



John G. Testa, Mayor

CITY OF PEEKSKILL STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

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IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO REVIEW THE CITY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2006, THE YEAR JUST PASSED, AND TO TELL YOU THAT OUR LONG RANGE PLANNING CONTINUES TO ACHIEVE CLEAR PROGRESS FOR PEEKSKILL AND ITS RESIDENTS.

WE HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE STATE COMPTROLLERS OFFICE AS ONE OF THE MOST STABLE MUNICIPALITIES IN NEW YORK STATE. THAT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN. IT TAKES CONSISTENT, MULTI-YEAR, GOAL ORIENTED COMMITMENT IN EVERY DEPARTMENT, IN EVERY PROJECT AND EVERY CITY ACTIVITY.

PEEKSKILL'S TAXPAYERS ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF OUR STRONG FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT WITH A 0% TAX INCREASE FOR 2007, THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 30 YEARS, A HEALTHY FUND BALANCE ENABLED US TO COVER A TEMPORARY CASH FLOW SHORTAGE WHILE WAITING FOR TAX REVENUES TO COME IN, FURTHER SAVING TAXPAYERS THE COST OF SHORT-TERM BORROWING.

WE NEED TO CREDIT NEW PROJECTS OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS WITH BUILDING UP OUR TAX BASE AND ASSESSMENT ROLL. WE COULD NOT BE IN THIS STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION WITHOUT THESE NEW PROJECTS AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP BENEFICIAL PROPOSED PROJECTS ON TRACK TO MAINTAIN OUR STRONG FISCAL POSITION.

TO GIVE YOU AN INDICATION OF HOW GROWING OUR TAX BASE BENEFITS US ALL, OUR TAX BASE HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN \$3 MILLION SINCE JANUARY 1, 2002. \$1 MILLION OF THAT WAS ADDED LAST YEAR ALONE. THIS HAS ENABLED US TO RAISE OVER \$2 MILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES. AND \$1.5 MILLION OF THAT ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REVENUE BENEFITS OUR CHILDREN WHO ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT TO EMPHASIZE. EVERY TIME WE IN THE CITY ACT TO INCREASE OUR TAX BASE, THIS FLOWS THROUGH TO OUR

SCHOOLS IN THE FORM OF ADDITIONAL SCHOOL TAX REVENUE. AND THIS IS GOOD FOR OUR CHILDREN.

WE'LL START OUR OVERVIEW IN THE AREAS OF DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION, ECONOMIC, HISTORIC AND RIVERFRONT PROJECTS, WHICH SHOWED GREAT STRIDES FORWARD IN 2006.

AN ECONOMICALLY STRONG DOWNTOWN CREATES A POSITIVE IMAGE AS WELL AS A HEALTHY BASE FOR COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND EXPANDS OUR TAX ROLL, BENEFITING ALL OUR RESIDENTS. PEEKSKILL'S INNOVATIVE GROW PEEKSKILL LOAN FUNDING PROGRAM CONTINUES ITS POSITIVE RECORD AS IT ENABLED ITI STRATEGIES TO LOCATE ITS FINANCIAL SERVICES BUSINESS INTO THE REHABILITATED, FORMERLY VACANT, 949 MAIN STREET BUILDING IN THE HEART OF OUR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT.

FORD MANAGEMENT (FORD PIANOS), WITH THE EXTERIOR OF ITS CORNER SPACE AT 27 SOUTH DIVISION STREET COMPLETED, SECURED A \$275,000 RESTORE NEW YORK COMMUNITY INITIATIVES GRANT TO CONVERT THE LARGE INTERIOR INTO A PERFORMANCE VENUE, BAR AND GALLERY. WORK IS ANTICIPATED TO START THIS SPRING.

REHAB OF THE HISTORIC PARAMOUNT EAST BUILDING, FORMERLY A MASONIC TEMPLE, WAS COMPLETED UNDER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP BRINGING IT BACK ON OUR TAX ROLLS AND IT IS NOW OCCUPIED BY NEW AND RELOCATED BUSINESSES, RESIDENCES AND A CONNECTION TO THE PARAMOUNT.

MEANWHILE, THE AUTHENTICALLY RESTORED PARAMOUNT CENTER, PEEKSKILL'S HISTORIC LANDMARK 1930 MOVIE PALACE, CONTINUED ITS MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS WITH NEW BATHROOM FACILITIES FUNDED THROUGH STATE GRANTS. INCREASED NUMBERS OF LIVE PERFORMANCES, FILM AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS SOLIDIFIED THE CENTER'S STATUS AS A REGIONAL CULTURAL FACILITY THAT ATTRACTS UPWARDS OF 60-70,000 PEOPLE TO OUR DOWNTOWN EACH YEAR WHO HELP SUPPORT LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND BUSINESSES.

OUR HISTORIC AND LANDMARKS BOARD APPROVED SUITABLE FACADE RENOVATIONS AT 5 NORTH DIVISION STREET AND CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN

THIS YEAR. THIS BOARD ALSO APPROVED REPLACEMENT OF AN ALUMINUM STORE-FRONT AT 1049 MAIN STREET WITH MATERIALS MORE SUITED TO THIS HISTORIC BUILDING, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE OCCUPIED BY A BAKERY IN 2007.

NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT/ LOW VOLTAGE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND CROSSING LIGHTS WERE INSTALLED IN OUR DOWNTOWN. AN APPROPRIATELY DESIGNED MARQUEE/MESSAGE BOARD WAS INSTALLED AT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER PLAZA TO ANNOUNCE EVENTS THAT ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. AND A PORTION OF CDBG FUNDS WERE APPROVED TO COVER COMPREHENSIVE SIDEWALK AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES THIS YEAR INCLUDING MAIN, DIVISION, PARK AND BANK STREETS.

AN ATTRACTIVE NEW PARKING LOT WAS CREATED ON CENTRAL AVENUE TO RELOCATE POLICE AND COURT VEHICLES, REMOVING THEM FROM THE NELSON AVENUE GARAGE AND MAKING 40 ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

OUR REVISED WEB SITE IS CONSTANTLY UPDATED TO PROVIDE NEW INFORMATION, BROADEN OUR EXPOSURE AND BRING NEW INTEREST TO THE CITY.

AN IMPORTANT REVITALIZATION STUDY WAS UNDERTAKEN IN MID-2006 FOCUSING ON DEVELOPMENT OF A VIABLE PLAN TO REVITALIZE THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE DOWNTOWN, A 4-SQUARE BLOCK AREA FROM BANK TO BROAD, MAIN TO BROWN STREETS.

BASED ON THE SMART GROWTH MODEL THAT HAS BECOME POPULAR AND SUCCESSFUL NATIONWIDE, THE GOAL IS TO INTEGRATE NEW REDEVELOPMENT INTO THE HISTORIC CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, TO BROADEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS, ADD SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PARKING SPACES, CREATE NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, IMPROVE STREETSCAPES AND LIGHTING, AND EXPAND THE TAX BASE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT HAS ALREADY CAUSED A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE TO PROPERTY VALUES IN THE AREA AND WILL ENABLE EXISTING PROPERTY OWNERS TO IMPROVE THEIR BUILDINGS.

TO KEEP DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS, SEVERAL MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN HELD WITH MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND A GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENTATION WAS MADE

AT THE PARAMOUNT CENTER. THIS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT HAS BROUGHT ENCOURAGING AND WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT THAT WILL BRING A HIGHER LEVEL OF VIBRANCY TO OUR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT. THE RFP PROCESS WILL MOVE FORWARD IN 2007.

WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR POLICY OF OPEN GOVERNMENT WITH BROAD COMMUNITY OUTREACH, PERIODIC TOWN HALL MEETINGS AT VARIED SITES AND INFORMATIVE NEWSLETTERS AND WEB SITE. ADDITIONALLY, WE WILL CONTINUE VIDEOTAPING WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND OTHER PROPOSALS TO BE SHOWN ON OUR LOCAL CABLE TV GOVERNMENT CHANNEL. WE WILL LOOK TO IMPROVE THE TECHNICAL QUALITY OF THE CHANNEL AS WELL. THE CITY'S WEBSITE WILL CONTINUE TO BE IMPROVED IN 2007 WITH UPDATED INFORMATION AND THE ABILITY OF RESIDENT'S TO PAY TAX AND WATER BILLS ONLINE. THIS WILL NOT ONLY MAKE PAYING EASIER, IT WILL GIVE TAXPAYERS UNTIL MIDNIGHT ON THE DEADLINE DATE AND HELP TO AVOID LATE CHARGES. I HAVE ALSO ASKED MIKE MINER OF OUR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION TO INVESTIGATE THE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIRED TO ALLOW US TO STREAM LONGER RUNNING PROGRAMS SO THEY MAY BE POSTED ON THE SITE, INCLUDING COUNCIL MEETINGS. OUR NEW CITY OF PEEKSKILL CALENDAR, DISTRIBUTED CITYWIDE, LISTS DATES OF KEY MUNICIPAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING COMMON COUNCIL AND VARIOUS BOARD MEETINGS.

WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED A LOT IN A FAIRLY SHORT TIME FRAME WITH MUCH MORE TO COME AS WE CONTINUE TO BUILD. MULTI-MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT IS TESTIMONY TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR PROGRESS TO DATE.

ADDITIONALLY, WE CONTINUE TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN APPROPRIATE AREAS OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN. WITH PRELIMINARY WORK COMPLETED, AN IMPORTANT \$31 MILLION PROJECT ON A FORMER CITY LANDFILL OFF HIGHLAND AVENUE WILL CLOSE AND MOVE FORWARD IN 2007. THE 9 CORPORATE DRIVE PROJECT INCLUDES COMPLETE SITE REMEDIATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF WAREHOUSE, OFFICE AND COMMERCIAL SPACE. STATE ASSISTANCE WAS ALLOCATED THROUGH OUR OWN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.

ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CITY, A MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL VOTED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TARGET STORE, A WELL-KNOWN NATIONAL CHAIN, WHICH WILL PROVIDE HUNDREDS OF JOBS AND NEW TAX REVENUES AS WELL AS DRAWING LARGE NUMBERS OF AREA RESIDENTS TO PEEKSKILL.

A KEY ASSET, THE PEEKSKILL INN, IS WELL ALONG IN ITS PLANS TO REDESIGN, EXPAND AND PROVIDE NEW CONFERENCE FACILITIES AS WELL AS MODERN HOTEL ROOMS ON ITS BEAUTIFUL MAIN STREET SITE OVERLOOKING THE HUDSON.

HUDSON VALLEY MUNICIPALITIES HAVE LONG RECOGNIZED THAT TOURISM IS A SOURCE OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL THAT KEEPS OUR HISTORY ALIVE AS WE REUTILIZE OUR PAST TO SERVE OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE. OUR GOAL IS TO CONSERVE WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN PEEKSKILL'S PROUD HISTORY AND TO CONVERT IT TO VARIED CONTEMPORARY USES THAT BRING POSITIVE RECOGNITION AND POSITIVE BENEFITS TO OUR CITY.

THE EXCITING RESTORATION OF THE LINCOLN DEPOT IN OUR WATERFRONT AREA IS UNDERWAY. WE ALREADY HAVE \$1 MILLION IN STATE GRANTS FOR THE EXTERIOR WORK WHICH IS BEING DONE BY WOOD DESIGNE, INC., A LOCAL COMPANY WHO HIRED LOCAL YOUTH TO WORK ON THE PROJECT. THE CITY ANTICIPATES RECEIVING ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDS FROM THE STATE SO THAT THE INTERIOR CAN BE RESTORED AND RETROFITTED INTO A MUSEUM TO COMMEMORATE PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S VISIT TO PEEKSKILL AND THE CIVIL WAR ERA.

IN ADDITION, WE RECEIVED A \$300,000 GRANT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE LINCOLN DEPOT PLAZA, TO BE PLANNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH GDC'S WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. THE DESIGN OF THE PLAZA WILL BE COORDINATED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE LINCOLN DEPOT VISITORS' CENTER WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN AWARDED A \$350,000 GRANT WHILE THE HISTORIC CENTENNIAL HOSE FIRE HOUSE WILL BE MOVED TO THE SITE FROM ACROSS THE STREET IN 2007. THIS MOVE WILL BE DEVELOPED IN CONJUNCTION WITH STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLANS FOR A MUCH-NEEDED ROUTE 9 BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION BETWEEN

BAY STREET AND MAIN STREET. THE CITY AND GDC ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE PEEKSKILL FIRE DEPARTMENT TO INCLUDE A FALLEN FIREFIGHTER/911 MEMORIAL WHICH INCLUDE A STATUE AND BELL TOWER, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH HAS BEEN FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM GOVERNOR PATAKI.

THE ANNSVILLE PRESERVE PARK, WITH HIKING TRAILS AND FISHING PIER, WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED IN SPRING 2006. CONSTRUCTION OF THE JAN PEEK TRAIL AND MULBERRY TRAIL WERE COMPLETED AND PLANS WERE FINALIZED FOR THE SACHEM POINT TRAIL AND HIGHLANDS RUSTIC PAVILION, ROCK COVE COUNCIL RING AND ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED IN 2007.

WITH A GOAL OF PROVIDING EVEN GREATER PUBLIC ACCESS TO OUR BEAUTIFUL HUDSON RIVER SHORELINE, WE WERE PLEASED TO RECEIVE A \$460,600 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND GRANT FOR THE PEEKSKILL LANDING PARK TO PRODUCE THE PLANS, DESIGNS AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS FOR A 15,800 SQUARE FOOT WATERFRONT BOARDWALK AND A 1,900 SQUARE FOOT PIER AT THE NEW "CENTER DOCK." WE CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE SCENIC HUDSON LAND TRUST, OUR PARTNERS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PEEKSKILL LANDING SITE, TO BEGIN REMEDIATION, SHORELINE STABILIZATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL PLANS.

IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WE SEE A PEDESTRIAN RIVER WALK THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF PEEKSKILL'S EXTRAORDINARY AND ACCESSIBLE RIVERFRONT PARKS.

CENTRAL AVENUE, WHICH WILL SERVE AS THE CRITICAL LINK BETWEEN THE WATERFRONT AND THE DOWNTOWN, HAS ALREADY HAD MAJOR WORK DONE TO REPAIR THE ROAD AND OPEN NEARLY 300 FEET OF MCGREGORY BROOK AND PREPARATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GARDEN CLUB'S ROSE GARDEN THIS SPRING. THIS PROJECT WAS RECOGNIZED BY FEDERAL AND STATE FEMA OFFICIALS AS A INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO AN EMERGENCY AND AWARDED PEEKSKILL \$1.8 MILLION TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT.

ALSO ON THE RIVERFRONT NEAR CHARLES POINT PARK, THE LOUISA STREET BASEBALL FACILITY, OFFICIALLY NAMED PEEKSKILL STADIUM, HAS BEEN ENHANCED

WITH ADDITIONAL SPECTATOR SEATING AND CLUB HOUSE AND SCOREBOARD IMPROVEMENTS. IT GETS EXTENSIVE USE BY THE PHS BASEBALL TEAM, SUMMER AND FALL LEAGUES, CITY AND COUNTY SPONSORED LEAGUES FOR ADULTS AND ADOLESCENT YOUTH, SPECIAL TOURNAMENTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS PEEKSKILL CELEBRATION. IT IS RECOGNIZED AS THE BEST FACILITY IN NORTHERN WESTCHESTER WITH AN UNMATCHABLE SITE.

IN TERMS OF THE WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT, THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WAS ADOPTED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL SO THAT WE CAN NOW MOVE FORWARD AND HAVE THE DESIGNATED DEVELOPER REVISE AND PRESENT A PLAN FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL. THE FIRST PHASE WILL BEGIN IN 2007 WITH THE LINCOLN PLAZA, DEVELOPMENT OF A PARKING STRUCTURE AND SOME "POCKET PARKS" WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA.

IN 2006, PEEKSKILL WAS DESIGNATED AS A PRESERVE AMERICA COMMUNITY BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PROVIDING NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND PRESTIGE FOR OUR PROGRAMS AND MAKING US ELIGIBLE FOR PRESERVATION PLANNING GRANTS. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED A \$32,000 GRANT, WITH A MATCHING PLEDGE FROM GINSBURG DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR FORT HILL PARK TO EXPAND THE TRAILS, INSTALL BENCHES AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE. SPEAKING OF FORT HILL PARK, THANKS TO AN AGREEMENT WITH GDC, 2007 WILL MARK THE YEAR THAT WE WILL FINALLY OBTAIN THE NEARLY 40 ACRES OF PROPERTY PREVIOUSLY DESIGNATED FOR DEVELOPMENT. WE WILL APPLY FOR AN EPF GRANT TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMPROVEMENTS AND DESIGNATE THE AREA AS HISTORIC PARKLAND. THIS WAS A DEFINING ISSUE FOR ME WHEN I DECIDED TO FIRST RUN FOR MAYOR, I AM PROUD THE GOAL WILL FINALLY BE ACCOMPLISHED. TO BE ABLE TO PERMANENTLY SECURE THIS AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE IN A MUNICIPALITY ONLY 4 1/2 SQUARE MILES IS A SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT. ADDED TO THE OPEN SPACE SECURED ALONG THE WATERFRONT, WE HAVE BECOME A MODEL FOR BALANCING CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT WHILE ADDING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

FURTHER, IN 2006 WE RECEIVED A GRANT TO UNDERWRITE THE COST OF PUBLISHING THREE ISSUES OF A HISTORIC NEWSLETTER TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PEEKSKILL AND WE WILL LOOK TO CONTINUE THIS IN 2007.

ALSO, THE NELSON AVENUE/FORT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD WAS DESIGNATED AS A NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT BASED ON THE EFFORTS OF ITS HOMEOWNERS. CURRENTLY, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES ARE RESEARCHING THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS TO HOMEOWNERS IN NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS.

PEEKSKILL NOW HAS 12 SITES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER, 1 ON THE STATE REGISTER AND 1 COUNTY DESIGNATION -- QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT FOR OUR SMALL CITY. AND 6 MORE OF OUR ELIGIBLE HOMES HAVE RECEIVED HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAQUES.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE MARKET RATE HOUSING AS WELL AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A KEY ELEMENT IN HEALTHY GROWTH. TO THAT END WE HAVE AMENDED OUR ZONING CODE TO PROVIDE A BONUS DENSITY FOR DEVELOPMENTS THAT INCLUDE SOME AFFORDABLE UNITS; RIVERBEND IS NEARING COMPLETION AND THE ST. MARY'S PROJECT BY GDC, KNOWN AS "THE ABBY," HAS RECEIVED PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVALS AND WILL BEGIN CONSTRUCTION THIS SPRING; THE MAIN STREET GATEWAY PROJECT FOR 15 HOUSING UNITS HAS RECEIVED THE APPROVALS REQUIRED TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION THIS SPRING AS WELL; RENOVATION OF 104 AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS AT STUHR GARDENS IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN 2007; AND A NEW 43-UNIT DRUM HILL II BUILDING FOR SENIOR HOUSING IS PLANNED FOR RINGGOLD STREET.

THIS PAST YEAR WE UNDERTOOK A REVIEW OF OUR SECTION 8 ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAM, CLEANED UP OUR LIST AND MADE SOME ADDITIONAL UNITS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES THAT MET THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

ONE REAL STANDARD WE SHOULD ALL RECOGNIZE, BASED ON A MORE THAN 20-YEAR RECORD, IS THAT PEEKSKILL HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN THE LEAD WHEN IT COMES

TO MEETING THE COUNTY ALLOCATED NUMBERS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS WHILE MANY MUNICIPALITIES HAVE PROVIDED NONE. THE COUNTY HAS CONTINUALLY RECOGNIZED PEEKSKILL AS IN THE FOREFRONT OF PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND JUST EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE NY TIMES NOTED THAT PEEKSKILL HAD EXCEEDED IT AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS BY MORE THAN 40%. AND NOW, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, WE ARE PLANNING TO EXCEED THAT EVEN FURTHER BY ADDING AT LEAST 47 UNITS THROUGH THE GATEWAY AND DRUM HILL PROJECTS ALONE.

AS NEW HOUSING UNITS ARE ADDED, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO CONTINUE OUR STRONG CODE ENFORCEMENT/QUALITY OF LIFE PROGRAMS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS. WE SUPPORT AND WORK CLOSELY WITH NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS TO IMPROVE THEIR SURROUNDINGS. FAMILIES IN OUR TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS CAN BE ASSURED THAT MAINTAINING ATTRACTIVE, SAFE AND LEGAL RESIDENCES IS AN ONGOING PRIORITY FOR THIS ADMINISTRATION.

OUR CODE ENFORCEMENT HOTLINE CONTINUES TO SHOW TREMENDOUS RESULTS DUE TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT WITH OVER 1500 CALLS TO DATE. IN 2006 THERE WERE OVER 6,000 INSPECTIONS, DURING BOTH DAY AND EVENING HOURS, BY THE CODE ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE WHICH RESULTED IN NEARLY 1,400 VIOLATION NOTICES UNCOVERING 27 ILLEGAL APARTMENTS, 47 ROOMING HOUSES AND 52 ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. OTHER QUALITY-OF-LIFE ISSUES SUCH AS ABANDONED VEHICLES, LITTLER, HAZARDOUS TREES OR PLANT GROWTH AND GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMPLAINTS ARE ALSO ADDRESSED BY OUR INSPECTORS.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTIONS HAVE GENERATED CLOSE TO \$400,000 FROM PROPERTY OWNERS WHO DID NOT MEET CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME FRAME. THIS STRONG ACTION INDICATED HOW SERIOUS WE ARE AND RESULTED IN AN IMPROVED RATE OF COMPLIANCE.

FURTHER, A NEW LAW ENACTED IN 2006 NOW REQUIRES ISSUANCE OF AN UPDATED CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY WHEN A BUILDING IS SOLD. THIS HAS HAD A TREMENDOUS EFFECT ON PREVENTING ILLEGAL CONVERSIONS WHILE ASSURING

NEW BUYERS THAT THEY WILL NOT BE STUCK WITH ILLEGAL CONDITIONS NOT OF THEIR MAKING.

OUR DEPARTMENT OF CITY SERVICES IS THE KEY DEPARTMENT PROVIDING DIRECT HIGH QUALITY SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF PEEKSKILL. THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EFFICIENT GARBAGE AND TRASH PICKUP, STREET LIGHTING, PARKING RAMPS, SNOW PLOWING, TREE MAINTENANCE, PAVING, ROADSIDE BEAUTIFICATION, SPECIAL EVENTS PREPARATION AND CLEAN-UP, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR NECESSARY BUT FREQUENTLY UNSEEN INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS STORM LINES, DRAINS, SEWER SYSTEMS, STREET LIGHTING AND A HOST OF OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.

IN 2006, WE RECEIVED A WESTCHESTER COUNTY AWARD FOR THE MOST INFORMATIVE BROCHURE IN THE COUNTY FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW.

THE CITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS DEVELOPED AN EXCITING PROJECT ON THE CITY'S EAST SIDE TO RESTORE PENELOPE POND AND DAM TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE ABILITY TO WITHSTAND FUTURE STORMS AS WELL AS CREATE AN ADDITIONAL PARK AREA AND MULTI-USE BALL FIELD. THIS UNIQUE PROJECT WILL ALSO ENABLE EXTENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOMPKINS BALL FIELD AREA BY EXPANDING PARKING AND PUTTING IT ALL ON THE TOP LEVEL, UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE AND MORE. WE APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF THE LAPOLLA LITTLE LEAGUE BOARD IN DEVELOPING THIS PROJECT.

CITY SERVICES CONTINUES TO SUPERVISE THE MANY CDBG IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS -- SIDEWALKS, LIGHTING, LANDSCAPING, NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION -- AS WELL AS MONITOR THE CLEAN-UP OF ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED AREAS -- THE L&L SITE, CORPORATE DRIVE, PEEKSKILL LANDING, THE ENGELHARD (NOW BASF), KARTA AND DPW GARAGE SITES. AN ONGOING CITY PRIORITY IS FINDING APPROPRIATE SPACE TO RELOCATE THE DPW GARAGE.

WE WERE FINALLY SUCCESSFUL IN OUR LONG 8-YEAR BATTLE AGAINST THE COUNTY PROPOSAL FOR SEWER DIVERSION WHICH WOULD HAVE ALLOWED YORKTOWN TO DIVERT A PORTION OF ITS SEWAGE TO THE PEEKSKILL SANITARY SEWER

FACILITY. IN TIME, AS MORE PEOPLE LEARNED ABOUT THE PROPOSED DIVERSION PLAN, PEOPLE OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES IN PEEKSKILL, INCLUDING A UNANIMOUS COMMON COUNCIL, UNITED AGAINST THE PLANNED DIVERSION. BUT THE REAL BATTLE WAS ULTIMATELY WON IN THE BODY THAT FIRST PROPOSED THE DIVERSION: THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS. TO FACILITATE THIS LEGISLATIVE VICTORY, LEGISLATOR OROS AND I HAD MANY MEETINGS AND FREQUENT OUTREACH TO DEC AND DEP OFFICIALS TO MAKE THE CITY'S CASE AGAINST DIVERSION KNOWN. THIS, AS WELL AS MORAL SUPPORT FROM ALL CITIZENS IN PEEKSKILL, ENABLED US TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WHEN YORKTOWN ULTIMATELY TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS OWN SEWAGE PROBLEMS. THE OUTCOME WAS SOMETHING THAT EVERYONE IN PEEKSKILL CAN BE PROUD OF.

IN NOVEMBER, OUR WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT SAW GROUNDBREAKING SITE WORK STARTED FOR PEEKSKILL'S NEW, STATE-OF-THE-ART \$32 MILLION WATER TREATMENT FACILITY. THIS IS THE LARGEST PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT EVER UNDERTAKEN BY THE CITY WITH ANTICIPATED COMPLETION IN 2009.

PEEKSKILL IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE ITS OWN WATER SUPPLY FLOWING FROM THE WICCOPEE DAM IN PUTNAM THROUGH THE HOLLOW BROOK TO OUR OWN WATER PUMPING STATION. SINCE WE RECEIVED STATE APPROVAL TO PATROL THE WATERSHED, OUR SPECIAL WATERSHED ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS HAS CONDUCTED REGULAR ROUTINE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES AND RESPONDED TO VARIOUS COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE DEVELOPED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NYSDEC OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THIS REGION AS WELL AS CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS IN NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES.

IN ADDITION TO ROUTINE FUNCTIONS SUCH AS REPAIR OF WATER MAIN BREAKS, FLUSHING SEWER MAINS, CLEANING CATCH BASINS, REPAIRING SERVICE LINES, THE DEPARTMENT'S WORKFORCE, WITH COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF THE CAREER FIREFIGHTERS, CONTINUED THE IMPORTANT FIRE HYDRANT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM.

WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH WESTCHESTER COUNTY, CORTLANDT AND YORKTOWN ON THE ROUTES 202/35/6 BEAR MOUNTAIN PARKWAY STUDY TO ALLEVIATE

NEGATIVE TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND TO PRESS FOR THE ABILITY TO CONTROL TRUCK TRAFFIC TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF OUR RESIDENTS. AS A MEMBER OF THIS COMMITTEE SINCE ITS INCEPTION, I WILL CONTINUE TO BE A STRONG VOICE FOR PEEKSKILL TO ENSURE THE RESULTS INCLUDE WHAT IS BEST FOR PEEKSKILL.

AT THE END OF 2006, THE NY STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REQUESTED FORMAL SUPPORT FROM THE 3 MUNICIPALITIES FOR A PROJECT TO RECONSTRUCT THE BEAR MOUNTAIN PARKWAY BETWEEN ROUTE 9 IN PEEKSKILL AND ROUTE 202 IN CORTLANDT WHICH WOULD ADDRESS PROBLEMS ON THE PARKWAY AND ALSO DIVERT TRUCK TRAFFIC FROM MAIN STREET. THE COMMON COUNCIL VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO HAVE THE STUDY MOVE FORWARD. WE ARE NOW WAITING FOR CORTLANDT AND YORKTOWN TO DO THE SAME.

AS OUR POPULATION GROWS, WE MUST ALSO LOOK TO ENHANCE AND ENLARGE RECREATION FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES. IN 2006, WITH CDBG FUNDING, WE COMPLETED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIVERFRONT GREEN PLAYGROUND, COMPLETED COMPREHENSIVE RENOVATIONS AT FRANKLIN PARK, AWARDED A CONTRACT TO INSTALL A NEW SPRAY POOL AT LEPORE PARK BEFORE THE SUMMER OF 2007, AND COMPLETED PLANS FOR BOTH DEPEW PARK AND RIVERFRONT GREEN RESTROOM RENOVATIONS SCHEDULED FOR SPRING 2007 CONSTRUCTION.

OUR PARK FACILITIES ARE SECOND TO NONE AND ALL RECEIVE CONSTANT ATTENTION -- YOUTH AND ADULT PARTICIPATION IN A BROAD RANGE OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES HAS INCREASED. 2006 SAW A RECORD NUMBER OF 30,000 ATTENDING THE 2-DAY PEEKSKILL CELEBRATION WEEKEND AT THE RIVERFRONT.

IT'S NO WONDER THAT WESTCHESTER MAGAZINE DESCRIBES PEEKSKILL AS ONE OF THE "6 BOOM TOWNS OF WESTCHESTER." THE NEW YORK TIMES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS CONSISTENTLY WRITE POSITIVE ARTICLES ABOUT PEEKSKILL. AS WE CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE CITY'S REPUTATION AND IMAGE ON THE OUTSIDE, WE ALSO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PRIDE AND A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY WITHIN.

PEEKSKILL'S OUTSTANDING YOUTH BUREAU WAS SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING WELL OVER HALF A MILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL, STATE AND COUNTY GRANT FUNDS

THIS PAST YEAR AND WAS RECOGNIZED BY BOTH THE COUNTY AND THE STATE FOR ITS INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION. WITH PROGRAMS SUCH AS LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES FOR TEENS, YOUTH COURT, PARENTS' NIGHT OUT, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKSHOPS, TEEN JOB FAIR, SHINING STARS, VIOLENCE PREVENTION, PHENOMENAL MEN, POST SECONDARY EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR OLDER YOUTHS AND MORE, OUR YOUTH BUREAU HAS BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SERVICES OFFERED TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

OUR CITIZENS DESERVE THE BEST IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND IN 2006, WE HIRED 8 NEW POLICE OFFICERS BRINGING OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT TO ITS HIGHEST LEVEL OF STRENGTH IN ITS HISTORY -- 61 -- ENABLING US TO DIVERT OFFICERS FROM THE UNIFORMED DIVISION TO NARCOTICS AND ANTI-CRIME DETAILS. THREE OF THESE POSITIONS WERE FUNDED BY A MAJOR GRANT FROM GOVERNOR PATAKI.

INCREASED ENFORCEMENT HAS SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE THAT CRIME IS NOT TOLERATED IN PEEKSKILL. A PARTICULAR FOCUS WAS PLACED ON PROSTITUTION, DISORDERLY CONDUCT AND A CONTINUED PRIORITY ON DRUG SALES RESULTING IN A MARKED INCREASE OF ARRESTS FOR THESE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES. TWO OFFICERS WERE RE-ASSIGNED TO TARGET ALL QUALITY OF LIFE VIOLATIONS DURING A 6 P.M. TO 2 A.M. SHIFT WITH SIGNIFICANTLY EFFECTIVE RESULTS.

THE CITY'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HAS EXPANDED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE REORGANIZATION INCLUDED A DEPUTY DIRECTOR SPECIFICALLY ASSIGNED TO TAKE COMMAND. RESPONSE CAPABILITIES TO ALL DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES HAVE IMPROVED AND PERSONNEL IN ALL CITY AGENCIES ARE RECEIVING CONTINUING TRAINING IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES.

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER WERE COMPLETED IN 2006. WITH GRANT FUNDING, WE WERE ABLE TO PURCHASE COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND COMPUTERS AND INSTALL AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT THAT ENORMOUSLY ENHANCES OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS. FURTHER, SHELTERING

PLANS HAVE BEEN FORMULATED FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH THE RED CROSS, CONTRACTED TO MANAGE ALL ASPECTS OF EMERGENCY SHELTERING SHOULD THE NEED EVER ARISE.

AGAIN, THROUGH GRANTS AND A LEGISLATIVE AWARD FROM SENATOR LEIBELL, THE DEPARTMENT PURCHASED A NEW 30' MOBILE COMMAND VEHICLE COMPLETE WITH SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATION AND OTHER EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT. A USED FIRE TRUCK WAS PURCHASED WITH THE SAME GRANT AND REFURBISHED AS AN EMERGENCY SERVICE VEHICLE. ADDITIONALLY, THE DEPARTMENT'S TACTICAL RESPONSE UNIT WAS PROVIDED WITH THE LATEST IN EQUIPMENT AND TACTICS TRAINING, ENSURING WE CAN RESPOND TO ANY EMERGENCY OR DANGEROUS SITUATION THAT MIGHT BESET THE CITY.

PEEKSKILL'S POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE IN ESTABLISHING A NORTHERN COUNTY NARCOTICS/ANTI-CRIME TASK FORCE, COMPRISED OF POLICE AGENCIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE COUNTY.

A SIMILAR TASK FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED IN LOWER WESTCHESTER SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND HAS PROVEN EXCEPTIONALLY SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF ATTACKING THE SUBJECTS WHO TRANSPORT, DELIVER, PROCESS AND SELL NARCOTICS. OUR COLLABORATIVE OPERATIONS STARTED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AND WE HAVE ALREADY HAD THREE SUCCESSFUL JOINT VENTURES.

OUR COMMUNITY POLICING DIVISION HAS EXPANDED AND ENHANCED ITS ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH THROUGH ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH PROGRAMS SUCH AS YOUTH COURT, NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS AND MAINTAINING AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENCE AT COMMUNITY EVENTS AND FESTIVALS. IN ADDITION, TWENTY YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE DEPARTMENT'S SUMMER YOUTH POLICE ACADEMY. THE DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO BE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO FURTHER ENHANCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN 2007.

OUTREACH TO THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY WAS AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE CARRIED THROUGH THE HEALTH CENTER AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP RESULTING IN A SURGE OF REPORTING INCIDENTS. ALSO, MEMBERS OF THE TACTICAL RESPONSE

UNIT HAVE BEEN TRAINING FOR SCHOOL-RELATED INCIDENTS AND OFFICERS WORK TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS BOTH IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL.

BY TAKING A STRONG STAND AGAINST CRIME AND HAVING A DEDICATED AND HIGHLY TRAINED POLICE FORCE, PEEKSKILL IS A SAFE CITY. ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS, SINCE THE YEAR 2000 TOTAL CRIME IN PEEKSKILL HAD DECREASED BY 41%. THAT IS TWICE AS MUCH AS WESTCHESTER AS A WHOLE. BETWEEN THE YEARS 2003-2005 VIOLENT CRIMES IN WESTCHESTER ACTUALLY HAD A SLIGHT INCREASE WHILE IN PEEKSKILL DURING THAT SAME PERIOD THEY DECLINED BY 30%. MOREOVER, PEEKSKILL HAD A BETTER RECORD REDUCING OVERALL CRIME FROM 2000 TO 2005 THAN 30 OF THE 48 REPORTING MUNICIPALITIES IN WESTCHESTER. THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT. WE HAVE INSTITUTED STRICT POLICIES TO FIGHT CRIME AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES AND WE MUST THANK CHIEF TUMOLO AND HIS DEPARTMENT FOR TAKING A STRONG STAND AND IMPLEMENTING THE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE MADE PEEKSKILL A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE.

WITH HIGH STANDARDS OF TRAINING AND COMMUNITY COMMITMENT, MEMBERS OF THE PEEKSKILL FIRE DEPARTMENT HAVE ALSO CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE CITY'S PUBLIC SAFETY, RESPONDING TO A LITTLE OVER 3,000 ALARMS IN 2006. THESE INCLUDE FIRES IN STRUCTURES, SMOKE INVESTIGATIONS, BRUSH FIRES, MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS, HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, BASIC LIFE SUPPORT RESPONSES AND MORE.

OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO PARTNER WITH THE TOWN OF CORTLANDT IN OUR JOINT PARAMEDIC PROGRAM, WHICH OFFERS PREMIUM ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT SERVICES TO THE CITIZENS OF BOTH MUNICIPALITIES. PEEKSKILL PARAMEDICS ANSWERED 765 ALS ALARMS IN PEEKSKILL AND ALMOST 1,200 IN CORTLANDT IN 2006, OUT OF MORE THAN 2,200 ALARMS. CORTLANDT MEDICS ANSWERED 280 IN PEEKSKILL.

FIREFIGHTER PARAMEDICS CONTINUE TO BRING THEIR SUCCESSFUL SENIOR CITIZEN HEALTH CHECK WITH PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPASSION. THE PROGRAM,

WHICH IS CARRIED OUT RIGHT IN THE SENIORS' APARTMENT BUILDINGS, CHECKS BLOOD PRESSURE, PULSE AND BLOOD SUGAR LEVEL AND GIVES OUR OLDER CITIZENS SOMEONE CONVENIENTLY AVAILABLE TO TALK TO ABOUT EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS. ALSO, A PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTING CITY EMPLOYEES IN CPR TRAINING BEGAN IN 2006.

THROUGH EXEMPLARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERIOUS CODE ENFORCEMENT, THE DEPARTMENT BRINGS THE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF FIRE PREVENTION TO THE COMMUNITY. CAREER STAFF CONCENTRATES ON INSPECTING PLACES OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY FOR FIRE HAZARDS AND WORKS WITH THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT TO UNCOVER AND ELIMINATE UNSAFE LIVING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES. VOLUNTEERS CONDUCT FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION DEMONSTRATIONS AND TALKS WITH VARIOUS COMMUNITY GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

THE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS REGULAR FITNESS TESTING, WITH A POSITIVE RESULT OF NO SERIOUS INJURIES TO FIREFIGHTERS THIS PAST YEAR. IT ALSO PARTICIPATED IN A FULL RANGE OF IN-HOUSE TRAINING SESSIONS AS WELL AS NEW YORK STATE FIRE ACADEMY AND WESTCHESTER COUNTY FIRE TRAINING CENTER PROGRAMS RESULTING IN MEMBERS ACHIEVING STATE CERTIFICATION IN VARIED TECHNICAL FIREFIGHTING AREAS. WE CERTAINLY APPRECIATE THE HIGH LEVEL OF PROFESSIONALISM DEMONSTRATED BY PEEKSKILL'S CONSCIENTIOUS FIREFIGHTERS.

PEEKSKILL'S FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE CAPABILITIES WILL BE ENHANCED BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW FIRE RESCUE TRUCK IN 2007. THE DELIVERY OF THE VEHICLE IS DUE ANY DAY NOW AND WILL BE HOUSED BY THE PEEKSKILL FIRE PATROL. AFTER CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THEIR TRUSTEES I WILL RECOMMEND TO THE COMMON COUNCIL THAT WE EMBARK ON AN INITIATIVE TO PLAN FOR A CENTRALIZED FIRE HOUSE THAT WILL COMBINE NO LESS THAT 3 OF THE 6 COMPANIES. NOT ONLY WILL THIS ENSURE A MORE EFFICIENT AND HIGHER QUALITY FIRE DEPARTMENT, IT WILL PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC SAVINGS FOR THE CITY TAXPAYERS. I LOOK FORWARD TO MOVING AHEAD IN 2007 WITH THE NEWLY

ELECTED CHIEFS; FIRE CHIEF JOHN PAPPAS, FIRST ASSISTANT CHIEF LEONARD VARELLA AND SECOND ASSISTANT CHIEF ROBERT FIORIO. I WOULD LIKE TO ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK OUTGOING CHIEF JIM HOWARD FOR HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THIS COMMUNITY AND HIS LEADERSHIP IN BRINGING IMPORTANT INITIATIVES FORWARD THAT WILL HAVE LONG LASTING EFFECTS ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR RESIDENTS.

OUR DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES PROVIDED INTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES IN 2006 SUCH AS PARTICIPATION IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, ANALYSIS OF INSURANCE PROPOSALS, PROCESSING OF EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS AND COMPENSATION CLAIMS, ARRANGING DRUG/ALCOHOL TESTING AS REQUIRED, COORDINATION OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING FOR ALL CITY EMPLOYEES AND MORE.

OUR CITY CLERK'S OFFICE INTERFACES WITH THE PUBLIC ON A DAILY BASIS AND, THIS PAST YEAR, DEALT WITH 230 FOIL REQUESTS, PROCESSED 250 MARRIAGE LICENSES AND 400 BIRTH CERTIFICATES, ISSUED 550 ANNUAL PARKING PERMITS PLUS 400 MONTHLY PERMITS, 565 DOG LICENSES AND MUCH MORE. COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED COURTEOUS TREATMENT AS STAFF RESPONDED TO ALL SORTS OF QUESTIONS.

ADDITIONALLY, THE CLERK'S OFFICE CONDUCTED 4 ELECTIONS -- PRIMARY, GENERAL, FIRE DEPARTMENT AND BID.

NOW, I'D LIKE TO GET BACK TO WHERE I STARTED -- THE CITY'S HEALTHY FINANCIAL STATE, WHICH HAS A DIRECT EFFECT ON OUR TAXPAYING CITIZENS. THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THE MILLION DOLLAR INCREASE IN OUR 2006 ASSESSMENT ROLL ENABLED US TO PASS A 2007 BUDGET WITH A 0% TAX INCREASE. THE CITY'S PORTION OF A TAXPAYER'S TOTAL BILL HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM 26% TO 25% -- EVERY POINT COUNTS.

FURTHER, WE WILL BE WORKING TO IMPROVE OUR CITY'S BOND RATING WHICH, IN TURN REDUCES BORROWING COSTS FOR LONG RANGE PROJECTS, AND THUS BRINGS FURTHER SAVINGS TO TAXPAYERS.

OUR AUDITORS, HIGHLY EXPERIENCED IN MUNICIPAL WORK, HAVE HELPED

GUIDE US TO THE SUCCESS WE ARE EXPERIENCING TODAY. OUR NEW BUDGET FORMAT PROVIDES WELCOME TRANSPARENCY IN CITY OPERATIONS AND BUILDS PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN WHAT THE CITY HAS ACCOMPLISHED THIS PAST YEAR AND FOR THE FUTURE.

LOOKING OUT FOR PEEKSKILL'S BEST INTERESTS IS MY MAIN CONCERN. WE CONTINUE TO DEMAND RESPECT AND INSIST UPON INPUT WHERE DECISIONS OF OTHER ENTITIES AFFECT US SUCH AS ISSUES OF SEWER DIVERSION, HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC ON OUR MAIN STREETS, WATERSHED PROTECTION, AND ABSENTEE LANDLORDS. WE WILL USE A HIGH LEVEL OF ENERGY TO PROMOTE OUR CITY AND CONTINUE TO ATTRACT THOSE ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS THAT SUPPORT OUR GOALS.

ALL IN ALL, 2006 WAS AN EXTRAORDINARILY PRODUCTIVE YEAR FOR PEEKSKILL AND I WANT TO THANK ALL CITY STAFF AND DEPARTMENT HEADS FOR THEIR DEDICATED COMMITMENT; CITY MANAGER DAN FITZPATRICK, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER AND COMPTROLLER MARCUS SERRANO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND CODE ASSISTANCE BRIAN HAVRANEK, DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES DAVID GREENER, CORPORATION COUNCIL BILL FLORENCE, DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL LYNN SWANSEN, CITY CLERK PAM BEACH, ASSESSOR PAUL WOTZAK, POLICE CHIEF EUGENE TUMOLO, WATER SUPERINTENDENT EDWARD KHUNS, YOUTH BUREAU DIRECTOR VALERIE SWANN AND PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR FRAN BRUNELLE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO THE CITY OF PEEKSKILL AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER WITH THEM IN 2007 FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL RESIDENTS OF PEEKSKILL.

I WANT TO EXPRESS PERSONAL THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO OUR CITY RESIDENTS FOR THEIR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN ME. IT IS AN HONOR TO SERVE AS MAYOR OF THIS EXEMPLARY CITY.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.


JOHN G. TESTA, MAYOR