



VICTORIA GEARTY
Mayor

VILLAGE OF OSSINING

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Power Restored, Plows Ready

It is with great relief to report that, as of the sending of this email, there are no power outages in the Village of Ossining. This morning's conference call with ConEd and municipal leaders from across Westchester, began with a weather report of the storm expected to hit tomorrow. It was somewhat reassuring that ConEd stated the crews currently on the ground will remain in the area through the next storm. During my status report, I expressed gratitude for the ConEd work crews and liaison, as well as the Ossining Police Department for leading our local boots on the ground. One of the

concerns I addressed was the ongoing communication failures--from their website to their robocalls, ConEd seems unable to receive and transmit dependably accurate information. This is a challenge that we expected would be fixed in the wake of the grievous shortcomings highlighted by Super Storm Sandy. Representatives from our county, state and federal government were on the call too. They are keenly aware of the lack of preparedness and communication failures. Let's see what we can do to improve conditions with all levels of government working together toward that goal.

Village officials were especially grateful that the residents in 54 homes with the Iroquois Road outage had their power back on by late Friday. In visiting residents of that neighborhood last week, I was heartened by the generosity shared by neighbors. In varying states of warmth, property damage, preexisting health concerns and access to resources, their stories were inspiring. Very few folks on this block have a generator. What they do have is a deep sense of community.

As I arrived, one woman spoke to me briefly, but didn't linger because she was carrying a cup of hot cocoa to her 80-year-old neighbor who was without heat, but refused to leave the house. As I drove away later, two women were grabbing shovels to work together to clear a driveway.

Through the frustration and disappointment, these residents were able to keep their conditions in perspective when thinking about the devastation in places like Puerto Rico, as well as offer praise for Village staff in the wake of the storm. Folks were grateful for the excellent performance by Village Public Works crews in removing trees and large branches. All of our first-responders and public works teams have been doing yeoman's work serving our community. Whether it's bringing hot coffee to ConEd crews to thank them and keep them feeling motivated to help just one more neighborhood, or knocking on the doors of

homes impacted by a fallen tree—the men and women of Village government have performed admirably on behalf of the people of Ossining. Their service offers a particularly stark comparison to the shortcomings of ConEd management.

A couple of important lessons that have been reinforced during these recent storms:

- if your power is out, report it immediately to ConEd
- avoid downed lines, and report them immediately to ConEd.

Connecting This Week

Join me for **Open Office Hours** tomorrow, Tuesday from 10am-12noon in the Board of Trustees office at Village Hall. No appointment is necessary, and all are welcome to discuss any topic, concern or idea of interest to you.

Have a burning question or idea, at any hour of the day or night?... Email me (mayor@villageofossining.org), the Board of Trustees (bot@villageofossining.org) or Village Manager Debbie McDonnell (dmcdonnell@villageofossining.org).

This Week's Work Session

This week's Work Session includes discussion of a couple of items that community members have expressed particular interest in. The "Regulating Businesses" item refers to potential legislation directed at eliminating illegitimate massage parlors. We will hear from Chief Sylvester and Corporation Counsel Kahan about how best to craft legislation that will prevent undesirable businesses from existing in Ossining, while not undermining the ability for legitimate massage therapists to practice here. This discussion will help move forward consideration of proposed legislation. We will likely hold off on finalizing any proposed law until there is a decision from the NYS Supreme Court regarding the Greenburgh Town law on this topic which is under review.

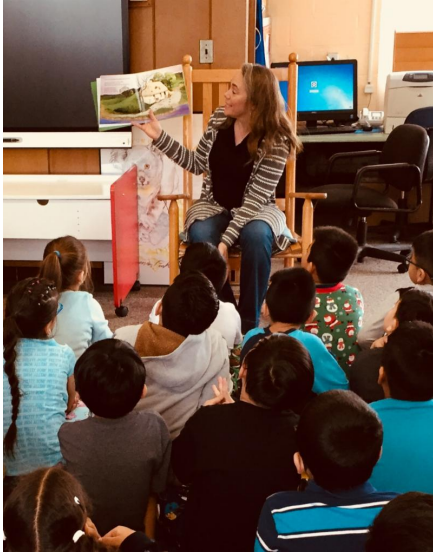
We will also be discussing the proposed Affordable Housing Policy. Proactively addressing safe, affordable, accessible housing in the Village is a priority that all Village Board members share. I expect that we will establish a new policy, along the lines of what was recommended by our Housing Needs Assessment, making us the progressive leader in Westchester County for affordable housing. For anyone who is interested in housing in Ossining, the policy framework recommendations of the Housing Needs Assessment is a must-read.

As always, Work Sessions are an opportunity for the Trustees and I to have discussions with staff and invited experts regarding potential policy or legislative changes. We invite community members to reach out to us by email (bot@villageofossining.org) anytime, or to speak during Visitor Recognition at Legislative Sessions on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

With Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Gearity', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Victoria Gearity, Ossining Mayor



Thank you Brookside School for the invitation to be part of your Community Readers program! As a parent of two recent Brookside graduates, it was a special delight to visit with three of your dual language classes.

The Ossining School District excels in so many regards—from our Science Research program to our championship Girls Basketball Team, Ossining is proud of our Schools! That said, school funding is challenging. Since Albany froze Foundation Aid in the wake of the great recession, the funding gap has steadily grown wider for our district.

While it was great to see Ossining recognized last week as one of the [10 Most Affordable Places to Live in Westchester](#), it sure doesn't feel that way when we pay our taxes! Though the Village tax rate has increased 0% in recent years, that represents a relatively small portion of our total tax bill.

Right now is budget season in Albany, and a group of engaged Ossining parents are inviting fellow community members to sign a letter asking Governor Cuomo and leaders in the NYS legislature to close the gap that has been growing wider each year since School Foundation Aid was frozen. [Click here to learn more about this grassroots effort.](#)

