

2008 Accomplishments

I would like to thank everyone who has made this a productive year including the City Council (Randy Casale, Marlene Fredricks, Charles Kelly, Deanna Leake, Sara Pasti, Eleanor Thompson) all 130 City of Beacon Employees, business owners, our many residents who contributed their ideas and most important of all the volunteers in emergency service, boards, commissions and committees who donated their valuable time.

The 2009 Budget: This was by far the most challenging budget in years as we fought off the loss of more than \$550,000 of sales tax related revenue plus the correction of past year's homestead/non-homestead misappropriation (in 2009 a larger percentage of the tax levy was applied to homeowners as required by law). To prevent an unacceptable 25% tax hike the 2009 budget represents; the non-funding of three police positions and a Detective Clerk saving \$300,000; the reduction of a Fire Department Clerk from full time to part time; the cooperation of the Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corps to provide a higher level of service resulting in a savings of over \$225,000; the cooperation of the three Veterans organizations saving over \$7,000; the 50% reduction of Beacon contributions to private youth recreation leagues and senior programs; the increasing of various city fees and permits. The result is a tax rate of \$5.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Therefore if your home is valued at \$300,000 your tax will be \$1,590 or \$11 a month more than last year. Considering the 0% increase in 2008, this year's 8.66% increase conforms to the ten year Beacon average of approximately 4% per year. In fact the tax rate for 2009 is actually lower than the rate for 2008 had the correct base proportion been applied!

Appointments: The Mayor appointed and the Council approved Administrator Meredith Robson, Chief of Police Glenn Scofield, City Attorney Richard Wolf, Planning Board Chair Jay Sheers, Finance Director Toni Tracy, Conservation Advisory Commission Chairperson Tom Baldino and the re-appointment of ten year veteran Chairperson of the Zoning Board of Appeals John Dunne. They have all contributed enormously towards the City's accomplishments.

Police Department Highlights: The Administration established a Community Policing Program that set the direction of a more personal interaction with the public. The City hired three Police Officers and promoted Detective Louis Lucato to Detective Sergeant. A dedicated Main Street Patrol began in September which has been a huge success as reported by our business owners and residents who frequent or establishments. In addition we retired our two hard working Police Canines and trained two new ones for service.

The Council was effective in 2008. Required by resolution to proceed with Comprehensive Plan recommendations, the City Council; passed twelve zoning amendments; the Mayor organized three community groups to assist with Main Street, Fishkill Creek and Waterfront zoning amendments; we pushed ahead with an aggressive enforcement of building codes to protect our historic abandonment industrial buildings

from neglect; and we are in the process of finalizing a sustainable (green) building code and a Work Force Housing Law to guarantee that one of every ten new units are affordable to Beacon City Employees, volunteers, and residents.

Additional legislation passed by the City Council include: the registration of absentee owners of properties for safety concerns; we banned the use of outdoor furnaces as a health precaution; we executed a revenue generating contract to accept private sludge; we hired a company to perform the GIS computerized mapping of our infrastructure; and we established a contract with a company to construct bus shelters at no cost to the city. For our residents the Council increased the income bracket to allow more senior citizens to receive a City Tax Exemption; we passed a resolution to provide Cold War Veteran's Exemptions; and we joined a state resolution to reduce state property taxes for volunteer fire fighters.

In Recreation: The Recreation the Commission completed another successful year presenting programs for Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July fireworks and the Summer Concert Series. They also interacted with sports leagues to facilitate successful programs. The City Council passed the following resolutions regarding the University Settlement Camp: the pool was open to the public, an agreement was made with Beacon Community Center for operation of its LionSun Camp and other Beacon youth programs; an agreement was made with Michigan Technological University (MIT) to rent space for \$5,000; the Council signed an agreement (and is still in negotiations) with the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater for lease of White House building. The Hiddenbrook Park was opened to the public and we assisted Riverpool so our children could enjoy swimming in the Hudson River at Riverfront Park.

Communications: The Council opened the first thirty minutes of our meetings to the public to voice issues not on the agenda; in May we began televising our council meetings; and we held three successful town hall type meetings at the Veterans Memorial Building. We appreciate all of the residents who participated. You've made a difference.

Happy Holidays and Thank You,

Steve Gold, Mayor