

Introduction

This is the first newsletter for 2012 and we hope that you find these newsletters informative on what is happening in Blooming Grove and Orange County Government.

Past newsletters can be found on our website at <http://www.ocbgdems.com/Documents.html>.

Topics:

- A review of the 2011 Election
- 18th Congressional District Primary
- NYS Assembly Campaign
- Orange County Government Center Update
- Valley View
- A Moffat Library Update

A Review of the 2011 Election

As you may know we did not do well in the last town elections despite door to door canvassing, publishing 3 newsletters with information about our candidates and their platform for change, phone banking and a website that provided additional information on all of our candidates.

We were very disappointed, especially with the mailer that was sent by our opponents. This mailer claimed that the Town Supervisor had nearly eliminated the debt owed by the special districts to the general fund. Mr. Frank Fornario, the Town Supervisor, confirmed that the mailer's claims were false. What was further disturbing was the fact that the Town Supervisor made no public statement condemning this tactic during the election.

However, we cannot lay the blame at the feet of this mailer. The Democratic Voter turnout was 20% of the eligible voters while the Republican voter turnout was 25% and the Conservative party turnout was 33% of their registered voters.

No matter how hard we work, if the voters do not vote we cannot win and bring change to our Town and County Governments.

18th Congressional District - Primary June 26, 2012

There are five candidates currently vying for the Democratic nomination to run in the New York 18th Congressional District against incumbent, Nan Hayworth. The Primary for the congressional election will be June 26, 2012. For information on each of the five candidates please go to our website- www.ocbgdems.com/Candidates, and you will find links to the candidates' websites and other information for your consideration.

Dr. Richard Becker has been endorsed by the Orange County Democratic Committee to oppose Nan Hayworth.

NYS Assembly Campaign

Currently we expect to have a primary for the NYS Assembly seat with Larry Delarose of Blooming Grove, and James Skoufis from Woodbury.

The Blooming Grove Democratic Committee will host at least one debate so you can have the opportunity to hear where the candidates stand on the issues and ask the candidates questions about topics that concern you.

The primary date for the State and local elections will be September 13, 2012.

In 2012 we hope that you will get involved to bring change to our town, county, state and country governments. Please vote.

The Orange County Government Center

Harvey Berg, a retired architect, structural engineer and a resident of Blooming Grove wrote a My View on the Government Center dated April 16, 2012. The title "A new Government Center would be monumentally irresponsible." [<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120416/OPINION/204160307>]

His article focused on a number of key points in the County's efforts to justify the expenditure of our tax dollars. First our County Executive said a new government center was needed because the current building was not efficient or effective for government services. However, he never gave us a reason for his assessment. Harvey stated that Mr. Diana then moved on to "toxic mold (proved to be false), destruction of the concrete (also false), lack of a cavity wall (also false), building on a swamp (false again), high energy costs (correctable - only caused by deliberate neglect), a roof that can't be repaired (false again)."

The County Legislature refused to get an independent assessment to verify the LaBella estimate of \$67 million to renovate the building. The Taxpayers of Orange County organization paid for such an assessment from NASCO Inc., a well respected estimating company located in Westchester County. Harvey explained that their estimate was \$35.3 million and it was for a total gutting of the building and that we would have a building that would have the same serviceability as a new building and it would be ADA compliant. The LaBella estimate of \$67 million would not have done the same.

Now Mr. Diana has stated the building is not safe. The LaBella Studies report that the building is sound and repairable but neglected over the past 40 years. A recent THR article by Chris McKenna about FEMA's study of our

government center supports the fact that our government center has been neglected over the past 40 years and that the LaBella Assoc. conclusions were flawed and did not match their own study documentation in regard to the government center.

[\[http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120505/NEWS/205050314/-1/NEWSLETTER100\]](http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120505/NEWS/205050314/-1/NEWSLETTER100)

After the May 3rd meeting the THR reported that FEMA had already told the County Executive that O. C. was only eligible for a small amount of the requested FEMA money because the storm did little damage to the building, and in fact FEMA reported that the building was currently at the pre-storm condition. Therefore, the Orange County taxpayers will have to pay the full cost of building a new building.

Our Blooming Grove Legislators Katie Bonelli and Kevin Hines voted for funding the building of a new building at the May 3, 2012 County Legislative meeting. It did not pass because a bond required 2/3rds of the legislators to vote yes.

Now Katie Bonelli, a strong opponent of renovation, has been placed on the Legislative Committee that was created to investigate actions of the county government during the renovation/build new debate.

We continue to support renovation by a reputable company with experience in renovating Paul Rudolph's buildings because we believe that is the most cost effective decision.

Valley View and Our Seniors

by R. A. Fromaget

The county has stated on numerous occasions that the services that the Berger Commission Study recommended to help close the deficit cannot legally be provided by the county. However, we called the NYS Bureau of Licensing and Certification and found out that this is not true. What I found out is that any service provided by the private sector can be provided by the county if they are certified to provide that service.

The consultant hired by the county recommended that the county hire its own employees to manage Valley View and discontinue the contract they have with the current management team because it was too expensive. They reported that the current management was giving contracts to companies that they had a financial interest in, and this practice should be discontinued. What the county chose to do was sell Valley View without even trying to reduce the deficit that currently exists. Thus marketing this facility in the worst financial condition possible and reducing the financial value in the market place.

The county has said that the private sector will be paid at a higher reimbursement rate, which is not true. The medicare/medicaid reimbursement rates are the same for all providers. What the private provider can do is reject patients

that have low reimbursement illnesses such as Alzheimer's and dementia. Who will take care of them once Valley View is privatized?

What the county has not done is develop a strategy to identify and address the issues of our seniors as they progress from home care to nursing home. Such planning could reduce the number of people in our nursing homes and significantly reduce the cost to the taxpayers of our county while providing dignity and care for our seniors as they progress through their autumn years without fear or uncertainty.

Shouldn't we expect more from our elected representatives?

Moffat Library Update

The town of BG took ownership of the Moffat building in 1956 by an agreement with the Library. In 1995 the library district was re-aligned with the Washingtonville School district and the taxpayers of that district. However, the town retained the responsibility for maintaining the Moffat building. Over the past year the town has been negotiating with the library board to transfer ownership and maintenance of the Moffat building to the library.

We have been told that the town of Blooming Grove has been advised that the insurance company agreed to pay for the asbestos removal, mold remediation and has agreed to pay the library association a small amount for relocation costs after the flooding.

The library newsletter stated that once the flood damage is repaired the building will still be in very poor condition. However, the town said that the insurance company will assist in the process of fixing the building in the problem areas (i.e., the ceilings, the leaks, the bathrooms, etc.) that were outlined prior to the hurricane. We have no idea at this point what "assistance" the insurance company will provide to fix the pre-existing conditions.

Many questions remain to be answered after 40+ years of neglect of the Moffat building. Shouldn't the town develop a complete estimate of what the total cost of renovation will be AFTER the Insurance and FEMA repairs are completed? Shouldn't the town complete repairs on the building before any action is taken to transfer the Moffat building? Will the town continue to use/rent space from the library for the town programs that are supported there today, thus offering some financial support to the library?

The library Board is planning to relocate into the village of Washingtonville as soon as possible.

The Blooming Grove Democratic Committee meets the 1st Wednesday of every month at the Blooming Grove Senior Center at 08:00 PM. These meetings are open to the public.

"Let your voices be heard!" Vote on November 6, 2012