

Pittsford Neighbors – “From the Supervisor” column – October, 2018 issue
Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

Strengthening Pittsford through Partnerships in Government

A core principle in the Town of Pittsford has been working together across all levels of government to provide services as efficiently as possible, at the lowest cost. This may seem like common sense to most of us, but the ideal often isn't embraced elsewhere in New York State. It is not uncommon to see separate levels of government operate in silos. No communication; no collaboration; no cooperation. The result – duplicative services, increased costs and lack of shared vision.

Since taking on the duties of Town Supervisor in 2014, I've made it a priority to establish strong partnerships across all levels of government. A prime example is the Town-Village School Leadership Committee, in which Pittsford's School Superintendent, the Village Mayor and the Town Supervisor meet regularly and work together, with open and clear communication, sharing resources and a commitment to act together for the benefit of all Pittsford residents.

Our interaction with state government offers an exemplary illustration, in the form of the Town's partnership with Senator Rich Funke. A strong advocate for Pittsford who shares my vision of good government, stronger neighborhoods and constant improvement for the benefit of all Pittsford residents, Senator Funke has worked with us to bring about tangible outcomes.

East Avenue Sidewalk: The Town had long considered a sidewalk along East Avenue from the Village line to the Town of Brighton. Such a project undoubtedly had its challenges. Coordination with the New York State Department of Transportation, terrain, elevation grade issues and, of course, financing. I sat down with Senator Funke to discuss with him the importance of the proposed sidewalk, not just as a matter of public safety but as part of my larger vision of making Pittsford more walkable. Providing better, safer and easier access to the Village for the many students at Nazareth College and St. John Fisher College would inevitably contribute to the Village's continuing vitality. We provided the Senator with with the information about the project that he requested – and he went to work for us, providing \$540,000 in funding for the project. You can see the result today as you drive along East Avenue. We expect to complete the sidewalk from the Village to Kilbourn Road by the end of this season, and to complete the portion from Kilbourn to the Brighton line next spring.

Park, Playground and Pavilion Improvements: The Town of Pittsford launched its Community Athletic Fields Improvement Project to upgrade fields and facilities at Great Embankment Park, Hopkins Road Park, and Thornell Farm Park. An important component of the improvements involved playgrounds for younger children and pavilions. Again we worked with Senator Funke. Again he supported our vision, bringing the Town a grant of \$225,000 to fund construction of three new playgrounds and two new sheltered pavilions at the parks. Another contribution toward continuing improvement made possible by Senator Funke and our shared collaborative approach.

New Traffic Light: The fight for a traffic light where Route 31 intersects with Mitchell Road and The Highlands of Pittsford dates back many years. The intersection had seen numerous motor vehicle accidents. With the 350 residents of The Highlands using this intersection every day and the volume of traffic on Route 31, more were sure to occur. It was only a matter of time. That picture has now changed substantially. Working with residents of The Highlands, management of the Highlands and the Town, Rich took on the issue, got it the attention it deserved from the State Department of Transportation and won both approval for the light and full state funding for it. The new traffic light went live on August 9 of this year.

I highlight the Town's cooperative relationship with Senator Funke because it represents such a successful example of the collaborative approach the Town seeks with all levels of government. No matter the level, we share the same duty – to best represent the interests of our residents.

As ever, if you have any questions or comments, please stop by my office in Town Hall, call me at 248-6220 or send a message to bsmith@townofpittsford.org.