



Town of Sweden *Snapshots*

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Fall 2016

A message from the supervisor's office

One of the most important functions of a Town Board is the creation and passage of legislation. After all, we are primarily a legislative body and the sole authority in setting local law. This authority is granted to the Town Board by the State of New York which also defines the scope and limits of a Town Board's legislative powers.

The Town's laws are codified as the Sweden Town Code and it is available in its entirety on our website at www.townofsweden.org

The Sweden Town Board is currently considering legislation in two areas: the regulation of commercial solar farms, which would be entirely new legislation; and amendments to existing codes (Chapters 175 Zoning and 97 Farming) to help

regulate special events. As with all new local laws, the Town Board must hold public hearings before adoption.

The Town has been approached by a few companies regarding the construction of large-scale commercial solar farms. None of the inquiries have led to a formal application but the Town Board is considering a moratorium on their construction for about six months until we can adopt appropriate regulations. We have concerns about scale, set-back, intrusion on neighboring properties and disposal once the useful life of the panels is over. We held a public hearing on a proposed six-month moratorium on September 13 but did not put it into effect as yet.

The Special Events legislation is being developed in response to concerns about large-scale and/or frequent special events held on agricultural properties. Concerns like noise, parking,



Supervisor **Rob Carges**

traffic and public health facilities will be addressed in the code amendments. We hope to complete this legislative process by the end of 2016. Look for updates on the website or give me a call at 637-7588.

Rob Carges, Supervisor

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Councilperson Windus-Cook resigns

Councilperson Danielle Windus-Cook resigned from the Sweden Town Board effective September 28, 2016. The term of office for the seat ends December 31, 2017. Windus-Cook served 12 years on the Town Board and was instrumental in establishing the Sweden Farmers Museum.

In her resignation letter, Windus-Cook stated that she will not be maintaining a residence in Sweden but will continue to operate her business here. The Sweden Town Board may appoint a replacement for the remainder of 2016 and 2017. The Board does not have to fill the seat. The next four-year term will be determined at the general election November 2017.

2016 general election information for Sweden residents

The 2016 General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 8. All three voting locations are handicap accessible. Polls will be open from 6 am to 9 pm.

Town of Sweden voting districts are as follows:

- Districts 2, 3, 4, 9 & 11 Sweden Town Hall
18 State Street
- District 1, 5 & 6 Sweden Senior Center
133 State Street
- Districts 7, 8, 10 & 12 Community Center
4927 Lake Road

What if you are not physically able to vote on November 8? Absentee ballot applications are available from the Monroe County Board of Elections by calling 753-1550, here at the Sweden Town Hall or at www.monroecounty.gov. Applications must be post-marked prior to seven days before the election in order to receive an absentee ballot.

Are you interested in working as an election inspector? Inspectors receive training by the Monroe County Board of Elections, they are then scheduled by an election coordinator, either Republican or Democrat depending on party affiliation. The current rate of pay is \$10/hour; training time is also paid. Comprehensive election information is available at www.monroecounty.gov/elections

13th Annual Sweden/Clarkson Halloween Fun

The Sweden/Clarkson Recreation Department's annual Community Halloween Party will be held on Thursday, October 27 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Community Center, 4927 Lake Road. The free event is open to families with children in grades four and under.

The two haunted houses (one exclusively for toddlers) are always big hits. Other activities include a costume contest at 7:15 pm, games, face painting, temporary tattoos, crafts and refreshments (apple cider and donuts).

This structured event is a great way to help your children enjoy Halloween in a safe environment. Older children are welcome to attend with families, but the activities (haunted house, games and candy gathering) are restricted to age appropriate children.

The Sweden/Clarkson Recreation Halloween Party is sponsored by Brockport Wegmans. Attendance is usually between 300 and 400 residents. For more information, call the recreation department at 431-0090.

Monroe Ambulance offers health services at The Center

Monroe Ambulance is offering some health services free of charge at the Town's 133 State Street facility—now known as The Lodge on the Canal. Every Wednesday from 10:30 am until 12 noon, there are free blood pressure checks. Monroe Ambulance provides a wallet card for participants to keep with them with their history of blood pressure checks—the patient can then show the history to his or her doctor.

Monroe Ambulance is also offering a fall prevention and safety program. While getting the blood pressure check, residents can choose to complete a Fall Prevention and Safety self-evaluation form. The form asks the senior if they feel safe (from falls) while cooking, while using the bathroom at night, and while performing other tasks. It also asks whether the resident has suffered a fall already or are afraid they are at risk for falling.

Monroe Ambulance provides suggestions for fall prevention and if the senior chooses, Monroe Ambulance will do a home inspection and point out things that seniors can do to improve safety at home. The program is free of charge.

According to Mike Bove, Deputy Chief for Patient Care/ALS at Monroe Ambulance, falls are the sixth leading cause of geriatric death in Monroe County. More specifically 20% of the 911 calls that Monroe Ambulance responds to in the Town of Sweden involve falls. That's about 200 ambulance calls per year.

The Monroe Ambulance Fall Prevention and Safety program is done in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control. Monroe is also offering the program at several of the senior housing complexes here—Royal Garden, Park Avenue and The Landing.

For more information about the Monroe Ambulance Fall Prevention Program, inquire at The Lodge on the Canal on Wednesdays or call Monroe Ambulance's main number at 232-9000.

Editor's Note: Silver Sneakers is a great exercise program incorporating exercises that improve balance and coordination and may prevent falls. Silver Sneakers is offered at both The Lodge on the Canal and the Sweden Clarkson Community Center. Call 431-0090 for info.

Committee meets to study water issues/solutions

Even if you are among the hundreds of Sweden households with access to public water, you must be aware that we are in the midst of a drought (see article page 6). If you happen to be one of the Sweden households that relies on well water, you are probably more acutely aware of the drought conditions.

Several residents have brought water quality/quantity issues to the attention of the Sweden Town Board this summer. Well water issues are not new to the Sweden Town Board. The Board was able to create six new water districts between 2003 and 2015 bringing public water to many more Sweden households. The Board also had its 1998 Water Study updated in 2013 to look at potential additional districts.

The projects studied all appeared to be above a threshold of affordability set by the New York State Comptroller's Office. The Town of Sweden also did not seem to qualify for any of the federal/state funding that would bring specific projects under the threshold.

However, the Town Board has convened a committee of the Board and interested citizens to take another look at possible grant/loan programs that would bring water district expansion projects under the threshold.

The most important part of the committee's work right now is to gather comprehensive information about well water issues in the Town. In October, a survey will be mailed to all residents who do not have public water. The Town is also looking into setting up an on-line option for participation in the survey.

The Town Board urges all residents on private wells to **complete the survey and return it by Monday, October 31**. Grant/loan opportunities generally require information that is contained in the survey. Without public participation in the survey, it will be difficult to pursue grants/loans.

The survey asks questions about the quality and quantity of water, whether wells have gone dry, whether they have been found to contain contaminants. The survey also asks a very general question about household income—that information is used to qualify for certain funding opportunities.

The Sweden Town Board is aware that even if our drought condition eases and water tables return to normal, there will still be properties in the Town that do not have sufficient quantity or acceptable quality of water. The Town is committed to continue exploring the opportunities to expand public water where possible.

The public will be kept up-to-date on the Committee's progress through this newsletter and on the Town website at www.townofsweden.org.



Replacing the heating/cooling equipment on top of the Sweden/Clarkson Community Center is no simple task. There are a total of 12 units and the Town replaced two of them this summer. Pipitone Enterprises was the winning bidder and brought in a crane to hoist the units onto the roof of the gymnasium. Photos by Todd Dobson.



Town of Sweden 2017 budget under tax cap

The Town of Sweden’s 2017 Budget is a \$4.9 million spending plan that stays under the Tax Cap set by New York State. The increase in the total tax levy is \$28,138, inclusive of all special districts, leaving a cushion of \$2,575 under the Tax Cap.

For the fourth year the Tax Cap was not the 2% Tax Cap that many assume. The 2017 Budget cap was less than 1% —.68%. There are other factors in the lengthy Tax Cap formula but a simple division of the levy increase of \$28,138 by the 2016 total levy of \$2,569,348 yields an actual increase of 1.1%.

Assessments grew by just over \$6 million, inclusive of the Village of Brockport. The tax base growth factor of .0073 allows a portion of the new assessment to grow the tax cap calculation.

Property owners are generally most interested in the effective tax rate. It is the rate, multiplied by the assessment per thousand that determines a property owner’s individual tax bill. The rate per thousand for properties within the Village of Brockport will drop by \$.01332 (about a penny per thousand); the rate per thousand for properties in the Town outside the Village will increase by \$.00364 (less than a penny per thousand).

The reason for the difference in rate changes between Village taxpayers and Town outside taxpayers is the highway budget. Village taxpayers do not contribute to the highway fund; it is the highway fund that had the largest levy increase— \$18,200 out of the \$28,138. Highway appropriations increased by \$30,200 but were partially off-set by an increased appropriated fund balance. The highway spending increase is attributable to wage increases.

The special district levies increased by \$3,426 taken as a whole, although some special district levies decreased slightly. The two largest special district levy increases are in the Heritage Square sewer and the Colby Street water districts.

The general fund tax levy increase is \$6,512. Budgeted appropriations for 2017 total \$2,571,880. That is actually a \$1,723 decrease in budgeted appropriations from 2016. The reason for the levy increase is a decrease in the appropriated general fund balance. The Town Board was able to reduce expenses in the justice court, the community center and park to achieve the decrease.

The 2017 Budget leaves in tact all services offered in the 2016 budget. At the time this newsletter went to print, the Board was expected to set the Public Hearing on the Preliminary 2017 budget for Tuesday, October 25 at 7 pm.

This budget article continues on page 6 with a chart of elected official salaries. Please note there is no increase in the salaries of supervisor or councilperson. Other elected officials have been budgeted for a two percent increase.

2017 budget by category

NYS requires municipalities to report its budget in the following categories:

Transportation	\$1,472,700
General Government	\$1,267,556
Culture & Recreation	\$ 710,185
Employee Benefits	\$ 793,850
Home & Community	\$ 184,250
Debt Service	\$ 99,363
Public Safety	\$ 118,250
Economic Assistance	\$ 51,879
Health	\$ 2,500
Special Districts	<u>\$ 213,896</u>
TOTAL	\$4,914,429

Special District levy detail

Gallup Water	\$26,658
Colby Water	\$12,517
East Ave Water	\$ 4,550
Shumway Water	\$12,463
Swamp Salmon Water	\$ 8,135
County Line Water	\$ 3,831
Sweden Hills Light	\$19,045
Crestview Light	\$ 2,425
Hilltop Light	\$18,245
Talamora Light	\$ 9,750
Fieldstone Light	\$ 2,500
Northview Light	\$ 1,950
Walmart Light	\$ 675
N. Poole Light	\$ 2,050
Heritage Light	\$ 2,400
Consolidated Sewer	\$19,032
Fourth Section Sewer	\$13,717
Heritage Sewer	\$ 3,000
Drainage I	\$ 5,300
Walmart Sidewalk	\$ 1,000
Talamora Park	\$ 1,580

Sweden Town Taxes for a \$125,000 house over 10 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Village	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$286.25	\$290.63	\$287.50	\$285.25	\$298.38	\$307.08	\$304.99	\$303.33
Outside	\$553.75	\$553.75	\$556.25	\$559.25	\$557.50	\$558.63	\$581.38	\$593.94	\$587.92	\$588.37

From the desk of the Town Historian

Education in Early Sweden

September brings the first hint of autumn, the initial change of color in our trees and the sounds of children heading off to school in the morning. Some of our local students still walk although not like our forefathers did. Sue Edmunds' great-great grandpa walked four miles to school. On cold winter mornings his mother would give him two baked potatoes to carry in his hands to keep warm. They would be cold by the time he had them for lunch! We are so fortunate to have Sue generously share her father's writings about "Our Vanishing Folklore" and the stories of five generations of his ancestors growing up in our area.

Early pioneer farmers needed a lot of assistance planting, cultivating and harvesting crops, so they had large families. One of Sue's ancestors, James Edmunds II, had seven sons who then fathered 66 children. The family grew quite large and while that helped with labor on the farm, it created another problem—how to educate the children.

Education on the frontier was quite different and "book larnin" was considered very important. Most of it took place in homes because there were no school buildings. Once homes were built and farm land cleared, the school would often be the first public building erected in a settlement frequently, "before they even built a church."

In 1824, when the Edmunds family moved to the Town of Sweden there was already a log school on the property that they bought. The building served as a home for the family until 1831. "To make up for their occupation of the school building, he, Eliphalet Edmunds, gave the district another piece of land 1/8 mile east of the corners where the original building stood."

There a new building was erected which lasted until 1846. In that year, his son renewed the land lease to the district for 100 years for the price of \$1. He also helped to build a new school which was a brick building 24 feet wide by 32 feet long at a cost of \$550.23. According to records, this money also include the building of "two suitable privies."

"It was to this school, still standing though remodeled into a private home in 1950, that five generations of the Edmunds family went for elementary education. During the 103 years of service as the school for District 3, it was, according to a great aunt who was one of the first students to enter it, substantially unchanged. The crude benches were changed for desks with form-fitting seats attached and there was about every 20 years a change in the potbellied stoves. On very cold days, these stoves kept those students within 10 feet of it fairly warm and left those farther away to shiver in the cold."

"This school would serve as a model for most such early schools. The pupils sat on fixed benches. In front, before raised platforms on which the teacher sat, was a recitation bench to which generation after generation marched to recite the lessons they had learned. The records for this school are complete from the year 1830. Records were kept by the clerk of the district and carefully recorded from that year until 1920 when the book was filled and a new clerk's book had to be bought. The book records how the school was supported, who the teachers were, how long each taught in the district, how much he or she was paid, and how many pupils were taught."

Teachers were apparently fairly young and not extensively trained. A teacher was either an improved or inspected teacher who had been "visited" by the local board and given a certificate to teach or they could also be hired to teach with no real teaching education at all. What seemed to be most important was that they be of good moral character.

The length of the school year varied widely depending on the amount of money collected in the school tax levy and the availability of teachers. One year the winter term lasted only "2 10/30" months. Other years it was nine months. The only other expense would be the heating of the school. That was resolved by asking each student to bring a cord of wood to the school.

There was a winter session in which many of the older students who could not work during the summer session would attend. "The teacher of that session would often be a man who could whip the oldest student in a fair fight! Teachers who could not do so often had a miserable time teaching." Apparently many of the older students came to socialize rather than to learn. They would be helping on the farm in the summer and were unable to attend.

The courses taught were the fundamentals of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, history and geography. The students would demonstrate their abilities from the recitation bench at the front of the class to which they would all have to march to show how much they had memorized. The school day was six hours long with recess in both the morning and afternoon so the children did have some time to relax and have fun. Since the school was the only public building in most communities (until a church could be erected), it was also a gathering place for adults. It was here that the children would entertain their parents with short plays at Christmas time and it was here that itinerate speakers would hold forth. The school, thus, served many purposes from educating the children to being a gathering place for both religious services and entertainment for the adults.

Kathleen Goetz, Historian
Town of Sweden

Sweden is officially in an extreme drought condition

The Town of Sweden is presently in an extreme drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.** An extreme drought, classified as D3, is the result of only receiving 50 to 60% of the normal rainfall over the past six months coupled with unseasonably high temperatures and with stream-flows in the lowest 5th percentile. In mid-September, we are at approximately minus 10 inches.

A drought can have a substantial impact on plants, animals, soil, ecosystems, agriculture and the economy. Some biotic and abiotic factors recover when the drought is over, others have long lasting ramifications.

The frequency and amount of rainfall during the growing season with respect to plant health and growth is of greater importance than the total precipitation in a given year. An extreme drought can occur even when the annual precipitation is normal or even above normal.

During a severe drought, a plant's leaves will wilt, show marginal scorch or prematurely drop from the plant. Its growth will be stunted and its life-cycle accelerated. The long-term effects of drought on the health and survivability of woody plants and perennials are less obvious.

To understand the impact of drought on plants, one must remember water is the medium whereby the chemical reactions inside a plant cell take place—including photosynthesis. A soil water deficit can increase the solute concentration outside the roots compared to the internal environment of the root leading to reverse osmosis. Thus, the cell membrane shrinks from the cell wall leading to cell death. The same type of injury can occur with a build-up of road salts or excess fertilizer around plant roots.

More commonly, a soil water deficit causes the soil to crack exposing roots the air upsetting the soil-plant-air continuum. If these conditions persist, the integrity or life of the plant is compromised. Compromised native plant life means it's essential for wildlife to seek an alternative food source in order to survive. This is often a farmer's

field or homeowner's garden or landscaping. Increased stress and altered/inadequate diet can have health consequences for wildlife—malnutrition or disease.

Soil moisture is not only important for plant life, it is the key for the breakdown of organic matter. Droughts cause less organic activity and the death of many soil insects and biotic organisms. Soil quality is degraded and wind erosion increases.

As water bodies and wetlands dry out, water animals die and other wildlife migrate in search of water. Entire food chains and ecosystems are disrupted leading to vulnerabilities for all species.

The economic impact of droughts is comprehensive for individuals, families, businesses and governments. Farmers incur great loss during an extreme drought as do associated businesses. Dry conditions yield more brush fires, destroying farms, forests and homes. Residents with wells suffer loss of quantity and quality of water. Governments spend more to fight fires and send emergency supplies. Hydro-energy companies operate below capacity with community ramifications.

Droughts are not tracked like hurricanes—the beginning and end remain in question. Fresh water is a precious and scarce commodity worldwide and it needs to be used wisely. A birdbath and/or shallow plastic dish at ground level can be an oasis for our precious wildlife.

** Weekly map produced jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Department of Agriculture, and the National Drought Mitigation Center and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Kathy Harter, Chair

Environmental Conservation Board

2017 Budget continued

Schedule of Elected Officials	Salary
Supervisor	\$25,918
Councilperson (4)	\$7,559
Justices (2)	\$20,387
Highway Superintendent	\$77,468
Town Clerk	\$47,217
Receiver of Taxes	\$21,754



Sweden's Buildings and Grounds Department built two shelters late this summer at the dog park to protect residents from inclement weather. Photo by Roger Evans.

Sweden assessor retires

Tony Eaffaldano retired in August after serving as Sweden’s assessor for 12 years. The assessor’s job is arguably the least popular and most difficult in town government. No one wants to pay more property tax. However, as Tony always correctly pointed out, it’s not the assessor who determines how large the town levy or village levy or school levy is: the levy is set by the governing board. The assessor merely apportions the levy according to the rules set by New York State.

When Tony was hired after the untimely death of Assessor Alan Bader in 2004, he was no stranger to the tax roll of the Town. He worked for the firm that conducted Sweden’s 2000 town-wide reassessment— the Town’s first reassessment in 30 years. It was a lengthy process and Tony actually had an office at the Town Hall for close to a year. His firm specialized in helping local governments conduct reassessments—he worked in communities all over the North East and brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to Sweden.

As the Town’s assessor, Tony consistently kept the Sweden tax role at 100% and earned the Excellence in Equity Award from New York State for “efforts to provide property owners with fair and equitable assessments.” Tony was held in very high regard by his peers, they relied on his advice for some of the difficult and unusual property valuations and he served in leadership roles among the assessors’ associations, including as President of the Monroe County Assessors Association.

As a Town employee, Tony was a favorite with the staff. His sometimes gruff demeanor belied a compassionate

Fall brush pick-up scheduled October 24-28

The Sweden Highway Department will conduct the annual fall brush pick-up Monday, October 24 through Friday, October 28. All brush must be placed at the roadside by 7 am on October 24 and no sooner than October 21. Brush must be no longer than six feet and placed parallel to the road. This is a brush only pick-up. Please use caution when placing brush near storm drains.

Residents may also drop brush off at the highway garage during normal business hours. In addition, a highway truck can be made available for large volumes of brush throughout the year. The truck is parked overnight at the residence and homeowners are responsible for loading the brush.

Leaf vacuuming will soon begin in subdivisions and will continue as weather permits. For additional information about either of these services, please call the highway department at 637-3369.

and supportive co-worker. He often bore the brunt of inner office humor and pranks with a good nature; he is missed at the Town Hall already particularly his signature dish— Artichokes French.

Tony’s retirement won’t be idle. He has golf, his dog Rocky, his adult children and travel plans with his girlfriend Marge to keep him busy. The Town thanks Tony



Tony Eaffaldano

for his service and the staff thanks him for his friendship.

Editor’s Note: Tony’s replacement as assessor begins in mid-October. The December issue of the *Snapshots* will introduce her. Assistant Darla Emmerson is still available for residents’ assessment needs.

Town Hall holiday schedule

The Town Hall is open 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday except for the following holidays:

Monday, October 10	Columbus Day
Friday, November 11	Veteran’s Day
Thurs & Fri, November 24 &25	Thanksgiving
Fri & Mon, December 23 &26	Christmas
Monday, January 2, 2017	New Year

Town of Sweden Department Phone Numbers:

Assessment	637-8683
Building/Planning	637-8684
Clerk	637-2144
Court	637-1070
Dog Control	637-4260
Finance/Supervisor	637-7588
Highway/Cemetery	637-3369
Recreation Center	431-0090
Senior Center	637-8161
Tax Receiver	637-2145

Snapshots: Send ideas, comments and suggestions to Leisa Strabel at the Sweden Town Hall, 18 State Street, Brockport, NY 14420. Phone: 637-7588; Fax: 431-0039; email: leisas@townofsweden.org

Phase II of Soldiers Tower restoration complete

In 2013, the Town of Sweden acquired the Soldiers Memorial Tower, Owens Road. Stabilization of the circa 1894 Tower was paramount as it was in such a state of disrepair that many feared it would collapse. The Town hired master stone mason Steve Monno to stabilize the Tower and prevent further deterioration.

Last year, the Town applied for a grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation to continue work on the Tower. The Town was awarded \$15,000 in December and was able to re-engage Steve to continue the restoration work. Starting in July, Steve repointed the exterior of the Tower and repaired the entry archway.

Steve has a deep affection for the Tower which was built to honor the area's Civil War soldiers. He'd like to see the rest of the Tower restored—about a third of the top has fallen and the stairway and door were destroyed years ago. The next logical step, according to Steve, would be to protect the inside and the opening at the top of the Tower. The Town has stored some of the fallen stones off site, but many more would need to be cut from matching Medina sandstone.

Pictured at right are Steve and the Rochester Area Community Foundation's Saul Maneiro. The Town is grateful for Steve's expert masonry skills and the Foundation's financial support.



Route 531 terminus project update

The New York State Department of Transportation has reported that the project to improve the terminus of Route 531 at Washington Street is progressing. The project includes improvements along Route 31 from Route 36 to Salmon Creek Road. Route 531 will tie directly into Route 31 with an improved at-grade signalized intersection. The DOT is currently finalizing the construction plans and purchasing property required

for the project. The plan is to open bids in November and beginning some limited construction this winter.

Construction will be on-going for two years. The proposed work for each year is as follows:

2017: The majority of the work will be at the interchange area of Route 531 and Route 36. Route 531 and Route 31 will remain open to traffic; however, Route 36 will be closed between Colby Street and Route 531. A detour using Colby Street will be utilized for the Route 36 traffic.

2018: The majority of the work will be along Route 31. Route 31 from Salmon Creek Road to Route 36 will be reduced to one lane, eastbound only from mid-May to the end of August to provide space to reconstruct Route 31. Incentives have been included in the construction contracts to minimize the time that Route 31 is down to a single lane. A Route 531 westbound detour will direct drivers to Manitou Road north to Route 104 west to Route 260 south.

For more information on the project, contact Project Engineer Daniel Farrelly at 272-4875 or Daniel.farrelly@dot.ny.gov or visit www.dot.ny.gov/531. The Town of Sweden will continue to provide updated information received from the NYS DOT in this newsletter and on the Town website.