

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA—ENJOYED BY ALL AGES



Somers Fire Chief Carson Wilkinson
and his wife Jan as Santa and Mrs. Claus



Grandparents, parents, and kids of all ages joined Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Somers Breakfast with Santa fundraiser on Saturday, December 2, 2017. Everyone enjoyed holiday music, pancakes, lots of butter and syrup, sausage, and juice while the kids waited to visit with Santa. The young ones were dressed in their finest holiday outfits and parents captured the magic of Christmas with many clicks of the camera as the kids gave Santa their wish list. Before leaving the event, the kids proudly presented Santa and Mrs. Claus with pictures they colored. All were displayed on the bulletin board in the Leon Dreger Auditorium.

The annual Breakfast with Santa event was popular in Somers for decades. After several years of taking a break, the tradition was resurrected this year with big success thanks to all who attended and helped. The fundraiser proceeds benefited the Somers Fire & Rescue Association and the Shalom Center in Kenosha who will receive donated nonperishable items.

Adam Pisula, President of the Somers Fire & Rescue Association spearheaded the event as well as George Stoner, President of the Village, and Bill Morris, Administrator. Ann Brumback and Jackie Nelson were responsible for decorating, and members of the Somers Explorers Post #463 and Somers Fire & Rescue Association cooked pancakes, served food, helped guests, and performed the cleanup.

The guests of honor, Santa and Mrs. Claus, were convincingly played by Somers Fire Chief Carson Wilkinson, and his wife Jan.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to Ocean Spray and Kwik-Trip for supporting this fundraising event by donating juice and food items.

CREATION OF NEW SOMERS STORMWATER UTILITY DISTRICT GENERAL INFORMATION

PUBLIC HEARING

The Village Board of Trustees will conduct a public hearing on the 9th day of January, 2018 at the Village/Town Hall commencing at 5:30 pm for the purpose of discussing the possibility of establishing a Stormwater Utility District.

NEW ORDINANCE

A new Village Stormwater Utility ordinance is being proposed. Stormwater utilities are authorized under Chapters 1 and 66 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Section 66.0821 allows municipalities to create a system for collecting, transporting, pumping, treating, or disposing of stormwater.

WHAT IS A STORMWATER SYSTEM?

A stormwater system consists of concrete and metal sewers, storm drains, manholes, curbs, gutters, ditches, retention and/or detention ponds or basins, dams, manmade channels or storm drains, and flood control facilities which are designed or used for the collection, control, transportation, treatment or discharge of stormwater. The goal of the stormwater system is to avoid property damage from flooding.

WHY IS SOMERS PROPOSING A NEW STORMWATER UTILITY?

Currently, Somers does not have a Stormwater Utility District. The cost of operation, expansion, and maintenance of the Village's drainage infrastructure and watercourses are paid by property taxes through the General Fund and distributed amongst the tax base. The tax base does not include tax-exempt properties such as schools, churches, and public property, which also contribute stormwater runoff into the system. The amount of stormwater runoff produced from residential property is typically less than the runoff produced from other land use classifications. This is due to the fact that residential property typically has a higher percentage of grassed area, which allows more stormwater to soak into the ground, producing less runoff. Therefore, the collection of storm water management funds through general property tax levy may not be the most equitable method of collection because it does not include all properties that contribute to stormwater runoff.

A timely example of financial problems that can occur with flooding is the historic eight-inch rainfall of July 11, 2017 that produced approximately \$200,000 of flood damage in Somers. This unbudgeted amount had to be paid from the General Fund

which took funds away from other budgeted items or reserves. This method of paying for flood emergencies year after year is not fiscally prudent or equitable to all.

WILL THERE BE A STORMWATER UTILITY DISTRICT FEE?

Yes. The fee will apply to all property owners in both the Village and Town of Somers because every property generates runoff and will benefit from the District's improvements. The fee will be included annually on tax bills.

HOW ARE FEES DETERMINED?

The measurement and calculation of impervious areas on a parcel will determine the proportionate share of the annual stormwater budget that will be charged to each individual property owner. The impervious area is the amount of area on that particular parcel that does not allow water to absorb easily into the soil. There is a strong correlation between impervious ground cover and the amount of stormwater runoff leaving that property. Therefore, the impervious area analysis is an appropriate basis for developing utility user fees. The Kenosha County GIS database was utilized to evaluate parcel impervious areas.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET FOR THE STORMWATER UTILITY?

A proposed budget will be developed annually that includes funding projects such as planning, staff, storm sewer system maintenance, capital improvement projects, equipment replacement funding, management, and other expenditures. The budget may also include best management practices maintenance which includes street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, leaf and brush collection, and televising of the existing storm sewer system to detect failures.

DO OTHER NEARBY COMMUNITIES COLLECT STORMWATER UTILITY FEES?

Yes. City of Kenosha, Village of Mt. Pleasant, Village of Pleasant Prairie, Village of Salem Lakes, Village of Bristol, Village of Sturtevant, City of Racine and others.

Article from Karl re: S&P Rating Budget Highlights

S & P BOND RATING IMPROVED TO A+ WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ALL SOMERS TAXPAYERS

Standard & Poors gave Somers an A+ rating on our most recent water and sewer system revenue bonds. This is a marked improvement from just a few years ago when Somers carried the lowest bond rating of any municipality in the State of Wisconsin.

The high bond rating is important to Somers residents. It allows us to borrow at a lower cost with more flexibility. This means our tax dollars go farther. It also helps in attracting and retaining businesses that want their municipality to be well run and strong financially.

Some recent changes implemented by Village Trustees that have contributed to an improved bond rating include:

- ☑ Strong reserves.
- ☑ Improved financial policies, controls, and monitoring.
- ☑ Capital planning that focuses on the long-term with annual updates.
- ☑ Budgeting and forecasts that now cover three years.
- ☑ Success in expanding and diversifying our tax base.

VILLAGE AND TOWN MILL RATE

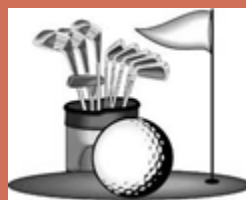
The Village of Somers Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve the 2018 budget. There was an increase in the tax levy from \$3,745,706 in 2016 to \$3,913,472 in 2017. The municipal tax levy is the amount which will be collected through property taxes in order to cover expenses for services provided to property owners in Somers. The 2016 Village mill rate was \$5.24 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation and the 2017 Village mill rate is \$5.51 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The mill rate increase, approximately 5%, will increase the Village tax on a \$200,000 home by \$54.00.

The Town of Somers Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve the 2018 budget. There was an increase in the tax levy from \$438,603.31 in 2016 to \$458,366.62 in 2017. The 2016 Town mill rate was \$5.17 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation and the 2017 Town mill rate is \$5.45 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The mill rate increase, approximately 5%, will increase the Town tax on a \$200,000 home by \$57.08.

2018 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS VILLAGE/TOWN OF SOMERS

- \$500,000.00 - upgrade of Village and Town roads and streets during 2018. Priority will be considered based on condition.
- \$200,000.00—sewer lateral lining on aging lines installed in the 1950's.
- \$170,000.00—purchase of a new public works dump truck and plow that replaces a ten year old vehicle.
- \$75,000—new full-time staff position of Assistant Administrator. This amount includes salary and benefits for a 12-month period.
- \$40,000.00—new electronic Village/Town sign on Highway E replacing the wooden Town of Somers sign.
- \$30,000.00—replacement of several units of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for rescue workers and firefighters.
- \$ 36,169.00—new full-time firefighter/rescue position. This amount is for a nine-month period. Start date is targeted for April.
- \$15,000.00—update IT and network.

NEW YOUTH RECREATION PROGRAM WINTER 2018 CO-ED GOLF CLINIC STARTS JANUARY 10 SIGN UP IN PROCESS



This clinic offers a friendly introduction of golf basics to youth from 5-13 years old. Teaching stations will take place in the lower level of the Village/Town Hall. Golf swing, putting, short game, and physical fitness will be taught. A camera and I-pad will be available for swing review.

Dan Plens, our instructor, is a graduate of the Golf Academy of America and has spent the past seven years at the Head Golf Professional at Lake Lawn Resort. Plens is also a certified US Kids Golf Coach.

The cost of the clinic is \$60.00. Clinics are held Wednesdays 5-6 PM and Saturdays 9-10 AM during the month of January. Registration forms can be found on-line or at the Village/Town Hall. Sign up is currently in process. Please call Tim Kitzman, Clerk-Treasurer at 262-859-2822 with questions.

NEW PIKE RIVER BIKE/HIKE TRAIL EXTENDS KENOSHA COUNTY PATHWAY TO MT. PLEASANT



Bikers and hikers will now be able to enjoy off-road paved trails in Somers that connect the old North-Shore Railway Trail, UW Parkside, and Petrifying Springs Park to Racine County.

Beginning at the entrance of Petrifying Springs Park on Berryville Road (Highway A), the new 1.5 mile trail heads north, crossing the Pike River on a new pedestrian bridge, currently under construction. Continuing north along the east side of Green Bay Road (Highway 31), the trail turns west at the intersection of Green Bay Road and County Line Road where it will connect to a future northern trail currently being designed by the Village of Mt. Pleasant.

This project is managed by Kenosha County and is part of the Kenosha County Comprehensive Bike Plan. It provides safe off-road options where currently there are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The trails consist of 10-foot wide asphalt with 2-foot soil covered shoulders in most parts. This route was selected based on the minimization of environmental impacts and uniform accessibility. This new trail completes an important connection, now and in the future, that links bicycle and pedestrian trails in Racine and Kenosha counties.

HIGHWAY S EXPANSION IMPACTS SOMERS RESIDENTS

A public meeting was held November 16, 2017 at the Kenosha County Center in Bristol to discuss the status of planning for the upcoming Highway S reconstruction and expansion project. Although construction of both phases one and two are tentatively scheduled for 2020, now is the time for residents to voice their concerns and ask questions regarding the various alternatives and options being presented.

Phase one includes a four lane divided highway expansion from Green Bay Road (Highway 31) west to Highway H. Phase two involves expanding Highway S to four lanes from the I-94 east frontage road to Highway H.

Somers residents impacted by this project are encouraged to direct questions and concerns to Kenosha County Highway Commissioner, Clemont Abongwa at 262-653-1870 or Clemont.Abongwa@kenoshacounty.org.

\$97,304.53 FLOOD STATE AID AWARDED

Overnight on July 11, 2017, more than eight inches of rain fell in Southeastern Wisconsin, flooding homes and closing roads and bridges

According to Wisconsin Emergency Management, Kenosha County incurred approximately \$1.7 million in reported flood damage. A total of 1,300 homes were affected by the floods, 14 sustained major damage, and 4 businesses reported major damage. Somers residents were provided emergency cleaning supplies donated by Sam's Club with a matching donation by the Village. Red Cross kits were available as well as debris pick up which was provided the Village Public Works Department. Several Somers culvert and road shoulder washouts occurred and 160 feet of pavement and embankment erosion occurred on the 13th Avenue bridge. An application was submitted to the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation for Disaster Damage Aid. \$97,304.53 was awarded to reimburse eligible repair costs.



WATER MAIN PROJECT PHASE 1 FINISHED HIGHWAY L - FROM 41ST AVENUE TO HIGHWAY 31 SAVED \$60,000



The Village of Somers, Village of Somers Deputy Sheriff, Kenosha County Sheriff's Department, and various construction companies extend a **thank you to the residents** who were impacted by the Highway L three week road closure between 41st Avenue and Green Bay Road. Admittedly an inconvenience, the road closure was necessary to avoid accidents and ensure the safety of construction workers and equipment while installing a new water main feed to First Park 94 Industrial Park located on Highways H and S.

\$34,000.00 savings resulted from being able to utilize the open cut method (cutting trench across road) vs. a horizontal directional drill (under the road) to install the water pipe. Due to the road closure, there was no need for traffic flaggers which resulted in \$26,000.00 in labor costs. Combined, \$60,000 was saved on this project.



WATER MAIN PROJECT PHASE 2 BEGINS DECEMBER HIGHWAY L - FROM HIGHWAY 31 TO HIGHWAY H ROAD CLOSED UNTIL BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY, 2018



Phase two of the water main project on Highway L has begun starting at Highway 31 (Green Bay Road) proceeding west to Highway H. This portion of Highway L will be closed until early February, 2018. Law enforcement, emergency responders, and construction workers appreciate the patience of all residents who will be temporarily inconvenienced by this project.



RELINING SEWER LATERALS SCHEDULED 2018

As homes age, so does the infrastructure serving the home. Many homes along the Sheridan Road corridor have clay sewer laterals connecting sewer service from the road to the house that date back to the 1950's, over 65 years ago. Common problems are cracks, sagging, roots, and holes that cause improper ground water infiltration. The new lining is less expensive than total replacement, increases sewer flow capacity, and is designed for a 50-year minimum life. Relining is quick and economical. Prior to lining, the crew cleans the pipe and inserts a video camera to inspect the pipe condition. It then places a flexible liner into the existing sewer line. The 2018 utility district budget has earmarked \$200,000 toward relining sewer laterals along the Sheridan Road corridor. Starting in 2018, relining work will begin on 17th Street and will continue north every year until both sides of Sheridan Road are relined and completed. This project will span over several years. On the day of the work, service will be turned off to prevent sewerage back-up into the home. Residents will be notified when work will begin.

\$40,421.50 URBAN FOREST GRANT RECEIVED



The Village of Somers received formal notification in a letter dated December 1, 2017 that it was awarded a \$40,421.00 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry 50/50 matching grant for ash tree removal and reforestation, according to Jerry Smith, Public Works Superintendent. This grant is double the \$20,000 matching grant awarded in 2016. The 2018 grant requires that the Village of Somers allocate \$20,210.50 its own resources to demonstrate there is a local commitment to the project. This can be achieved by allocating public works labor costs toward this project.

Due to the emerald ash borer infestation, a significant amount of urban forest canopy has been lost on Somers public lands. The intent of utilizing the grant is to reestablish a diversified and more abundant urban forest canopy on public lands.

WELCOME JASON PETERS NEW ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR



Jason Peters

On November 28, 2017, the Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved the hiring of Jason Peters to serve as Assistant Administrator.

The hiring of Mr. Peters was prompted by the increase in work that comes with the substantial development that has occurred in Somers. The Village experienced a 7.91% increase (\$53,353,200) in net new construction during 2017, far above any other municipality in Kenosha

County. The growth trend is expected to continue in the short and long term. Secondly, Bill Morris, the current Administrator is looking to retire within the next few years. Hiring Mr. Peters provides an orderly transition as Mr. Morris mentors Mr. Peters who is slated to succeed him. Mr. Peters will primarily focus on development activity.

Jason has a master's degree in public administration as well as a law degree from Hamlin University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has experience in the municipal sector overseeing day to day administration, clerk, and zoning. We welcome him to our community and are excited about the high level of education and experience he brings to our growing Village.

Jason leaves his position of Administrator and City Clerk with the City of Okoboji, Iowa, and is expected to start his position in Somers in January, 2018. He is looking forward to moving back to Wisconsin with his wife and three year-old daughter where they will enjoy living closer to family in Mukwonago.

WHY SOMERS IS ON THE DEVELOPMENT HOTSEAT —STAY INFORMED—

Somers is a uniquely located Village in Kenosha County. Our western Village border spans three undeveloped miles along Interstate I-94, one of the most desirable locations for commercial development. Resulting from our Intergovernmental Agreement with Kenosha and Paris, a section of Paris along the western side of I-94 will annex into Somers when development requires sewer and water services. Our southern border along Highway 142 is adjacent to Amazon.com, a one million square foot fulfillment center that employs more than 3,000 people. Our north border is adjacent to the proposed Foxconn development on our Racine/Kenosha County Line Road. In 2017, Foxconn announced it intends to spend up to \$10 billion on factories that would employ as many as 13,000 people. Within ten minutes of our Village/Town Hall we have approximately 7,900 full and part-time students travel from home to school between UW-Parkside and Carthage College.

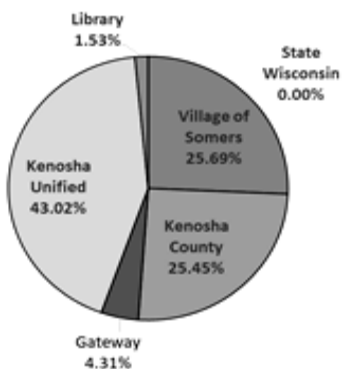
The Village of Somers, sandwiched between major developments and the Cities of Racine and Kenosha, stands to experience inevitable change going forward. Our community will reflect a more diverse characteristic, balanced between agriculture, commercial, retail, residential and recreational green areas. The goal is to continue to foster a civic spirit throughout our community as these changes occur. A good way to keep in touch is to review agenda items on the website for the Plan Commission, Work Sessions, and Board meetings.

SOMERS ACTIVE IN RETAIL MARKET DEVELOPMENT

In a joint effort to proactively seek retail development, the Village of Somers, Village of Pleasant Prairie, Village of Bristol, Village of Salem Lakes, City of Kenosha, Kenosha County Planning and Development, and KABA (Kenosha Area Business Alliance) have retained JLL commercial real estate consultants, headquartered in Chicago, to provide a retail development plan to assist in seeking retail development to service the needs of residents and visitors.

JLL will also create marketing materials and help broaden our relationships with key retailers and developers. George Stoner, President of the Village of Somers and Bill Morris, Somers Village and Town Administrator will be joining JLL and others from Kenosha at the Las Vegas ICSC (International Council Shopping Centers) Recon Exposition in January, 2018 to share ideas and connect face-to-face with retail real estate professionals.

How Your 2017 Tax Dollars Are Spent





BUILDING PERMIT REVENUE UP 37% IN 2017

Russ Nolen, Building Inspector for the Village/Town of Somers, reports a spike in building permit revenue of 37% received between January-November 2017. Somers granted 414 permits during this time period. Revenue from the 414 permits brought in \$594,432.00 compared to \$432,973.00 from the same period in 2016.

The top five categories are multi-family, houses, electric, commercial building, plumbing and commercial additions and alterations.

Nolen, who conducts inspections of all new or remodeled residential, industrial, and commercial buildings, is responsible for public safety as it relates to the enforcement of building codes.

HISTORIC BOUNDARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN SOMERS-PARIS-KENOSHA WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SOMERS?

With the spike in recent development of farm land, especially near the I-94 corridor, Mayor Antaramian of the City of Kenosha, Ed St. Peters of the Kenosha Water Utility, Chairman Virgil Gentz of the Town of Paris, Supervisor Ron Kammerzelt of the Town of Paris, Chairman Mark Molinaro of the Town of Somers, and President George Stoner of the Village of Somers, came together to discuss the rapid growth in Kenosha County and the challenges of providing water and sewer near the I-94 corridor. All agreed that it was in the best interest of the future generations of our communities to address the issues now. In October, 2016, all reached an agreement, in concept, to end boundary, water, and sewer battles, create permanent borders along the I-94 corridor, and define revenue sharing.

Step two in the process created teams representing each community consisting of elected officials, staff, and advisors. The document was reviewed, fine-tuned, and changed many times. "Successful development happens on purpose – not by accident. This Agreement assures thoughtful and orderly development", stated George Stoner.

This Intergovernmental Agreement removes obstacles, provides clarity, and it represents the best ideas and solutions for each community. Somers, Paris, and Kenosha will now be a team, working together representing southeast Wisconsin as we welcome new business and residents to Kenosha County.

The Agreement was submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Administration requesting approval. Receiving the approval letter dated November 10, 2017 was the final step in a year long process of negotiations that ultimately opens the door to development along the I-94 corridor.

RECYCLING IN SOMERS TOSS IT IN THE CART!



Somers uses a single recycling process where all recycling materials are combined together and then later sorted. The list below is a reminder of those "toss it in the cart" items eligible for recycling.

- ◆ Aluminum cans and clean aluminum foil
- ◆ Brown corrugated cardboard
- ◆ Brown paper bags
- ◆ Glass bottles and jars
- ◆ Gray chipboard (cereal and shoe boxes)
- ◆ Milk cartons juice boxes, soup cartons
- ◆ Newspaper, magazines, books, mail, school and office paper
- ◆ Plastic numbers 1-7
- ◆ Shredded paper (bagged in clear plastic)
- ◆ Tin cans, steel cans, aerosol cans, empty/dried paint cans

DO NOT put the following in the recycle cart:

- ◆ Clothing
- ◆ Construction materials
- ◆ Electronics
- ◆ Household hazardous waste
- ◆ Styrofoam of any kind

SOMERS WATER STUDY TO BE SCHEDULED IN 2018



Included in the 2018 budget is a \$45,000 expenditure for a regional water study that is being prepared in conjunction with the City of Kenosha. The study is an engineering analysis that addresses future water demands on our municipal water system that will be triggered by change in land use and development, especially near our I-94 corridor. Highlights include system design issues, water towers, meters, and pumps, all addressing demand and making sure our system is financially feasible and workable.



FIRE & RESCUE NEWS

Chief Carson Wilkinson has worked with the Village Board of Trustees and Firefighters Union to start the process of upgrading Somers Fire & Rescue staff to full paramedic status, a level above EMT's (Emergency Medical Technicians). EMT's maintain vital functions and comfort until patients have been transported to a hospital. Paramedics administer pre-hospital care involving use of intravenous fluids, medications, and intubation. Chief Wilkinson is working with Gateway Technical College regarding the establishment of an upgrade curriculum program. "The Fire & Rescue Department is experiencing an emerging trend of increased demand for emergency services. Call volume is up at least 30% from last year due to development growth in the Village. With the addition of more apartment complexes, and

commercial and retail businesses, there is an increase in traffic accidents from people who live, work, visit, shop, and drive within the Village boundaries", reported Chief Wilkinson.

The 2018 budget allocated funding to add a full-time firefighter/paramedic. This position replaces a seven-year vacancy in full-time staffing. It is expected this position will be filled by April, 2018. The Somers Fire Commission is responsible for the hiring of this position based on the recommendation of Chief Wilkinson. Qualifications include (1) Wisconsin EMT/paramedic license; (2) certified firefighter II level; (3) within one year of hire must be trained to drive all Department apparatus, and within two years, be certified by the State of Wisconsin; (4) join one of the specialty response teams such as dive rescue, technical rescue, or hazardous materials rescue; (5) within the second year of employment must be certified in a specialty team.

The Village and Town of Somers "Connecting With Your Community" newsletter is published by the Village/Town of Somers for public education and informational purposes. This newsletter is distributed to the residents via the U.S. Postal Service.

William Morris, Village/Town Administrator, Managing Editor

Jacqueline Klapproth Nelson, News and Creative Editor

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**WINTER SAFETY
ADOPT A HYDRANT
KEEP SNOW 3 FEET AWAY
FROM HYDRANTS**

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR VILLAGE PRESIDENT GEORGE STONER

The Village of Somers is in very good financial standing both in the short and long terms. In 2017, net new construction was valued at \$53,353,200 which is a 7.91% increase over 2016 far exceeding any other municipality in Kenosha County. This growth prompted an increase in sewer and water service, which in turn triggered new development in industrial warehousing, apartments, and retail and food services. Managing orderly development is a daily priority and is essential in achieving the quality community you want and expect.

Equally as important as new development is our focus and commitment to improve and upgrade existing infrastructure and equipment so that we continue to deliver quality services to our residents. Since becoming a Village in 2015, Trustees have appropriated funds in the budget every year to address aging water mains, lift stations, road and street repair and replacement, as well as replacing trucks and equipment for public works and public safety.

On behalf of all the Trustees, Happy New Year!

George Stoner, President

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR TOWN CHAIRMAN MARK MOLINARO

The Town of Somers Board of Supervisors finalized the 2018 budget in late November and continues to work closely with the Village to improve the quality of services that are being provided. The Intergovernmental Agreement between the Town and the Village continues to govern all that is accomplished between the two municipalities. The joint capital improvement plan supports the road resurfacing projects that took place in the Town during 2017 as well as the continued removal of the diseased ash trees throughout the various Town neighborhoods. Additional Town street resurfacing funds are earmarked in the 2018 budget. There is much that will be happening throughout Somers in the short term. As a neighboring community to Mt. Pleasant, the Foxconn project will put development pressures on Somers that will be significant. It is critical that we begin the planning process now to put Somers in the best position possible to be able to respond. I want to encourage all residents, Town and Village, to become engaged in the conversations and operations of Somers government.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2018.

Mark Molinaro, Chairman