

Scout's honor!



Mr. John Tripodi, Council Representative; Peter Woodford, David Kollar, Eagle Scouts; Mayor Joan Walsh; Thomas M. Blake, Michael Agazzi, Eagle Scouts; and, Capt. Robert J. Blake, Scout Master.

On June 29, four young men from Harrison and Purchase received the prestigious Eagle Scout award, the highest award a Boy Scout can receive. A mass was held at St. Anthony's in West Harrison, with the Eagle Scout ceremony taking place on the lower level of the building.

In the coming weeks, *The Harrison Report* will continue coverage of the Eagle Scouts and profile the projects of each of the Eagle recipients.

Digging in against development

Residents oppose projects, want new Master Plan

By MARK LUNGARIELLO

A proposal for a zoning change that would allow for the construction of a new building on Calvert Street was sent back to the Planning Board last week. The Harrison Town Board voted to send the matter back for further site plan discussions on the planning level after a resident group came out in droves to voice displeasure with the proposal and a general dissatisfaction of Harrison planning policy.

The request would have allowed a special exception use permit that would have seen a three-story building at 53-55 Calvert St., called Harrison Commons Condominiums. The fire inspector took issue with the current plans saying he did not approve of it and felt it needed modifications for fire safety. This was a major talking point for board members who felt the site proposal should be kicked down and discussed to address any variances outside of the code.

Potential variances and code changes are what have the Harrison Residents Committee (HRC) in a huff. The group criticized Harrison for a lack of action on a new comprehensive plan. Last year, three meetings were held to get community input on a comprehensive plan draft (municipalities use a plan as a guideline for zoning, aesthetics, and other policies). Since last year though, there has not been any public action on adopting a new plan. Because of this, HRC said changes in zoning are commonplace; this can result in overdevelopment and projects that go against the will of Harrison residents. The group is requesting variances and zoning changes be halted until a new plan is in place.

Ellen Kaidanow of Purchase said, "It feels like you are ignoring us since we have not moved forward on the Master Plan Update, and we continue to

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observe the same 'modus operandi.' This is why we have, and will continue to have, representatives at almost every Planning Board and Town Board meeting. Once again, we implore you to work with us to forge a balanced, realistic updated Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town of Harrison, which recognizes not only economic issues, but the environment and our quality of life as well."

Ann Gold of the Purchase Environmental Protective Association (PEPA) said that the town continues to approve development projects, building more while there are a "glut of homes" for sale in Harrison. She also stated that recent projects overburdened facilities like storm water drains and municipal services. "You continue to approve building plans with seemingly little recognition of the larger problems such over-development brings."

Only Councilman Pat Vetere (D) opposed sending the plan back down, saying residents who opposed the plan should have been vocal and more involved in planning and zoning board meetings prior to it being kicked up to the government level. There remains no clear timetable on a new Master Plan draft or when it will be ultimately adopted.

HRC says

Below are excerpts from a joint statement by the Harrison Residents' Committee, to the town. The letter urges for a new Master Plan and hopes to stop zoning changes and development until a new plan is in place.

WHO THEY ARE:

"Over the past few years, many Harrison residents have become increasingly concerned about decisions regarding development in our town. Accordingly, a resident group was formed in 2007, called the 'Harrison Residents' Committee' (HRC), consisting of members encompassing every electoral district, in a town of some 23,000 Harrison voters."

ON THE NEED FOR A NEW PLAN:

"We are frustrated and disappointed that we continue to see significant zoning variances granted regularly, open space disappearing, wetlands compromised, trees illegally cut down, among other violations. Due to an irresponsible lack of comprehensive town planning, houses and streets continue flooding, home foundations continue cracking from blasting, tree lined streets continue disappearing, and more and more Harrison children are being educated in unsatisfactory school buildings. The bucolic character of our town is slipping away, and along with it, our quality of life."

THE MISSION:

"In previous written and verbal presentations, we have made the following statements clear, but we

repeat them again: We do not want further development which would require rezoning, pose significant environmental risks; or significant variances, until an updated Comprehensive Master Plan for Harrison is completed. Furthermore, we do not want high-density development of any kind.

"We are asking for a moratorium on variances and further development that increase the density of property use beyond its current purpose or pose serious environmental issues, until a comprehensive Master Plan update is completed."

CONCLUSION:

"Given the problems already facing Harrison residents, due to excessive development, anything less than such a moratorium on rezoning, significant variances and related development, coupled with a procedure for completing an updated Comprehensive Master Plan, is unacceptable and will be viewed as negligent on your part, as our representatives.

"We ask you to take this request seriously, to work with us to achieve these goals, and to responsibly represent the citizens of Harrison on these now critical issues. A healthy future for Harrison, both environmentally and economically, depend on it."

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Water works woes

*Numerous plans made,
nothing set in stone*

By MARK LUNGARIELLO

The fight continues over the state-mandated construction of an \$80 million water filtration plant to be built in Purchase. A court order said construction had to be completed by 2006, but the work has yet to begin as Westchester Joint Water Works (WJWW) hopes for an alternative while fines loom.

County Legislator Marty Rogowsky (D), a Harrison resident, stepped in to try to help WJWW find an alternative to the plant construction. He hopes that a feasible and financially leaner substitute would convince the state to sign off on the alternative.

The most recent plan is to run a pipe to Kensico reservoir, where the county would construct a U/V filtration plant. The cost could save 10's of millions when compared to the Purchase plant. But, right now it is only a talking point – studies are being conducted, while WJWW and the state would need to agree on the project. "The county is working on its own timeframe," Rogowsky explained. "They are doing the engineering. They're all waiting for numbers. The question is how much is the alternative cost?"

This isn't the only other option for WJWW. As previously reported in *The Harrison Report*, representatives were looking at the possibility of tapping into New York City's water supply at Mount

Pleasant. The Mount Pleasant plant is a U/V, not a standard filtration system like the Purchase plant would be. To construct the U/V plant, the city received a filtration avoidance determination from the state, something which WJWW failed to do back in 1991.

The Harrison Planning Board delayed construction of the plant when they required a new environmental impact study to be conducted for the proposed site just outside of Westchester County Airport. The delay could result in a cost of millions in a bill for taxpayers, in the form of state-imposed fines against the municipally-owned water works. Rates are expected to jump due to plant construction and can only be made worse as fines pile up to over \$10,000 per day. But, these fines don't kick in until 2009.

The grace period gives WJWW and the county a little more time to roll up their sleeves on the alternatives. If either of the two options gains steam, help can come on the state level from Assemblyman Adam Bradley (D), Assemblyman George Latimer (D) and State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D), who have all pledged to do what they can once a plan becomes more than just talk.

The water works serves over 50,000 customers in Harrison and Mamaroneck and sells water to some other municipalities to Rye and Port Chester.