

***October 29, 2013***

I am very pleased to report that, with the strong support and assistance of County Executive Ed Mangano and State Senator Jack Martins, the Village has made significant progress towards our plan to address the drainage issue that has plagued the West End of Floral Park for decades.

As anyone living in the West End near the border to Belmont Park can attest, there is a clear need for an additional stormwater retention facility for stormwater from roadways within the Village of Floral Park as well as stormwater from the Village of Bellerose and Bellerose Terrace. When there is a major rain event, flooding in this area is common. The Village previously commissioned an engineering study by Dvirka & Bartilucci which identified the construction of a new basin near the existing basin on the property of the New York Racing Association at Belmont Park as the most viable solution for addressing the need for additional stormwater retention.

Now we have received written confirmation from County Executive Ed Mangano's office that Nassau County is committed to entering into an inter-municipal agreement with the Village for the construction a new basin and related drainage work at this location when permission to do so is received from NYRA. Significantly, the County has also committed that, to the extent that any funding may be available for this project, the County will contribute such funding.

Since NYRA's approval for this project is still necessary to move forward, I have to acknowledge we are not there yet in terms of finalizing our plans. But I am confident that with the strong support we are receiving for this project from County Executive Mangano and State Senator Martins we can obtain the approval of NYRA and move forward with this project so that the residents of the West End can finally get the relief they deserve.

***October 15, 2013***

The upcoming election on November 5<sup>th</sup> may be the most important election for the future of Floral Park and the communities surrounding Belmont Park. In addition to the election for our Nassau County executive and many other public offices, there is arguably the most important vote on the ballot concerning the state wide referendum on casino gambling. As the Village of Floral Park has previously proclaimed, we the people of Floral Park do not want or need casino gambling at Belmont Park.

Unfortunately, for the voters of New York, the proposed referendum on the ballot states that it is for the “legislated purposes of promoting job growth, increasing aid to schools, and permitting local governments to lower property taxes through revenues generated.” No one we know in Floral Park or our sister communities could be against “promoting job growth, increasing aid to schools, and permitting local governments to lower property taxes through revenues generated.”

If that is what the first referendum on the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot was all about, then, unless someone wanted to stop job growth, decrease aid to schools and increase property taxes, then along with baseball, apple pie and the American flag, such a referendum would be universally supported. Sadly, however, unless the voters of Floral Park and the rest of New York pay close attention to what is actually being proposed in Referendum One on November 5<sup>th</sup>, we the people will be signing off on allowing the expansion of casino gambling in the State of New York at up to seven locations in the state. Since the seven locations are also not specified, is there any doubt that Belmont Park could be at least within the win, place or show positions of such a seven horse field?

Indeed the Roman Catholic bishops in New York have urged their congregations “to very carefully consider this measure and all its potential implications.” Especially troubling to the Church leaders are the potential negative impacts on communities neighboring full scale gambling casinos. According to the New York Church leaders, a well regarded Connecticut study “found that while the casinos did boost employment and revenues, they also resulted in serious negative consequences in the areas near the casinos and for individuals. These included a 400 percent increase in embezzlement arrests, a doubling of DWI arrests, and an increase in substandard and illegal housing for undocumented workers.”

As we have always said, any local community that votes to support casino gambling will be signing its own death warrant. Is there any doubt that if Floral Park voters approve Referendum One on the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot that the Albany insiders will claim that our vote for “promoting job growth, increasing aid to schools, and

permitting local governments to lower property taxes through revenues generated” means that the communities neighboring Belmont Park support casino gambling there too?

The Village of Floral Park therefore urges all residents as well as all citizens in communities neighboring Belmont Park to have their voices heard loud and clear on Tuesday November 5<sup>th</sup>. If you are unable to get to your local voting location due to illness or being out of town, please consider casting your vote by absentee ballot by contacting the Nassau County Board of Elections, or your local political party. For everyone else, please be sure to vote on Tuesday November 5<sup>th</sup> and focus special attention on Referendum One relating to authorizing casino gambling at up to seven locations in New York. The future of Floral Park and the communities neighboring Belmont Park may well hang in the balance.