

Monroe County Post – Pittsford edition – **submitted for online use and March 21, 2019 print issue**

"From the Supervisor" column

Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

*Please use Bill Smith headshot on file*

## **From the Supervisor**

**Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith**

### **Spring Updates – Canal Tree Cutting Lawsuit, Refuse Districts, Sustainability**

We can begin to think of the green landscape of the spring season – lawns, trees and other plants coming back to life. "Green" also reminds us of sustainable practices and actions taken to benefit our environment – efforts in which the Town of Pittsford has been a leader for many years. I'd like to share with you some of our most recent updates regarding the Town's green initiatives.

#### **Protecting our Canal**

When the State came in to cut down all the trees on the Erie Canal, Pittsford brought in Brighton and Perinton to join us in taking the Canal Corporation and the State Power Authority to court. Pittsford's Town Attorney, Robert Koegel, argued the case for the three towns and we won.

As the Canal Corporation and the Power Authority now begin the environmental review that our court order compels them to undertake, we're preparing for the next step. Specifically, to bring the State to the table to work out a tree management program acceptable to our residents. Recently, the Town Attorney and I met with Elizabeth Agate and Ginny Maier of Stop the Canal Clear Cut, who have stood by us throughout this fight, to plan our next steps. I'll keep you updated as our efforts unfold.

#### **Leadership in Sustainability**

At the end of February the Town of Pittsford, together with Pittsford Village and the towns of Irondequoit and Brighton, issued a Request for Proposals for a **Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)** administrator. Responses are due by April 5. At that point, the three towns and the Village will select a CCA administrator and will task the administrator to seek an electric power supplier that can provide electricity from 100% sustainable sources at a rate less than the RG&E rate.

Joining with other municipalities puts Pittsford in a stronger position to be able to provide residents with energy from 100% renewable sources, at a cost lower than the regular RG&E rate. To learn more about the Town's CCA initiative, visit [www.townofpittsford.org/content/community-choice-aggregation-information](http://www.townofpittsford.org/content/community-choice-aggregation-information).

We've also been working on our proposed RG&E **LED Street Light Conversion** plan. Converting our traditional cobra street lights to LED lights means less energy use and a more sustainable future. Such a conversion would pay for itself in the near term with reduced energy and maintenance cost. We're working with RG&E and the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council to assess our options. Next steps: RG&E is compiling the streetlight location list and a list of approved LED replacement lights. The Regional Planning Council will determine the cost, energy benefit and payback period estimates for us. We'll then be able to review our options and make a decision about light replacements.

#### **Resident Refuse Districts**

In response to interest expressed by residents, I announced in February of this year steps to enable residents to create refuse districts for their neighborhoods. This marks a new approach to trash collection in Pittsford. Creating a refuse district means potentially lower cost to residents for trash collection and would reduce garbage truck traffic on residential streets to one visit, once a week. The recent consolidation of waste hauling companies restricted competition and left residents with fewer

choices. Allowing for refuse districts means the Town may be able to negotiate a group price lower than what an individual would pay. It also means fewer trucks on the road, which is good for the environment, good for our roads and good for reducing traffic congestion. Our residents deserve better options. We're providing them. You can find complete information on the Town website at [www.townofpittsford.org/refuse-districts](http://www.townofpittsford.org/refuse-districts).

Please note setting up a Refuse District and setting the boundaries of the district are entirely up to the residents of a district. It is strictly optional. The residents decide the boundaries of the district, then inform the Town of their decision. The Town will help guide interested residents through the process. Those interested in forming a refuse district in their neighborhood may contact Renee McQuillen in the Department of Public Works at 248-6253.

### **New Composting Program**

Recently we announced the Town's latest sustainability initiative. In partnership with Impact Earth, the Town has launched a composting program at the Spiegel Community Center. Instead of throwing away food scraps from the senior lunch programs at our Community Center, the Town now collects them, to be picked up and composted by Impact Earth using worm composting and other natural methods. That turns it into nutrient rich soil, for use in agriculture. Some of the compost will be returned here to Pittsford, for use in our Pittsford Community Garden at Thornell Farm Park.

Robert Putney, CEO of Impact Earth, tells us that Pittsford is the first town in Monroe County to launch such a composting plan. The program has multiple benefits: it not only allows us to reduce waste, it also improves our environment and encourages sustainable practices. A win for everyone involved. Now we're looking into expanding the composting program to encompass other programs at the Community Center and programs at other Town facilities.

### **Yard Debris Collection**

As the weather warms and residents get out to do some yardwork, Town crews will be out in your neighborhoods picking up yard debris. By the end of March you will have received our annual Yard Debris information mailer. You can also find complete information, including collection schedules, on the Town website at [www.townofpittsford.org/home-yard\\_debris](http://www.townofpittsford.org/home-yard_debris). For Spring Cleanup, we collect loose piles of leaves, thatch, brush and branches. That begins April 1. Please note this collection is not on a set schedule – crews make their way through the Town repeatedly during April. Regular collection of both loose brush and branches and bagged/containerized debris will begin on your scheduled collection day the week of May 6. As we do each year, we'll grind into mulch all yard debris and leaves collected and make it available to Pittsford residents free of charge.

### **Responsible Lawn Care**

If you have a lawn service, carefully assess and discuss your needs with your lawn company. For example, most lawn service plans treat for grubs in spring and fall. But grubs don't feed in the spring. So spring treatment is unnecessary and wastes your money.

Professional advice is available to help understand what's really necessary in your lawn treatment plan. You can phone Cornell Cooperative Extension, at (585) 753-2550, to review what your service is proposing. It's an opportunity to save money and avoid applying chemicals that are unnecessary.

Please follow the Town's practice of responsible and very limited pesticide use, and only when strictly needed.

Remember that you can reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at [bsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:bsmith@townofpittsford.org). As ever, my door is open and I answer my own phone. Let me know what *you* think!