

From the Supervisor
Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

A Year in Review

When a new year begins, it's a natural tendency on the part of each of us, I think, to reflect on the year just ended. What did we accomplish? What were our satisfactions and challenges? So I'll take this moment to reflect on just a few of the accomplishments in our municipal life during 2018.

Lower Taxes

My Supervisor's Town Budget for 2019, adopted unanimously by the Town Board in November 2018, cuts the Town Tax rate for 2019 by 6.6% and cuts the Town Tax levy by 1.3%. It preserves and improves the Town services we've all come to rely upon in Pittsford.

New life for the Spiegel Community Center and a new home for our Senior programs

We cut the ribbon for our renovated and expanded Paul M. Spiegel Pittsford Community Center on August 25. The Community Center now includes a spacious new lobby with street level access and a complete interior renovation that provides state-of-the-art amenities. A completely updated infrastructure preserves the building's historic character. Among other improvements such as a new playground, the new Community Center hosts new and vastly improved facilities for our Senior programs. Bringing the Senior Center into the Community Center saves Town taxpayers about \$100,000 per year in rent paid for the previous Senior facility. This project exemplifies the benefits of careful planning and thorough public participation. The project began with the first public meetings in 2014. It proceeded with a vote of support by the public in October 2016, and with further input and design development through August 2017, when construction began. To all the community members who gave their advice and support for this project we can all be grateful. The new Community Center stands as a testament to civic improvement and historic preservation.

East Avenue Sidewalk Project

The Town completed Phase 1 of the project by fall. We now have a complete sidewalk along East Avenue from Kilbourne Road to the Village. Our work included pedestrian signal improvements, principally crosswalks and signal lights, on French Road at East Avenue and on East Avenue at Nazareth College. In the spring we'll carry on with Phase 2, pouring concrete, restoring topsoil and replanting as we continue constructing the new sidewalk westward, from Kilbourn Road to the Brighton Town line.

Athletic Fields/Playgrounds Project

Completion of the new playground at Great Embankment Park marks the last of the work on the Town's multi-year Athletic Fields project. Notwithstanding the demands of leaf pick-up season and the early snow, Pittsford's public works crews are making sure the playground will be ready for use in the spring. The Thornell Farm Park playground was completed and open for use at the beginning of 2018.

Expanding our Clean Energy Efforts

When Pittsford earned its designation by the State as a Clean Energy Community in 2017, it made the Town eligible for a grant of up to \$50,000 from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) aimed at reducing energy use and carbon emissions, cutting costs and driving use of clean energy locally. We applied for the grant and were awarded the full \$50,000. We'll use these funds to install an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station at the Spiegel Community Center – the second for the Town – and a roof-mounted solar array on the lodges at King's Bend Park. The solar array will power the lodges and serve as a demonstration project for sustainable solar energy.

Offering a Sustainable Electricity Choice

We passed legislation in 2018 that permits the Town to enter into a **Community Choice Aggregation** program. Such programs allow local governments to source energy on behalf of their residents by designating a default energy provider. In Pittsford, our goal is to use the aggregated buying power of our residents to obtain electricity for Pittsford households from 100% sustainable sources, at a cost below the RG&E rate. A Community Choice Aggregation program would make every Pittsford household eligible for lower-cost electricity from sustainable sources.

Inter-Municipal Cooperation

Community Choice Aggregation offers a splendid example of Pittsford's long and successful history of cooperating with neighboring municipalities to the benefit of us all. In 2018 the Supervisors of Irondequoit and Brighton, Mayor Corby of Pittsford Village, and I as Pittsford Supervisor, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to partner with Brighton, Irondequoit and the Village to move forward together in pursuing a CCA program. By leveraging the buying power of all four municipalities rather than just one, it significantly increases our likelihood of success in obtaining for our residents cheaper electric power from completely sustainable sources. If we are able to obtain a bid satisfying our goals, this may turn out to be the most significant inter-municipal undertaking locally since Pittsford initiated and spearheaded creation of the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust (FLMHIT) in 2010. FLMHIT now consists of 15 municipalities and has saved taxpayers in Pittsford and the other participating communities many hundreds of thousands of dollars in the cost of providing health coverage for municipal employees.

Making Pittsford more pedestrian and bike friendly

Work continued on the Town's collaboration with the Village of Pittsford on our joint Town-Village Active Transportation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to make it safer and easier to get around Pittsford on foot and by bicycle. This is to be done in part by safety improvements, such as better and more effective pedestrian crossings, by planning for more sidewalks and trails, and by connecting those pathways already in proximity to one another, in order to provide longer contiguous pathways around Pittsford for walking and biking safely. This effort has involved substantial public input and careful planning by the citizens' committee advisory consisting of Town and Village residents. The Town completed its draft recommendations in 2017; the Village completed its in 2018. Another public workshop, this time to consider the draft plan, and potential revisions to it before it goes to the Town and Village Boards for approval, will take place in the coming months.

Continuous Improvement

What I've described just scratches the surface. Every project we complete sets the stage for what comes next in fulfilling the core commitment of my Town Administration: to quality of life, strong neighborhoods and continuous improvement for Pittsford residents.

As always, should you have any comments about this or any other topic you may reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at bsmith@townofpittsford.org. My door is open and I answer my own phone. Let me know what *you* think!