

ROCHESTER REPORTER



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Meetings Schedule

June 14, 7 p.m. Environmental Commission

June 18, 4 p.m. Historic Preservation Commission

6 p.m. Code Task Force

June 19, Planning Board

June 20, 9:30 a.m. Youth Commission Board

7:30 p.m., Fire Commissioners Board

June 27, 4:30 p.m., Town Audit Board

July 1, Tax Valuation, Completion final tax roll

July 4, Town Offices Closed for Independence Day

July 5, 7 p.m., Town Board Meets at Town Hall (public invited).

Reliable Cellphone and Wireless Internet Service Moves a Step Closer for Town Residents

At a June 7th Public Hearing presentation before the Town Board meeting, Manny Vicente, president of Homeland Towers LLC, detailed the planning and testing that has gone toward providing answers to the community's increasing need of reliable communications services. The possibility of Homeland Towers constructing two communications towers on property leased to it by the Town has been a matter of discussion for more than a year. At the sparsely-attended meeting, Mr. Vicente and associates were on hand to answer questions that a few people raised about public safety, cellphone coverage areas, wired vs. a wireless system, revenues to Rochester, and other terms of the proposed lease. (The full lease is available on the Town website; click on "public notices").

Mr. Vicente explained that his company has — at its own expense, and since first meeting with the Board in February 2006 — extensively "walked" throughout the Town and measured the strength of electronic signals provided

by such servers as Verizon, Time-Warner, etc.

A next effort involved beaming a live signal from a 100-ft. and 150-ft. crane at each of the two proposed tower locations and checking the signals' strength at various points all over Rochester. Verizon's test facilities were then called in to verify the Homeland Towers results.

"**Hard Bargain.**" After those three steps had been taken to assure that towers on the proposed sites would provide extensive coverage, filling in many "dead" areas, the company entered into nego-

tiations with the Board, which, Vicente said, "has driven a pretty hard bargain."

In addition to providing the expected benefits to cellphone/TV/internet users, he noted, up-to-date communications facilities are vital to emergency-services providers and virtually all businesses — those already in town or thinking of coming here.

The lease calls for Homeland Towers to charge fees to such carriers as Verizon, Time-Warner, and others that use the structures. Along with paying rent for the leased property, the firm will (Cont. over)

Twilight in the Park with Great Music!

Yes, it's time again for those warm summer evenings and superb entertainment by some marvelous musicians. The Town of Rochester — with wonderful support from nearly two dozen local businesses — will offer three up-close and in-person concerts by a trio of musical artists. Mark these dates on your calendar now and bring the family to the Town Park. The music goes on, rain or shine, from 6-8 p. m. And, best of all, each of the three concerts is *absolutely free*.

Sat. July 7, Val Emmich — The *NYTimes* says he "captures the poppiness of Foo Fighters and the heart of Ben Kweller and Bright Eyes."

Sat., July 28, Dorothy Scott — *Billboard* says she's intellectually stimulating with feather-light melodies and insinuating hooks.

Sat., Aug. 11, Rebecca Coupe Franks — comedian Bill Cosby says: "Rebecca is wonderful."

Towers (cont.)

pay a percentage of its gross revenues to the Town. The figure is 35% in the first seven years, 40% afterwards.

Although some residents raised questions about the potentially harmful effects of radio waves and electromagnetic currents in the air — both on individuals' health and the environment — the Homeland Towers officials cited data from the Federal Communications Commission, the FDA, the Telecommunications Act and other sources to calm their worries. To further allay fears, Vicente noted that there is considerable time in which additional questions can be raised, since the proposal must be put through the Planning Board process and eventually get regulatory approval from state and federal agencies.

Rival Providers? Responding to a resident who inquired whether any other possible suppliers were considered for the project, Councilman Francis Gray named names of several firms which had been contacted after the new Board took office two years ago. Most, he said, did not return calls, answer emails, appear at scheduled meetings, or show sufficient interest in working with the Town. Since the Board meeting, a new company has been invited to make a presentation June 27. "Even after 20 meetings," Gray said, "we'll welcome others."

Memorial Day Parade? Let's Start Now

Everybody knows how hard the guys and gals at the fire department have been working this year, what with having to deal with seemingly an ever-increasing number of fires, floods, and vehicle accidents that have bedeviled the area. One unfortunate result was cancellation of the annual Memorial Day Parade and Veterans' Service, which the department has organized in past years, and which has always given a boost to civic pride.

Particularly in these times, honoring our servicemen and women is of vital importance. To do the Town proud in the future as we pay proper respect to those who have served, it was agreed —after a meeting of the Fire Commissioners Board— that the Town Board, on behalf of the Town, will put together a committee or "task force" to work with the firemen on development of a parade and Veterans' Service for next year. The idea is to "get the whole town involved," says Supervisor Pam Duke. If you think you can help, with ideas and/or physical effort, stay tuned to this monthly bulletin and the town website for contact information.

Some Tax Relief

In a rare visit at the recent Town Board meeting, State Assemblyman Clifford Crouch (107th district) outlined efforts in Albany to provide property tax relief. He said people who got school property tax rebate checks will soon get ones this fall "about double last year's."

For Rochester, he said the new budget provides a 3% increase in state aid and a "3 to 4% increase in 'CHIPS' money." Other proposals discussed to ease the tax burden include putting a cap on tax increases for school budgets or raising in-

come taxes to offset lower property tax rates.

He praised the small crowd at the public meeting for turning out. As a former Town Supervisor, he said, "Many people after the fact complain that they didn't see the notice in

Noteworthy Notes

● It's really happening — prices are coming in for cement work at the planned Veterans' Memorial Park.

● Time-Warner looks to complete cable-TV installations on Bakerstown Road and Queens Highway in the fourth quarter. (Laugh-getter at the Board meeting; Someone asked if cable-TV installations can be seen "as you drive along a road." Yes. The lowest wire stretched on the telephone poles is the cable wire. "But if it's not there," said Rod Futerfas, Town attorney, "how do you know which wire is lowest?")

Free Swimming!

The friendly new management at Hudson Valley Resort & Spa is offering all Rochester residents complimentary swimming in its beautiful outdoor pool on Sundays from 2-8 p.m. all summer. (Bring ID to prove residency, and have fun.)

the paper." Crouch also noted that Sen. John Bonacic (R-42nd dist.) has offered a bill to add back to the tax rolls some tax-exempt properties of non-profit and religious organizations.

Palentown School To Get Make-Over

The historic school building in Palentown, sorely in need of renovation, drew attention from a group of citizens — including town historian Alice Schoonmaker and Gary Miller — which undertook a clean-up effort on June 9. The property needs a paint job and additional work, and the aim is to get it into shape so that it can eventually be turned into a museum open one or two days a month. Some funds for work are available in the Town budget, but volunteer workers are welcomed, says Miller. (To help, contact him at 626-4281.)

Busy Youth Dept.

Nominated by the Town's Youth Department, both Leon Decker and Tom Bauer drew "outstanding youth of the year" citations from the Ulster County Youth Bureau. The boys were previously commended by the Town Board for heroism in helping an accident victim.

At the Community Center, youth activities included hip-hop dance lessons for 20 youngsters, an "eat smart" program for 16 elementary students, and an effort in which a dozen children helped beautify Main St. with plantings.