Three exciting public hikes are planned for August in the Thousand Acre Swamp Sanctuary. Saturday, August 11 at 8:00 p.m. is “Perseid Meteor Shower Over the Swamp” hosted by Steve Gooding, Jackson Thomas and Diane Taggart. Bring a flashlight and lawn or lounge chairs and dress for a cool evening; Saturday, August 18 at 10:00 a.m. join hosts Rick Iuli, Frank Crombe and Carl Herrgesell for “Ferns” (a hand lens is suggested); and Friday, August 24 at 8:00 p.m. is the “First Quarter Moon Over the Swamp” hike. Leaders will provide telescopes, hikers are welcome to bring their own flashlights, binoculars or telescopes. All hikes are free and open to the public; they begin in the parking lot located at 1581 Jackson Road. The driveway is adjacent to Penfield Volunteer Emergency Ambulance. If you have questions or require additional information please contact Marie at (585) 773-8911.

This summer has seen above average temperatures and an abundant amount of sunshine. Although some may enjoy this stretch of heat, these conditions have added to an excess growth of algae in the more than 110 ponds throughout the town of Penfield. Algae growth is directly attributed to storm water runoff of lawn and garden fertilizers and car washing soaps that contain phosphorous. Decomposing algae depletes oxygen levels causing fish kills and offensive odors. While algae is a natural part of an aquatic ecosystem, decreasing the amount of nutrients like phosphorous from entering the ponds will greatly reduce the amount of algae. You can help. Consider using phosphorous-free fertilizers which are now widely available at home and garden centers. Also, keeping organic debris including grass clippings and leaf litter from pond water will also reduce the introduction of troublesome nutrients. For more information and remedial steps that you can take to help alleviate this problem, please log on at www.monroecountyswcd.org or contact the Monroe County Health Department at 753-2991 or the Cornell Cooperative Extension at 461-1000.

For those of you who regularly traverse the intersection of Empire Blvd. and Plank Road, you will be pleased that intersection improvements are finally complete after several years. I want to thank Town Engineer Geoff Benway for working with the NYS Department of Transportation to bring in the right contractor to finish the long overdue project for the safety and convenience of our residents. Next up are the left turn arrows in the Four Corners—this will be a welcome addition to help to control and manage traffic through this very busy intersection.

Beginning Monday, August 13 residents may apply for a Deer Management Permit (DMP) at the Penfield Town Hall or at any licensing outlet. The DMP deadline will close at day’s end October 1, 2012. DMPs are available to all big game hunters age 14 or older who purchase or possess a regular big game hunting license. For more information please log onto the NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov or call our Town Clerk at 340-8629.

In the coming months I will provide short weekly updates on the 2013 budget process to keep you informed of how the Penfield Town Board is addressing unfunded mandates while meeting tax cap requirements and minimizing the impact to overall services. However, for the board to maintain no increase to the tax rate, we must run the Town of Penfield leaner and more efficiently year-on-year. This will be accomplished by improving overall service delivery, continuing to create efficiencies across all departments, expanding our ongoing benchmarking process to include the private sector, and by continuing to promote economic development.

The 2013 budget calendar is as follows:

September 5 - Town Supervisor and Finance Director present a summary of the Tentative Budget to the town board and community; the entire document is made public for review (note: during this period, the Tentative Budget becomes the Preliminary Budget)

September 5-October 10 - Public comment period

October 3 - Public Hearing on 2013 Preliminary Budget; public comments received

October 3-12 - Town Board reviews comments, develops a Final Budget

October 17 - Town Board Legislative meeting, adoption of a Final 2013 Budget

Until next week, be well and be safe!
Tony
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