After a Year of Planning & Land Acquisition, Construction on New DPW Garage Commences

Week of February 5, 2018

After a year of planning, residents will soon see the first tangible signs of the construction of a new Department of Public Works facility in land off East Ridge Road, near NYS-590. I am happy to say we are tracking on-time for a late 2019 opening, and are already realizing some cost savings associated with what will be the largest public works project in our Town’s history.

Plainly, if Irondequoit was blessed with more shovel-ready, 10-acre properties, we likely could have started at some point last year. I often joke with my colleagues in Towns like Chili and Henrietta, who have been able to construct large facilities on untouched parcels of land likely larger than all of our Town’s green, developable land - combined.

Our process to acquire the State-owned land via a land transfer began on December 26, 2016 and is in its final stages as we hope to take title to the property in the coming days. While many may argue this is government at its slowest, we were initially told this would take 18-months, so I’m very happy with our progress and thank the State Department of Transportation and State Attorney General’s office for their assistance.

Starting this month, there will be considerable work done to prep the site for construction. I’m happy to say that the bid package for this work came in very much under budget – some 37 percent. Working with our construction manager, we are confident we have scheduled the remaining bid packages in a manner that will make them very competitive, and thus drive down cost.

I am also proud of the fact that our Town employees will be doing a good amount of work on the site, prepping the infrastructure and building the access road. As it will be their home, I believe it is only right that our DPW workers play a part in its construction. Furthermore, it’s good for our bottom line, as it will lower the overall cost of the project.

Shifting gears, our Town wide reassessment – the first in a decade - is entering the home stretch. In the next few weeks, residents will receive what is known as an impact notice outlining the preliminary change in assessment. In reviewing the 2017 home sales in Irondequoit, the need for a reassessment is clear. Just last year, the sale price of property exceeded their assessed value by over 7 percent. The state has affirmed we are underassessed by levying a 94 percent equalization rate last year.

Remember: an assessment increase or decrease should always be looked at in the context of overall Town wide assessment change – if it’s on par with the rest of the town, there’s a good chance the implication on your taxes will be nominal. As I continue to point out, the State’s property tax cap should always be viewed as an ally, as it prevents any local taxing jurisdiction from large levy increases without taking extraordinary measures.

I strongly encourage residents to schedule informal hearings with our assessor’s office later this month. This provide an opportunity to learn about the process of assessment, and provide new information to better inform the reassessment of your property. Our goal is to get this right, so we’re looking forward to hearing from you.