



# Town of Ulysses News

10 Elm Street Trumansburg, NY

July 2012

## Ulysses Municipal Boards

Town Hall 387-5767  
Ulysses.ny.us

### Town Board 2nd & 4th Tuesday at 7:00pm

Town Supervisor 387-5767  
Roxanne Marino Ext. 232

Town Council Members  
Kevin Romer 387-3379  
Lucia Tyler 387-3484  
Dave Kerness 227-0536  
Liz Thomas 387-8170

### Planning Board 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm

Ken Zeserson—Chair 256-7139  
Rod Hawkes—Vice-chair  
Rebecca Schneider  
Stan Beames  
Sarah Adams  
Peter Fry  
John Wertis

### Board of Zoning Appeals 3rd Wed. at 7:00 pm

George Tselekis—Chair 272-1808  
Barbara Bristow  
Carl Mann  
Andy Glasner  
Richard Coogan

## Ulysses Town Offices

**Town Clerk** 387-5767  
Marsha Georgia—Clerk Ext 221  
Patty Halloran—Deputy Ext 223

**Highway Department**  
Jim Meeker—Superintendent 387-6230  
Dave Reynolds—Deputy

**Town Court** 387-5767  
Tom Schlee—Justice Ext. 225  
Mark Dresser—Justice Ext. 226  
Michele Townley—Court Clerk Ext. 224

**Code Enforcement and Zoning**  
Alex Rachun—Building Inspector Ext. 231  
Darby Kiley—Zoning Ext. 222

**Accounting & Payroll**  
Mary Bouchard Ext. 227

**Town Historian**  
Nancy Dean 387-9323

## From the Supervisor's Office

The Town of Ulysses has a long history, having been incorporated in 1794, and since then communication technologies have certainly changed. In 2011, the Town updated its website and keeping with our intent to increase resident awareness of Town government activities, we are initiating a newsletter.

A major effort of the Town Board over the last two years has been researching how hydrofracking would change our landscape and our community and what options we as a town have to mitigate the impacts. After attending numerous meetings, reading stacks of articles and talking with other municipalities, including some in Pennsylvania, the Town Board adopted an amendment to the zoning law in August 2011 to reaffirm that our zoning does not allow natural gas exploration, extraction, and associated activities. The Town Board believes these and other heavy industrial activities pose a significant threat to the health, safety and welfare of residents.

The Town Board felt the characteristics that make Ulysses a unique and desirable place to live and visit would be compromised by intensive industrial activity and subject the community

to the boom and bust economy being observed in other states.

The Town is also busy in other areas. In newsletters to come, we plan to update Ulysses residents on newly completed projects as well as those underway or being considered. Look for specific sections contributed by our various Town departments.

Residents in Trumansburg and Ulysses are likely aware of the difficulty we've

had resolving what to do for Emergency Medical Services. This is very much an on-going issue and we welcome input from the public. The basics of the EMS issue are outlined on page 2,

but the complexity of this topic makes it difficult to cover fully in one page.

We appreciate feedback and want to know about the interests and concerns of residents. Please contact any of us with questions, concerns or ideas for making Ulysses the best it can be.

We are starting a series of informal question and answer sessions on topics of interest to Town and Village residents. The first will focus on Emergency Medical Services (see page 2). Come hear more on Tuesday, August 21 at the Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.





## Emergency Medical Services - Searching for Common Ground

In April 2011 the Village of Trumansburg created an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department and moved from a fully tax-funded ambulance service to a partially tax-funded EMS that also bills patients for service. The Village has billed for ambulance service for about 1 year, while the Ulysses Board chose to continue for 2012 with fully taxpayer-funded EMS in the area of its jurisdiction (all of the Town outside the Village).

During this time, the Ulysses Town Board has worked diligently to evaluate the EMS billing issues and options and continues to reach out to the Village to find a mutually beneficial solution to provide the best quality emergency medical services while balancing ethical and financial obligations to all of our constituents, which includes the Village of Trumansburg residents.

After studying multiple options and associated costs and benefits, the Town Board feels it is in the best interest of all Ulysses residents to have a single, town-wide contract as part of a joint agreement for shared service for provision of EMS. Town law provides flexibility in designing shared service agreements and this approach is strongly promoted by the State. The Town Board has proposed formally to the Village Board that we pursue discussions toward this end.

Why a single town-wide contract and joint service agreement? Town and Village residents each pay taxes for the

identical EMS service, but the rate for Village residents is nearly 3 times what Town residents outside the Village pay. This is due to the fact that the cost of roughly the same number of annual EMS calls is spread over a 3-fold difference in taxable assessed value base (see table below). Even factoring in billing income, recently projected by the Village at nearly 40% of needed revenue, the Village tax rate would exceed that of the Town without billing. And over the past 10 years, the Town TAV has increased at 3 times the rate of the Village TAV.

Since the Town of Ulysses includes Village of Trumansburg residents, the Town Board feels an obligation to have all pay the same rate for the same service. Under a joint shared services agreement, all EMS policies in the Town and Village would need to be identical. The Town feels it is reasonable to recuperate funds from insurance companies through billing to help offset the upward climb in EMS costs; however, not all residents are insured and many are underinsured. The Town Board feels strongly that the very small fraction of the population whose EMS costs will not be covered by either Medicaid, Medicare or other insurance must be considered and protected from an undue burden imposed by billing for ambulance services. To do this, the Town feels that the Village's current policies on collection and fee rates should be revised. Currently, the Village's *Charity Policy* is less generous than the local for-profit EMS provider,

and the *Billing Fees* for EMS are equivalent to the commercial service - this on top of a substantial tax levy. The Town can form a separate ambulance district and adopt different billing policies, but the Board feels a shared service would be optimal for residents both in and outside the Village.

Historically the Town of Ulysses pays the largest share of the EMS operating costs (see table) but has no vote or meaningful role in setting the policies, fees, budget, or changing coverage area such as the recent addition of northern Covert. With a shared service agreement, the Town and the Village negotiate the terms so that the Town has both an equitable responsibility for the costs and risks associated with operating an EMS service and a formal role in setting policies, fees, and the annual budget.

The Town Board values our local EMS and the dedicated individuals who serve our community. A shared services agreement and town-wide contract demonstrates a commitment by both municipalities to EMS into the future, with policies and services that are responsive to the needs of all residents across the diverse areas of our town and costs shared equally by all. As this newsletter goes to press, the Village has informed the Town that they are not interested in pursuing a shared service option at this time.

For more information go to [ulysses.ny.us/council/EMS/](http://ulysses.ny.us/council/EMS/) or contact Supervisor Marino or Deputy Supervisor Thomas

EMS BUDGET and Taxable Assessed Value (TAV) and Tax Rates						
	TAV <sup>1</sup>	% of Townwide TAV	EMS Cost <sup>1</sup>	% of total EMS usage & cost	Tax Rate <sup>3</sup> (no billing income)	Est. Tax Rate (40% income via billing)
Town (outside Village)	335,773,906	77%	232,786	43%	\$0.693	\$0.416
Village	100,358,079	23%	206,700	39%	\$2.060	\$1.236
Town-wide (total TAV)	436,131,985	100%	439,486	82% <sup>2</sup>	\$1.008 <sup>4</sup>	\$0.605 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> used for 2012 budget, <sup>2</sup> remaining 18% for Covert and Hector, <sup>3</sup> Tax rate/\$1,000 TAV as per 2012 budget. Village estimates for billing income= 40% of total budget. <sup>4</sup> Illustration of tax rate if a joint shared service agreement with billing and a single town-wide contract covering the Town and Village was in effect.

## Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

While wide-spread disasters are not common in our area, it is important to remember that a little planning is necessary in the rare instance when a severe emergency occurs.

New York's [Emergency Information Handbook](#) offers some quick reminders of what every household should have on hand and sensible advice about planning for emergencies BEFORE the lights go out! ([dhSES.ny.gov/media/documents/2011\\_EI\\_Handbook.pdf](http://dhSES.ny.gov/media/documents/2011_EI_Handbook.pdf))



In addition, signing up for [NY-Alert](#) ([nyalert.gov/](http://nyalert.gov/)) will help households to know when a life-threatening event is on its way. This service provides emergency updates and notifications of potentially dangerous situations—mostly weather-related such as road closures or severe storm warnings. Notifications can be tailored to come either by text message, phone call, or other methods alerting subscribers to pay heed to Mother Nature.

## PLANNING AND ZONING

Potential changes to the Town's zoning that will help protect areas within Ulysses are under discussion. **Along the lake shore**, two areas are particularly sensitive. Land between Route 89 and the lake is steep and full of creeks leading to the lake. Extra precaution is occasionally necessary when building, and new zoning provisions would help prevent erosion and degradation of waterways.

On the **west side of Route 89**, where the lands are still fairly steep in some areas and also rich in creeks and unique natural areas, the Town is looking at additional oversight of development.

Residents within these zones will be notified by mail of opportunities to comment and one or more public hearings will be held before any changes to the zoning law take place. Drafts will be available on the Town website or at the Town Planning office. [ulysses.planner@gmail.com](mailto:ulysses.planner@gmail.com).

Also underway is the **Ag and Farmland Protection Plan**. This document provides strategies for preserving our valuable agricultural lands and promoting the viability and vitality of farming enterprises.

## UPCOMING AND ON-GOING

**Solar Panels** will be installed on the Town Hall and Highway Barn roofs this summer.

The **Cable** contract is being renegotiated with Time Warner Cable.

**Website** updates continue to improve information sharing.

An **Energy audit** of the Town Hall pinpointed areas to conserve energy.

**Bridge replacement on Seneca Road** should begin in fall 2012.

**Waterburg Road bridge replacement** information meeting on 8/2, 7-9pm. Town Hall.

**Hunting licenses** will be available in mid-August.

**Lost dog?** Licensing can help you reunite.

## Black Diamond Trail Update

Fantastic news: the funding is now secured for the bridges on the Black Diamond Trail that will connect Taughannock Falls State Park to Cass Park. The bridge over Glenwood Creek is already under construction, and the one over Willow Creek will be soon. Many culverts still need to be cleaned or replaced in order to allow access for construction equipment, but the momentum is truly moving. Thanks to everyone who has helped make this trail a reality, and thanks to the Ulysses Highway Department for the road crossing culverts they installed. The County, State Parks and several towns continue to work together to secure funding to complete the trail. Ulysses Environmental Planner Darby Kiley has taken a lead role in recent efforts.

## Drilling and Home Rule

Ulysses zoning does not allow heavy industrial activities such as hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. A municipality's right to prohibit such land uses under Municipal Home Rule power is being challenged in court through appeal of the NYS Supreme Court decisions in the Middlefield and Dryden lawsuits which upheld their respective zoning laws prohibiting gas drilling and other land uses not consistent with community comprehensive planning. Decisions are not expected before late fall.

The Town also has been supporting efforts by the Senate and Assembly to require wastes from hydrofracking to be treated as hazardous wastes if they meet the State definition. Currently the gas industry has broad exemptions from hazardous waste laws.

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Presort Std.  
US Postage Paid  
Trumansburg, NY  
PERMIT NO 63

Town of Ulysses  
10 Elm St  
Trumansburg, NY 14886

### CALLING ALL SKILL SETS

#### Join us in setting the Town's direction

Town staff, elected officials and volunteers work hard to make Ulysses a safe and vibrant community but there is always more to do. Do you have a skill set to offer? Ulysses boasts of residents with a wide range of talents. If you have expertise and ideas that would help benefit the Town, please let us know – historic preservation, land preservation, agricultural enterprises, landscape design, planning, sustainability – the list goes on. An area of particular interest currently under discussion is the formation of a citizens advisory committee on improving energy and sustainability within the Town.

The Planning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals have an opening each year, and the Youth Commission needs two representatives. Applications are taken any time. [ulysses.ny.us/pdf/board-application-Ulysses.pdf](http://ulysses.ny.us/pdf/board-application-Ulysses.pdf).

If any of these areas interest you, please contact us at <http://ulysses.ny.us/contact/>.

### A SERVICE FOR WATER DISTRICT CUSTOMERS

Water bills can sometimes be misplaced. In order to avoid late fees, Water District customers can request an email notice when their water bill has been mailed. To sign up for this service, contact Town Clerk Marsha Georgia at [touclerk@twcny.rr.com](mailto:touclerk@twcny.rr.com)

### PROTECTING OUR WATERS

The Town of Ulysses is protecting the water quality of Cayuga Lake and its surrounding creeks through a recently passed law. Officially titled the Storm Sewer and Surface Water Protection Local Law, this legislation codifies that it is illegal to dispose of materials that could harm our wetlands, creeks and lake. See the law: [ulysses.ny.us/pdf/storm\\_sewer\\_and\\_surface\\_water\\_protection.pdf](http://ulysses.ny.us/pdf/storm_sewer_and_surface_water_protection.pdf).

### DO YOU HAVE HIGH SPEED INTERNET?

Several municipalities along with the County are working together to find ways for every household to have access to affordable high speed internet. Give us a call if you are in an area without high speed internet: 387-5767 ext. 229.

### **..IF YOU ARE CONNECTED, RECEIVE INFORMATION BY EMAIL:**

Are you interested in receiving the newsletter, public hearing notices, etc by email? Contact [Liz.graeper.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:Liz.graeper.thomas@gmail.com). Your email will not be shared. This will not replace published notices, local postings, or website updates.