Last week, Renew Penfield Home Energy Workshop was a success with 48 families taking advantage of the program that was intended to help residents save money, improve comfort and create a healthier home. I would like to recognize and thank RG&E, NYSERDA, PathStone, Crossfield, Isaac, Betlem, Taylor, Energy Cooperative of America, Rochester Solar & Wind and Blue Springs Energy for their participation and support of the program. My biggest take away from the program was the need to schedule a comprehensive home energy assessment. A home energy assessment is available for free or at a very low cost based on your annual household income. The assessment is the first and most important step to take to participate in various incentives. Over the next week, I plan on filling out the paperwork to schedule an assessment for the LaFountain home; I will keep you posted on the results—saving money, improving comfort and creating a healthier home for my family are all great quality of life issues! For program details, log on to www.renewpenfield.org. Also, PCTV videotaped the presentation; see www.PenfieldTV.org for a broadcast schedule.

At the last Town Board meeting, the board authorized a refunding bond resolution to take advantage of low interest rates to help reduce costs to the budget in future years. What this resolution does is take the capital costs from three previous projects that were undertaken by the town from 1999-2001 (swimming pool construction, library construction and water system improvements) and refinance them at a lower interest rate. The term of the bonds remain the same, and the cost to the town on an annual basis is reduced by more than $53,000 per year. This savings will allow the board to absorb some of the state mandated expenses in the future. While the property tax cap was a historic first step for property tax relief and we thank the Governor for this action, the current cap does not include mandate relief which is the root cause of rapidly rising property taxes. As a member of the Monroe County Council of Governments, we recently passed a resolution calling on the New York State Legislature and the Governor to enact a cap on state mandated expenses at the lesser of 2% or the rate of inflation; we believe this effort will help to bring true tax reform to our taxpayers.

I will be presenting the State of the Town on Tuesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall auditorium. This is an opportunity for me to share with our residents the town’s accomplishments from 2011, plans and goals for 2012, and what the financial wellness of the community is going forward to ensure one of the lowest tax rates in Monroe County. Everyone is welcome to attend. You may also view it from the comfort of your home on PenfieldTV, channels 12, 1398 or 5.12. You can also log on to www.penfield.org and watch the streaming video.

We continue to look for ways to reduce the cost of government for our taxpayers. Recently, the Penfield Town Board and Recreation Department have been discussing discontinuing home mailing delivery of the seasonal brochure which is sent to all residents three times per year at an annual cost of approximately $19,000. We would still make the brochure available on-line on our website and in print for pickup at convenient locations throughout town. Change does not come without impact, and to that end we want to know your thoughts on the idea. Do you feel strongly that the brochure should continue to be delivered to every household by mail? Would you pay a nominal fee for a subscription? Do you only access our information online? Please take a moment to share your thoughts through our online survey by March 15 at www.penfield.org, or if you are at the Community Center or Town Hall fill out a printed survey and drop it in the box. Thank you in advance for weighing in on this very important decision.

The town’s Wellness Committee and Recreation Department remind me that there are scores of fitness programs for all age levels offered through the town from swimming to pickle ball, Zumba to yoga, #get fit with fun! to #boot camp, and everything in between. If you have not started your 2012 wellness plan, it’s not too late. Come sign up for one of the many great programs!

Until next week, be safe and be well.

Tony
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