

January, 2020

From the Supervisor
Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

A Year in Review

Each New Year offers a unique opportunity to contemplate the twelve months ahead and to reflect on the year just ended. Let's take a look at some of our municipal accomplishments in 2019 and some priorities for 2020.

Tax Cut

In 2019 we continued our commitment to keep taxes low while preserving and improving the Town services our residents rely upon. My Supervisor's Town Budget for 2020, adopted unanimously by the Town Board in November 2019, cut both the Town tax rate and the Town tax levy for the second consecutive year. Cumulatively over the two years, we reduced Pittsford's Town tax rate by 8.25% and the tax levy by 2.3%.

East Avenue Sidewalk

We completed the major remaining portion of the East Avenue sidewalk before winter's onset halted construction, installing concrete from Kilbourne Road toward the Town line with Brighton. We'll finish it once the weather breaks in the spring. This will complete a safe and walkable route all the way from Brighton to Pittsford Village for residents, students and visitors. Walkability is central to quality of life and to the commercial success of the Village and the entire Town. Our policies to promote it – and bicycle-friendliness – carry ahead into 2020 as we finalize our joint **Town-Village Active Transportation Plan** and move forward with its recommendations.

Clean Energy

In 2019 Pittsford moved ahead with the **Community Choice Aggregation program**. Undertaken jointly with the Towns of Brighton and Irondequoit, its purpose is to get cheaper electricity for our residents and businesses from 100% renewable sources. Now the program administrator will solicit bids from electricity brokers in accordance with these twin goals: the lower rate and renewable sources. Last year we began work to swap out existing street lights with **LED lights**. Doing this reduces the Town's energy use and therefore reduces expenses to taxpayers. Also in 2019 the Town began work with the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute to develop its own **energy consumption benchmarking program**. This will give us a comprehensive analysis of energy use and identify opportunities for greater efficiency, to reduce the Town's energy consumption and expense still further. Both the LED streetlight project and the energy benchmarking will be completed and begin to yield benefits in 2020.

Sustainable Choices

We were proud to implement several projects in 2019 to offer residents sustainable options in everyday life. At the Spiegel Pittsford Community Center, we installed a new **electric vehicle (EV) charging station**. To encourage more low-impact transportation, we made life a bit easier for cyclists by installing the Town's first **bike fix-it stations**, one each at the Library and at Thornell Farm Park, and we added new **bike racks** behind the Library. We also installed seven additional water bottle filling stations in Town facilities, including at the Library and a seasonal station at Thornell Farm Park. Last year our bottle filling stations (which include two at Spiegel Community Center) kept tens of thousands of plastic bottles out of the waste stream. To encourage action for a cleaner and healthier environment, last summer the Town launched its community-wide **Toxin-Free Challenge and Responsible Lawn Care initiative**. We distributed hundreds of lawn care information cards and toxin-free challenge signs throughout Pittsford. We added to the Town website new Toxin-Free and Responsible Lawn Care web pages to assist residents in maintaining a healthy and attractive lawn without synthetic chemicals.

Together, these efforts support Pittsford's long-standing commitment to sustainable practices in our community.

Recreation

2019 saw the opening of Pittsford's first **Dog Park** – an enjoyable and welcoming spot for dogs and folks alike at 34 East Street. We completed a **new playground at Great Embankment Park**, made improvements to the **Auburn Trail** and launched our **Trail Passport program** in collaboration with Wegmans, all to expand and improve opportunities for outdoor enjoyment. The Spiegel Community Center offered new programs and services including cooking classes, intergenerational programming for seniors and youth and expanded drop-in gym activities for residents of all ages. Moving into 2020 our Recreation staff will continue to offer new opportunities for recreation programs that provide enjoyment, instruction and that bring residents together.

Expanding our Reach

Pittsford's long history as a community that welcomes everyone continued through 2019. We expanded the reach of our recreation programs through partnerships with Special Olympics of New York and with the Autism Council of Rochester. With Special Olympics we hosted our first Walk for Inclusion. We engaged the Autism Council of Rochester (ACR) to train Town staff. Consequently, last fall the Autism Council designated the Town of Pittsford as an Autism-Friendly Community. Our Community Center and Library, specifically, earned designation as Autism-Friendly facilities. We look forward to expanding on these important partnerships in 2020, with a view toward new programming and services for those with special needs.

Continued Fiscal Stability

Tax stability and professional -quality management of municipal finances continues to set Pittsford apart. Once more in 2019 the Town Administration was able to maintain and improve the level and variety of services provided to our residents while cutting Town taxes. Once more, in 2019, Moody's Investor Services gave Pittsford its fiscal report card, reaffirming the Town's Triple-A credit rating. Pittsford remains the only town in all of upstate New York, north of Westchester and Putnam counties, to hold the Triple-A rating, the highest credit rating possible. This means that when Pittsford goes out to finance projects, Pittsford residents pay the least – because our credit rating is the best.

Continual Improvement

Preserving the singular character of Pittsford that's so important to so many of us requires continual improvement. With each accomplishment, members of my administration and I look for opportunities to provide services, amenities and programs that are ever more effective, efficient and fiscally sound. As part of this enterprise, in 2019 we conducted a full **community survey** to measure residents' interest, support and opinions about existing and proposed initiatives and services for our community. The survey will continue to inform our judgment as we set priorities for the year ahead.

Comprehensive Plan

The survey results helped shape our updated **Comprehensive Plan** that the Town adopted in 2019. As the Town's fundamental land-use planning document, the Comprehensive Plan represents a vision and roadmap for the Pittsford's future development. As 2020 opens we begin work on updating the Town code in accordance with the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Refuse Districts

Continual improvement requires considering new and innovative approaches to matters that affect our residents. One such example is the Town's decision in 2019 to launch a **Refuse District program**. This empowered every neighborhood in Pittsford with the opportunity to get dependable trash hauling and recycling service at reduced cost and with fewer trucks in the neighborhood. It simplifies things for residents that opt-in, since the Town selects a single designated refuse hauler through competitive bid, administers the contract and bills residents annually via their tax bill. Participation is fully at the discretion of the neighborhood setting up the district. Residents of neighborhoods that created refuse

districts in 2019 now pay \$213 for all of their trash collection through calendar year 2020, a substantial saving. We hope to see more residents take advantage of this cost-saving and convenient approach in the year ahead.

Greenprint 2.0

Our 2019 Community Survey demonstrated broad public support for the Town expanding its groundbreaking Greenprint program. This would preserve additional expanses of countryside and open land unspoiled, in their natural state. I intend in the months ahead to make specific recommendations to the Town Board and to our residents for their consideration in expanding the Greenprint. This will involve extensive public engagement and public approval, by referendum, of the expense of any proposed program.

This discussion of accomplishments in 2019 barely scratches the surface. It does, I think, show the breadth, depth and strength of this administration's commitment to Pittsford residents through professional-level service, creative problem-solving and fiscal responsibility. I'm proud of what we accomplished in 2019. I look forward to the opportunities ahead.

My thanks to our entire Town staff. They work day in and day out to make our plans to serve Pittsford's residents a reality. My thanks as well to my colleagues on Town Board who have supported these initiatives and have shown a willingness to work together to serve the best interests of our community.

As ever, should you have any comments or questions about our past accomplishments or future plans, 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. I'm always interested to know what matters most to you as a resident.

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