

WARD 9 NOW – OUR WARD, OUR CITY

A community newsletter serving Ward 9 of Kingston, New York

Vol. 1, Issue 5

July 19, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Good things are percolating in Ward 9. Community leader Rebecca Martin is bringing together RecycleBank and city officials to explore ways that not only boosts Kingston's dismal recycle rate of 11%, but can also reduce our tipping fees (what we pay to load trash) at the transfer station. How cool is that? Meanwhile, residents are getting together to find places where we can set up community gardens. And there was a recent meeting with county officials to explore traffic calming in Ward 9, and potentially throughout the city. Still, there is more work to be done. One area in need of attention is with our younger residents, whether they own or rent. Can you think of someone in your neighborhood who is a twentysomething? Perhaps they would like to get involved in the community. Invite them to the next Ward meeting!

VOLUNTEERS – STEP UP!

Our community group has created committees, and we need volunteers. The committees include: Traffic Calming; Food Co-Op; Land Trust and Community Gardens. If interested or have ideas for others, please sign up at the front of the Muddy Cup during our Ward meetings, or write us at: kingstonnyward9@googlegroups.com

THE NEXT WARD MEETING

Thursday, August 16 at 6:00 pm at the Muddy Cup. "Volunteering in your community: citizenship isn't a spectator sport – you can make a difference!" A panel discussion led by Catherine Canzian, Director of the SUNY Ulster Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

MEETING FORMAT

Starting in September, our Ward 9 meetings will be held at Coach House Players on Augusta Street in Kingston. Please make sure to thank the Muddy Cup for their hospitality this year.

Our meeting format has changed:

5:30 p.m. – Resident sign-up. The maximum amount of residents to speak at each meeting is between 3 and 5. Prepare a five-minute or less statement. Public comment runs between 8 and 10 minutes.
6:00 p.m. – Past Business
6:15 p.m. – Resident Speak/Public Comment
7:15 p.m. – Special Guest Speaker/Panel
9:00 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

PAST BUSINESS (from June 21, 2007)

Our meeting began with residents' questions and comments.

1. **Diane Bonabita:** Diane is a resident of Andrew Street – where there is a great deal of trash left behind by Kingston High School students. Parking is problematic as well, as most of the spaces are taken by the students. This leaves tax paying residents (without a driveway) no place to park.

Please note:

A TRAFFIC CALMING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE HAS BEGUN IN WARD 9 THAT WILL WORK TO ADDRESS THESE AND A HOST OF OTHER ISSUES. PLEASE JOIN US, AND EMAIL THE WARD LIST FOR MORE INFORMATION: kingstonnyward9@googlegroups.com

2. Our guest panel last month was with **GAR Associates, Mayor James Sottile** and **Mary Ann Bahruth**, Assessor

for the city of Kingston. (Shortly, the paperwork that we received that evening will be available as PDFs on our Ward 9 website).

Some notes from the presentation:

* The last city of Kingston re-val was done in 1988. Revals, once they are done, must be kept current. There is a yearly maintenance that will be available to the city of Kingston so that another big re-val will not have to take place.

* Assessment Department Overview – There are 8,500 parcels (6,200 residential, 1,200 commercial, 900 vacant land and 200 other properties. Department functions include maintaining assessment roll, issuing building permits, handling grievances, sales transactions, inventory data, etc. Processing exemptions include: STAR, Senior, Veterans, Disability, etc. Filing assessment roll to process tax levy; Assisting public with information; Processing a variety of reports for the city and property owner use.

* The Reassessment Project Overview – Project goal: Fairness and equality for all property owners. Equalization rates versus change in assessment (current rate is + 23.47%). Assessments stay the same unless physical changes are made, but equalization rate changes each year. Benefits to the property owners, and the city overall, is that assessments creates fair and equitable valuations.

* Project Overview – Full Market Value. Re-val process includes property photos, surveys, data verification/ collection, sales verification, neighborhood delineation, modeling, land and improved values, quality control, public relations/education workshops.

* Project Enhancements – The systematic process of reviewing and analyzing market data within specific neighborhoods to determine trends; Computerized valuation of all properties utilizing current sales data; Professional, experienced appraisers reviewing each property, taking into consideration condition, location factors, etc.; Monitoring of current sales listing and closed activity to track trends; Consistency within neighborhoods/streets; Automated property record card, Electronic sketching.

* Project Schedule and Important Dates remaining: Property Valuation, April 2007 – December 2007; New Assessments Mailed to Property Owners, March 2008; Informal Hearing Process, March – April 2008; Notification of Any Changes – Informal hearings, April 2008; Formal Grievance (BAR) Process, 4th Tuesday in May – Hearings only by appointment; Final assessment Roll, July 1st; New Assessments Apply, September 2008 (School) and January 2009 (City).

* For more information on the re-assessment, contact the city assessor (Mary Ann Bayruth) at assessor@ci.kingston.ny.us More information is online at: www.orps.state.ny.us

ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Traffic Calming in Ward 9 that includes the problems on residential streets and safety, addressing the Kingston High School and the parking complications for residents, signage, speed, etc.

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2. Re-instate neighborhood watch group.
 3. Jewish holidays are not remembered on our government calendars. We'd like to ask that they be.

4. Submit petition asking the city to post the agendas of all government meetings (such as common council, planning, zoning, etc.)

TRANSPORTATION

In September, we will be moving our Ward 9 meetings to the Coach House Players on Augusta Street in Ward 9. This will be easier for the residents to walk to each month. For those still needing a ride, we have found transportation for up to 5 elderly residents in Ward 9 thanks to our neighbors at St. James Citgo on Broadway and W. Chester Street. They have made a generous donation of their car service Taylor's Taxi. Neighbors who can help identify those who would like to be at our meetings, but need a ride, please see Rebecca or Arthur, or email us at: kingstonnyward9@googlegroups.com

COMMENT BOX

Q: Is there a process where a family can ask for what the tax increase would be on any additions or improvements done to a home before it is made? This would help give the scope of a project a better sense of reality before making any building commitments.

A: City Assessor Mary Ann Bahruth can give an estimate of what taxes might go up based on what a homeowner might do, though she usually only does this on new houses. She says it is too time consuming otherwise. For those with newer homes pondering additions who would find this information helpful, you would need to provide the type of new house, square footage, # of baths, # bedrooms, garages etc. Mary Ann usually asks that you put it in writing and she will get back to you as soon as she can. If you'd like to learn more, please contact: Mary Ann Bahruth at (845) 334-3912 or Fax (845) 334-3913, or email at: assessor@ci.kingston.ny.us

UPCOMING PANELS

* TONIGHT!

"How (and Why) to repair your Historic Bluestone Sidewalk," a panel discussion led by Lowell Thing. This will be a discussion on why our historic bluestone sidewalks are rare and valuable, how the city values bluestone and why it's sometimes endangered, ways to protect bluestone, where it came from, how to repair your bluestone sidewalk and other masonry work. Handouts will be provided. Guests and resources at the meeting may include City Historian Ed Ford, Landmarks Chairman Youirj Donskoj and a modern bluestone quarry worker.

* THURSDAY, AUGUST 16 8 PM
 "Volunteering in your community: citizenship isn't a spectator sport - you can make a difference!" A panel led by Catherine Canzian, Director SUNY Ulster Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

* THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 8 PM (at the Coach House Players)
 "An Introduction to the Comprehensive Planning Process 101" A panel discussion led by Jennifer Schwartz-Berky.

* THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18 8 PM (at the Coach House Players)
 "Reduce — Reuse — Recycle," A panel discussion with Steve and Julie Noble.

TIP JAR DONATIONS

Collected, 6/21:	\$11.00
Balance From 5/17:	-\$244.23
Total:	-\$ 233.23

Newsletter expense 6/21

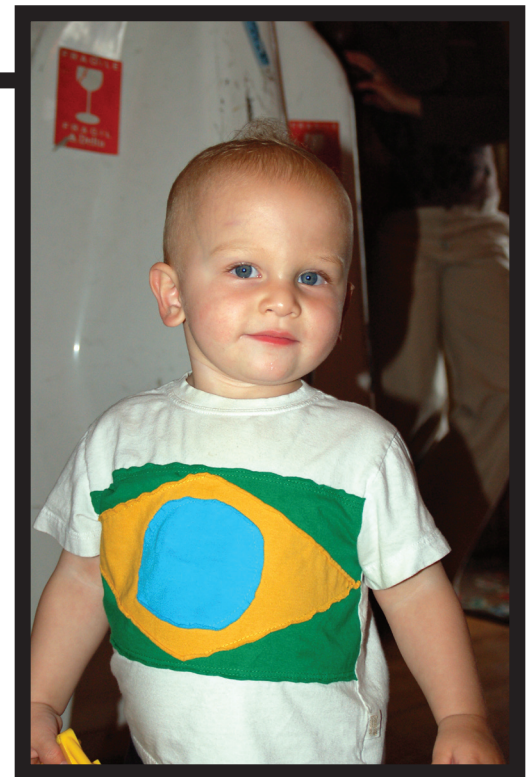
200 total	
1 double sided :	\$ 17.00
Total	-\$ 250.23

Attention Ward 9 Residents!

How will your actions today shape the Kingston of tomorrow?

*Our **children** need you to get involved. Join a committee. Volunteer. Hold a book swap or a garage sale — just to meet your neighbors!*

Share your opinions by writing letters to the editor. You can make a difference today.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The Community Mind – "Leaders make the knowledge of the community their knowledge, they make the minds of the community their mind. They are always wary of failing to comprehend the feelings of even one person, or failing to apprehend the principle of even one thing." - The Buddhist Monk Yuanwu

FAST FACT

Percent of Kingston population of households with someone living alone and aged 65 or older: 14.8%
 Source: Census Bureau