

Town Times



ISSUE
05 Quarter 1
2021

Meeting Times:

***Please check website and/or facebook for updates on in-person/zoom meetings!**

Town Board: Second Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm.

Planning Board: Third Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm.

Zoning Board: Fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Communications Committee: First Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Sustainability Committee: First Thursday of every other month (beginning in January) at 7:00pm.

Economic Development Committee: Fourth Wednesday of every other month (beginning in January) at 7:00pm.



this issue

- Updates about the end of 2020 and what to look forward to in 2021!
- Business Highlight: Advanced Biological Marketing
- Property Tax Information

From Supervisor Mark Venuti

Dear Town Residents and Friends,

Season's greetings from the Town of Geneva. I hope you are staying well and following the recommended precautions in this precarious time. If we are careful for the next several months, we should start to see the end of this pandemic.

The town finished this difficult year in good shape. Sales tax revenue did not fall as much as we feared, and we cut expenses mid-way through the year to account for a decline. The town's 2021 budget was reduced in anticipation of a decline in revenue in 2021 in sales tax and from the state, so we should be able to weather this storm and continue to provide high quality services to our residents and businesses.

In 2020 we continued to make progress on upgrades to our water plant, which should be completed in 2021. In the fall we built a bike park behind the town hall that serves our residents and attracts visitors from near and far. It is closed for the winter and will reopen in the spring; news can be found on the town's bike park facebook page. If you would like to get involved and join the Friends of the Geneva Bike Park, let us know on the town's website or facebook page, or email me at supervisor@townofgeneva.com.

In the coming year we must get through the COVID-19 pandemic and get our economy back on track. Let's support our local businesses now, as it is safe to, and when things get back to normal, which likely won't be the old normal, but a new one. We can do it.

Bike Park

After a successful launch, the bike park has been closed for the season. Volunteers helped cover necessary areas to protect everything from the winter elements!



Property Tax Payments

-From Lorrie Naegele, Town Clerk

Town of Geneva Town and County Tax Payments

IN PERSON TAX payments can be made at the Town Clerk Office, 3750 County Road 6

HOURS (from January 1st – January 31st)

Monday – Thursday 8:00am - 4:00pm and Fridays in January ONLY 8:00am - 12:00pm

If you choose to pay installments, you must pay the first installment in January. If you pay the second installment in February (1st-29th) the interest will be 1%. If you pay the second installment in March (1st-31st) the interest will be 2%.

DROP BOX TAX payments

Please include the whole bill with your payment. I will return your receipt. Bills can be placed in the drop box by the flagpole until March 31st at 3pm. After 3pm on March 31st you will need to take your tax payment to the Post Office to be date stamped.

Agricultural Enhancement Committee

- From Mitch Wilber, Committee Chair

In 2021 the Agricultural Enhancement Committee will continue its efforts to serve as a resource on relevant policies, practices, and information for Geneva's farmers, landowners, and the Town leadership.

The Committee has a keen interest in connecting Geneva's agricultural community with effective initiatives on storm water management, erosion control, the role of farming in carbon sequestration, and the economic sustainability of agricultural producers. The Committee will evaluate the potential for other farms to join Ed Hansen Farms, Red Jacket Orchards, Pedersen Farms, Reed's Farm, and Vince DeBoover Farms as recognized by the Lake Friendly Farm program for their participation in New York's Agricultural Environmental Management program at a high level.

The Committee hopes progress in managing the pandemic will allow a summer twilight meeting to acknowledge properly the 2020 LFF recipients, the Reeds and the DeBoovers. Town residents interested in joining the Committee are encouraged to contact Supervisor Venuti for consideration of appointment in 2021.

Business Highlight – Advanced Biological Marketing

-From Bob McCarthy, Town of Geneva Economic Development Committee Chair

The Economic Development Committee provides each edition of the Town Times with a highlight of a business located in the Town. This edition's business is Advanced Biological Marketing.

The Town of Geneva is home to many unique and innovative companies. One of them, Advanced Biological Marketing (ABM), is celebrating its 20th year of serving the agricultural industry. ABM started in 2000 housed in a converted two car garage. It now operates globally with its biological seed treatment products being used in over a dozen countries and throughout the United States. They employ over 40 people. While its corporate offices and production facilities are located in Van Wert, Ohio, its million-dollar state of the art research facility, constructed in 2013, is located in the Town of Geneva at 294 Gambee Rd.

ABM has been associated with Geneva since its inception. Most of its technologies are developed by Geneva's own Dr. Gary Harman. Dr. Harman had a 40-year career at Cornell before retiring and moving to ABM in 2012 as its Chief Science Officer (CSO). While with Cornell and working at the New York State Ag Experiment Station (now Cornell AgriTech), Dr. Harman experimented with various strains of Trichoderma, a fungi present in nearly all soils. He was able to develop a commercial strain of Trichoderma that helps with plant growth, yield increase, root development, and abiotic stress resistance. ABM sells this and other strains of Trichoderma through a license agreement with Cornell.

Dr. Harman, though still active at the company, retired from this encore career as CSO. He was replaced at ABM by Dr. Molly Cadel-Davidson. She ably continued and built upon the work done by Dr. Harman. An example of the exhaustive research conducted at the Gambee Rd. facility is the screening process for Trichoderma strains. Dr. Harman explained that of the thousands of strains of Trichoderma screened, only 6 made the cut to become a viable commercial product. Though frustrating at times, this research has proven to be rewarding. Recently a new strain of Trichoderma, K-5, was discovered and is presently awaiting approval for crop use from EPA. ABM describes this new product as a potential game changer for their company and for the biological seed protectant market.

ABM CEO Dan Custis is committed to the research facility in Geneva. He explains that it is the continuous investment in the facility's research that enabled this company to compete and succeed in the very competitive seed protectant market. ABM's mission statement as articulated by CEO Custis is to: "deliver a product to the farmer that gives him/her the return on investment they need and deserve. When the farmer is successful we are successful. And that is our end goal."

ABM continues to explore new ideas. Dr. Harman plans on conducting field trials in Geneva with some of ABM's products on land provided by Bejo Seeds this coming spring. Anyone with interest in touring these plots in 2021 can contact Bob McCarthy at McCarthy.Geneva@gmail.com for arrangements.

Property Tax Exemption Information

-From Lorie Peck, Assessor

You may be eligible for one or more of the following property tax exemptions. All exemptions are due in the Assessor's Office by March 1st, each year.

Basic and Enhanced STAR Exemption

ENHANCED STAR is available to senior citizens age 65 or older and typically saves seniors even more on their school property taxes than BASIC STAR. For jointly owned property, only one spouse or sibling must be at least 65 by December 31 of the year when the benefit will begin.

NYS adjusted gross income must be \$88,050 or less.

The income limit applies to the combined incomes of all owners (residents and nonresidents), and any owner's spouse who resides at the property.

If you are currently receiving the Basic STAR exemption and think you qualify for the Enhanced STAR contact the assessor's office at 315-789-3922.

If you are currently receiving the Enhanced STAR you do **not** need to reapply.

Senior Citizen Exemption

If you are 65 years of age or older and your income is \$21,200 or less, you may qualify for a Senior Citizen exemption (in addition to the enhanced STAR). This would include **all** income such as Wages, Social Security, Retirement, Bank Interest, etc.

Alternative Veterans Exemption

If you are a veteran who owns residential real property and served in active duty during defined period of wars you may qualify for the veteran's exemption.

Cold War Exemption

If you own residential real property and you served in the active military, naval, or air service of the United States between September 2, 1945 and December 26, 1991, you may qualify for the Cold War Exemption.

Information regarding additional exemptions including agricultural, business, and clergy can be found at townofgeneva.com/departments/real_property_tax_matters.php. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Assessor at 315-789-3922.

REMEMBER: ALL EXEMPTIONS ARE DUE ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1ST, 2021

Highway Department

- From Bernie Peck, Highway Superintendent

The Town of Geneva Highway Department had a busy fall. We managed to at least pave Slosson Lane, after not knowing about our budget due to Covid. In addition to that, hauling leaves and brush always keeps us busy during the fall months, as well as preparing all the plow trucks for winter.

Just a reminder: Slate Rock Road was closed as of December 3rd for the winter. It will reopen sometime in April.

Please make our jobs a little easier by following these guidelines provided by the Ontario County Sheriff's Department:

With the winter driving season upon us, the Ontario County Highway Superintendents Association and the Ontario County Sheriff's Office would like to remind area residents how they can help snow plowing crews in performing their jobs.

Motorists are encouraged to operate their vehicles at a reduced reasonable speed with regard to road conditions and poorer visibility due to blowing and drifting snow. Motorists should drive defensively keeping in mind that you could encounter black ice, a slow moving snowplow or other vehicles entering the highway from behind high snow banks. Brake in a safe and efficient manner. Remember, that bridges and overpasses freeze first. In our cold and snowy winters, automobile drivers should remember to always wear their seat belt and make sure passengers do, too. Snow tires or, at the very least, all-season tires should be on your vehicle. Bring gloves, a coat and boots in case your car breaks down or gets stuck. Check the weather forecast for your destination. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

When you are plowing out your driveway, it is recommended that the snow be plowed from the road to the sides of the driveway. It is best to pile the snow on the right side of your driveway as you face the highway. This will help to keep snow from being plowed back into your driveway by the highway crews. **Snow should not be plowed from driveways and across a highway.** Not only is this type of snow removal illegal but the snow that is left behind in the highway presents a hazard to the motoring public and results in the Highway Department making a costly trip back to remove this snow hazard. The Highway Superintendents and the Sheriff's Office also encourage parents to make certain their children are not playing on or in the snow banks adjacent to the highway.

To ease the job of the highway snow removal crew, homeowners should shovel away the snow from around their mailbox. Not only does this allow mail to be delivered but provides the opportunity for the plow operators to see the mailbox. Unfortunately, many mailboxes are damaged yearly by heavy snow and ice as it is being removed from the roadway. The Ontario County Highway Superintendents Association reports that their crews are aware of the damage that is done to mail boxes by snow removal and as many precautions as are possible are taken to prevent mail box damage. When this unintentional damage occurs, it is the homeowner's responsibility to repair or replace the mailbox. The Highway Superintendents understand the frustration of homeowners when this type of unintentional damage occurs but they point out that the municipality cannot legally reimburse for mailbox damage while the municipality is engaged in snow removal.

The Ontario County Sheriff's Office also reminds motorists that parking along the highway, in snow plow turn-arounds and school bus turn-arounds, also can be hazardous and prevent highway crews from removing snow properly. If your vehicle becomes disabled, first notify the Sheriff's Office, then try to remove the vehicle as soon as possible. If the operator fails to follow these mentioned steps, the vehicle may get towed at the owner's expense for hampering snow removal.

To all of you good town folk Happy Holidays and a happier and way better New Year!

- From all my guys and myself here at the Highway Department. God Bless.

Communications Committee

- From Kim Aliperti, Committee Chair

The Communications Committee continues to meet monthly on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30. Over the past quarter, we have worked to get our website completely up to date with seasonally appropriate photographs. Local photographer Daniel Roman has generously donated his time and talent to this effort. We have also updated our Town Welcome Packet and added additional information regarding Covid 19 resources. We continue to explore additional ways to reach out to Town Members. The best way to stay in touch currently is to follow us on Facebook at Town of Geneva, NY. We post regularly!

Water & Sewer Department

- From Charlie Bracko, Water and Sewer Superintendent

The Town of Geneva Kashong water plant project is in the design stages but has seen some delay due to the Covid pandemic.

MRB Group, the Town's engineering firm, is working on a new Process Logic Controller system that will hopefully be put in this spring first, then followed by the major replacements of pumps, valves, etc.

The Town of Geneva Water and Sewer has completed the flushing and exercising of the water system main live valves and hydrants. Repairs were completed to the valves and hydrants that needed to be repaired.

During 2020, 6 new homes were constructed that required the department to install new water and sewer services.

The department assists during the winter months with snow and ice removal. This includes keeping the town's facilities clear of snow and helping the Highway Department as needed.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 315-277-0881.

Kashong Conservation Area Committee

- From Mark Palmieri, Committee Chair

Cabin fever is something we all suffered this past year, as we stayed hunkered down indoors during the pandemic; however, lots of us ventured out, spending time hiking the trails at the Kashong Conservation Area, finding it a peaceful escape from the woes of the world. I walked the site many times, either alone or with my dog, Morgan. We truly are fortunate to have this "slice of heaven" in the Town of Geneva.

This coming year, there are plans to update trails and add new trail markers. In addition, several signs will be placed along trails showing where you are and directions to the parking area. Also being updated will be the map and the website. We also hope to add a small pavilion.

There are many reasons to look forward to 2021, including more peaceful walks at the KCA...see you there.

Building Department

-From Floyd Kofahl, Code Enforcement Officer

It's Winter Time! The Building Department wishes Happy Holidays to All.

With winter comes several concerns that need to be addressed. First, for all the property owners that have sidewalks in front of their property, remember that you are required to keep these sidewalks clear of snow and ice. Within 24 hours of snow fall, the sidewalks are to be maintained. This also includes after the plow trucks go by and throw the snow on to the sidewalks. This is a safety issue for the residents of the Town. Second, if you are thinking of doing any construction with a concrete element involved, be aware that during the cold temperatures there are specific additional requirements to protect the concrete applications. You will have to cover the concrete to protect it from freezing if the temperatures are going to be below 40 degrees at any time during application. If the temperature is below 20 degrees for a consecutive 24 hours, you will not be allowed to pour the concrete. Any application of concrete on the ground requires the ground to not be frozen. So, when you dig your area for the concrete, make sure you cover it with thermal blankets to keep it from freezing prior to placing the concrete.

This has been a great year for the Town of Geneva. We have completed over 140 permits with an estimated construction cost of over 6 million dollars. We have approved over 70 new residential homes and apartment sites, with 18 issued building permits this year. We inspected and issued 132 Certificates of Occupancies and Certificates of Completions. We approved 4 new commercial project site plans. We placed all our permit applications online for easy access. It was a busy year.

Please remember, if you are looking to do any type of construction, or you are unsure if you need a permit, you can call the Building Department and ask questions prior to designing your project. We may be able to help to get it right on the first try.

Our email address is codeenforcement1@townofgeneva.com and the phone number is 315-789-3922 x 303, if you have any questions or concerns you would like to have addressed.

I look forward to working with you on all your future endeavors.

Stay Informed!

Email users, give us your email address and we'll include you on periodic messages about important town and area events. Send an email to supervisor@townofgeneva.com to sign up! Your email address will never be shared with others, and you can be removed from the list at any time by hitting the unsubscribe button at the bottom of town messages.

Sustainability Committee

- From Jacob Fox, Climate Smart Coordinator

The Town Sustainability Committee had an active fourth quarter of 2020. We hosted a webinar on stormwater with Seneca Lake Watershed Steward Ian Smith; check the "Lake Friendly Living Education Series" on the town's web site for the recording. We collaborated with the City of Geneva Green Committee on meetings and made comments on the NYSDEC "value of carbon guidance."

Discussions have continued with the Town of Geneva Carbon Farming Working Group, and we are looking toward demonstration trials at a local farm in the town for the 2021 growing season. Please reach out to foxjacob@mac.com if you are interested in learning more about the demo trials.

The sustainability committee is forming a subcommittee to address winter roads management. This committee will interface with winter roads experts in other communities and create a list of best practices for Town roads and driveways. Please reach out if you are interested in joining this subcommittee.

We will continue to offer the "Senior Cleanup" service year round. This program is for seniors in the town who do not feel comfortable coming to the transfer station but who want to participate in our recycling or composting programs. Anyone 65+ who is interested can contact Jacob Fox, 210-833-8666, and arrange for a pickup.

Lastly, we still have backyard compost boxes available to town residents. \$20 gets you a wooden compost box, education materials, and compost accelerator (\$100 value). Please call the Town Hall or contact Jacob Fox if you are interested.

We look forward to accomplishing even more in 2021! We welcome new members on the committee, and meetings are open. We meet the first Thursday of every other month at 7pm, with the option of joining in person at the Town Hall, or via Zoom. Next meetings are January 7th and March 4th.

Contact Us

Town of Geneva
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315-789-3922
townofgeneva.com

