The new headquarters will still be the highest building in the area, and it will peek into the view shed; but it will not be the towering monstrosity originally proposed. The company also an-

nounced its plan to install special lighting arrays to protect migratory birds.

The Palisades are a National Natural Landmark and a National Historic Landmark, and have been included on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of Most Endangered Historic Places. Looking across the Hudson River at the Palisades, as many of us do every day, reminds us that we live in a unique place. We had to do everything possible to protect this precious view shed.

The compromise with LG happened only because of the pressure applied by one of the most extensive regional coalitions in many years. The Board of Legislators was proud to be a small part of it. ■

Legislator Shimsky Works with Edgemont Commuters to Increase Route 65 Bus Service

It is indeed true that a small group of committed citizens can effect positive change. Late last year, my office received a petition from riders of the Route 65 bus, which runs through the Longview section of Edgemont to the Scarsdale train station, asking for an additional morning and evening bus. We successfully worked with the County's Department of Transportation staff to make that service expansion happen.

I advocated for this increase in service because of the lack of parking at the train station, and the growing demand in Edgemont for mass transit. It is my hope that the new service is making commuting a little easier and safer for many Edgemont residents. ■



Bridge Repair Roundup

CRANE ROAD BRIDGE: The replacement of the Crane Road Bridge, a section of the Bronx River Parkway crossing the Bronx River and Metro-North railroad tracks near the Greenburgh-Scarsdale border, is nearing completion. At \$39.4 million, it is the largest bridge rehabilitation project in County history. There has been some slippage in the anticipated completion date, which will likely happen this fall. We'll then have a four lane bridge again, as well as a safe, new structure, improved pedestrian access to the Bronx River reservation, and a new Metro North platform.

WARBURTON AVENUE BRIDGE: By the time you read this newsletter, construction will have begun on the western half of this connector between downtown Hastings-on-Hudson and neighborhoods to the south. The bridge was in serious need of repair, with a score of 4.44 on the New York State Department of Transportation rating scale (A score under 5 requires immediate attention to avoid more serious problems). The \$10 million rehabilitation project includes deck, joint and sidewalk replacement, major pier rehabilitation, lighting replacement and safety screening. If all goes well, both lanes should be open in mid-December.

ASHFORD AVENUE BRIDGE: After four years of questions, meetings, press confer-

ences, editorial outcry and public dismay, we are still months away from the start of the main rehabilitation project on this, the worst County-owned bridge in Westchester (the latest State DOT rating is 3.71). The best we can hope for, is that work on the ramp to the northbound Saw Mill River Parkway will begin before winter, with rehabilitation of the main span not starting until spring 2016. The chronic delay in starting this project is my bitterest disappointment in my four-plus years as your County Legislator, and deeply concerns me as we endure another winter with the old structure in place.

My office participates in County efforts to notify residents of upcoming construction schedules and closures for all three of these projects. You may sign up for the updates, or share your concerns about the projects, by calling (914)995-2806, or emailing me at Shimsky@westchesterlegislators.com. ■

Pictured below: Legislator Shimsky points out the deficiencies in the Ashford Avenue Bridge to US Senator Chuck Schumer



Legislator Shimsky Working with Town of Greenburgh on Ridge Hill Settlement Road Improvements

After more than a decade of work, we are nearing construction of the traffic safety projects funded by moneys won in the Ridge Hill lawsuit brought by the municipalities of Ardsley, Greenburgh and Hastings-on-Hudson.

According to Town officials, work on the Route 9A widening in Ardsley should begin

by the end of August, and be completed in three months. The extra center lane should ease traffic tie ups along Saw Mill River Road.

The engineering of the Jackson Avenue safety improvements will unfortunately not begin this construction season. I continue to work with the Town to make these changes a reality. ■

The Work to Reduce Flooding Continues



Over the past year, we have continued the flood mitigation strategy we began in 2011.

The County Planning Department is working with local governments to develop flood mitigation projects, as provided in each watershed's Stormwater Reconnaissance Plan. Those plans, required by the County's 2011 stormwater management law, have identified flood-prone areas in our communities. Projects to reduce flooding in those areas will be eligible for matching funds from Westchester County, which has set aside \$15 million of capital funding for this purpose.

Our stormwater advisory boards -- the Saw Mill River Stormwater Advisory Board (SWAB) and the Bronx River Advisory Board (BRAB) -- supported efforts by our State legislators to grant inland waterway designation to the Saw Mill and Bronx rivers. These designations will help communities become eligible for additional funding for flood reduction projects.

SWAB and BRAB are continuing discussions with the State and County to remove debris dams, sand bars and other large obstructions in our rivers. Clearing obstructions helps prevent water from backing up and flooding neighborhoods during major storm events. ■

Pictured Above: Legislator MaryJane Shimsky works to address concerns during a Saw Mill River Stormwater Advisory Board (SWAB) Meeting