

Inc. Village of Floral Park
Board of Trustees Reports
December 1, 2020

Recognition of Architectural Review Board Chairman, Frank Gunther, AIA
By the Mayor & Board of Trustees

Mayor Dominick Longobardi

Tonight, the Village Board of Trustees is recognizing the Chairperson of the Village of Floral Park's Architectural Review Board (ARB) upon his retirement. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the residents of Floral Park, thank you to Frank and Gail Gunther who have been so generous to the Floral Park community by serving and volunteering in so many organizations over these many years.

I would like to thank Frank especially this evening for his outstanding service as the Chairman of the Floral Park ARB. Frank has been the Chairman since 2003 and in that role he has helped many homeowners make their homes better because of his contributions to their design and construction projects. Frank always gave that little bit extra of his time and talent to make the home become that much more special. Architects enjoyed presenting before Frank and many were inspired by his ideas and leadership. Frank is a wonderful person and talented architect. He could enhance home designs and maintain the integrity of the charm and aesthetics of the Village homes, buildings and properties. Everyone benefited from his expertise.

I offer Gail a special thank you for sharing Frank with the Village these many years. There are many guests participating in the Zoom tribute tonight who wanted to recognize you, Frank and I will be turning it over to them shortly. Before I do, I just want to say now that the Zoom meeting platform is being widely used, you cannot retire. You are only a Zoom call away. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you have contributed to the beauty and charm of the Village of Floral Park these many decades. I wish you and Gail every happiness as you start the next chapter of your lives in Pennsylvania. Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Kevin Fitzgerald

Frank, I would like to thank you for all of your efforts in making Floral Park "look" the way it does. It was not until my time on the Village Board that I came to know of the vast influence that you have had in shaping the aesthetics. I think besides all of the buildings and homes that you have approved as Chairman of the ARB, the thing that I will remember the most is the manner in which you worked with residents. You always offered them alternatives and knowing how precious their time was, many times you offered them additional time at the meeting for them to work with their architect to re-present their plans. I would be remiss if I did not thank you for your guidance and wisdom as a member of the Belmont Task Force.

In closing, Frank thank you for your time and your influence will certainly be felt by many for generations to come. And thank you for showing all of us what a true public servant should look like.

Dr. Lynn Pombonyo, Trustee

Frank, tonight we salute your seventeen (and many more) years of meaningful service and valuable contributions to the residents and businesses of Floral Park. While I could speak for way too long about your extraordinary talents and skills, I'll pick one that I think has had and will have a lasting impact.

That is your ability to create aesthetic solutions to mathematical problems. As the Architectural Review Board (ARB) has considered the designs of ever-increasing numbers of large houses being proposed on some of our smaller pieces of property, we watched in awe as you worked your magic. You shared your vision and wisdom, reimagining the fronts and sides of houses that had been designed to maximize their footprints on the properties; instead, you envisioned their potential beauty. You taught homeowners, architects and all of us about setbacks that are different floor to floor; colorful, decorative siding; eye-catching porches, peaks and turrets; inviting entranceways and doors; breathtaking bay and bow windows that become portraits of lovely, outside landscapes; and so much more. You transformed the standard and routine, and inspired many homeowners and architects to value their homes' aesthetic quality, over maximizing the size of their houses on the properties.

You are brilliant, creative and visionary, and your designs dazzle! I dare say, we've all enjoyed working with you and learning from you. It's been an honor.

Thank you for your decades of giving yourself, your time and your talents to the Village of Floral Park, and for making the places we call home beautiful, inside and out. May God bless you always.

Trustee Archie Cheng

Tonight, I am pleased to join the Village Board and the entire Floral Park family in thanking Frank Gunther for his years of service to our beloved Village. As a young boy, I would ride my bike from Braddock Avenue through our Village and knew that someday I wanted to live here. As a newly married couple, Denise and I picked Floral Park as our first home because of its charm, its character and for the beautiful homes.

Many tonight have spoken or will speak as to what Frank has accomplished over the past four plus decades. How through his leadership, he has preserved our character, charm and beauty, and those accolades are well deserved. However, I would like to tell you what Frank did and how he influenced me way back in 1990-91 while I was a trustee for the Floral Park - Bellerose School District. It was in 1990 that I met Frank. The district was about to embark on a most ambitious project. The district needed to build additions to the Floral Park - Bellerose School and the John Lewis Childs School. These additions would add much needed classrooms to accommodate our growing student population. We also needed to expand our gymnasiums and make several other improvements. The cost of these improvements was 6.8 million dollars, an amount unheard of back then. We selected Frank and his firm to be our architects. It was a decision that the Board and the district never regretted. While Frank and I argued over fees many times, there was never an argument as to his ingenious architectural eye, his vision, and his way of designing improvements that met our needs while maintaining the character of our beautiful schools. He was at the forefront of our presentations in explaining our need and convincing the voters to approve this expenditure. He was our leader in how to make it happen and probably first and foremost, the "architect" who created the extensions to be compatible with the existing buildings.

For 40 plus years, Frank has brought that expertise, that tradition for keeping Floral Park what it is, and the ingenuity to help all residents who sought direction. I with the rest of the Village and the Floral Park - Bellerose School District thank you for serving our Village so well. I hope you and Gail enjoy your retirement and never change your phone number because I know we will always need your expertise in the future. Thank you.

Trustee Frank Chiara

Congratulations Frank. I'd like to thank you for all of your service to the ARB. You will be forever remembered as the "Muntin Man" as I look at all of the windows in Floral Park. Your attention to detail and your willingness to share your expertise are equally amazing. Most applicants that presented before you at the ARB were left satisfied and even smiling, quite an accomplishment. You always took the time to work with the homeowners and many new architects enjoyed learning from you. The Village of Floral Park is very grateful to you and now with the Zoom capabilities, the Building Department and the ARB will still be able to include you in the meetings. The Village of Floral Park cannot thank you enough. We wish you and your family the best of luck and hope that you enjoy your new home. You will be forever be remembered as "The Architect of Floral Park". May God bless you and your family.

BOARD REPORTS

Belmont Redevelopment Project – Deputy Mayor Fitzgerald

Last week the ESD released at Proposed Modifications to the 2019 General Project Plan. They are looking to modify 4 specific items: 1) Relocation of 25,000 gross square feet (gsf) of retail from Site A to Site B. No change to total square footage of retail; 2) Replacement of the Site B parking beneath the retail village with a free-standing, aboveground parking structure and related modifications to the Site B site plan; 3) Substitution of the landscaped berm on Site B with a 10-foot wall with plantings and landscaping along the eastern perimeter of Site B; and 4) Inclusion of a hydrogen fuel cell technology option for on-site shuttle buses. Additionally, in the document there is discussions with regards to the new train station and adjustments that are being made to visual barriers as the station is being moved slightly further west than originally planned. It is our understanding that there will be a public hearing on these changes. The document can be found at the ESD website and we will post on our website tomorrow under the Belmont Redevelopment News section.

Fire Department Update - Trustee Pomponyo

On an early Sunday morning, November 22nd at 3AM, our police and fire departments responded to yet another major fire, this one at a home on Webster Street. Trustee and Fire Commissioner Archie Cheng, who always responds to Village fires, was unable to do so this time and, since I could see the intense flames from my home, which is about a block away, I was right there at the time.

Once again, our fire department, working with several mutual aid departments, did an outstanding job attacking the fire from both inside and out, and putting water on the two adjacent homes (which did suffer siding damage due to the intense heat). Most importantly, the families and their pets all got out of their homes safely and were taken care of by our dedicated Rescue Squad and their very kind neighbors. The fire was extinguished in about ninety minutes with the use of two tower ladders, including Floral

Park's. The house on fire suffered extensive damage, but we are grateful that there were no serious injuries or fatalities, and the fire did not spread.

Several neighbors on Webster Street asked me to convey their tremendous gratitude to our fire and police departments for their courage and hard work in saving lives and property.

This was the third Village fire in eight weeks. Indeed, thanks to Floral Park's bravest and finest from all of Floral Park. And we wish the families, whose homes were so damaged by the fire, well.

Conservation Society - Trustee Pombonyo

Thanksgiving weekend continued to be a busy time at Centennial Gardens with over 500 visitors entering and enjoying the beautiful fall foliage during the very sunny, warm and pleasant days. On Sunday, the 29th, the Gardens closed for the winter, leaving the outer brick path open and benches available for viewing nature as winter approaches.

All our Centennial Gardens fans will want to take a look at the Centennial Gardens 2021 Calendar. It is filled with magnificent photos of the flowers, trees and birds that make our Gardens so unique and special. Please check the Floral Park Centennial Gardens Facebook page, take a peek, and get your own copy of this lovely photo journal.

Covert Avenue Chamber of Commerce and Our Businesses - Trustee Pombonyo

We congratulate the Park Place restaurant on their move to a new and exciting location, the Olde Trading Post restaurant in New Hyde Park. We wish them great success and look forward to the possibility of their continuing a business in Floral Park as well.

Work on the site of the fire will continue, as the property owners and our Building Department move the recovery process forward.

Meanwhile, on Covert and Tulip Avenues and Jericho Turnpike, the holiday season has arrived. Suggestions for your holiday shopping include strolling along our business thoroughfares and looking for new and different gift ideas in our beautifully decorated store windows; checking the individual business websites and Facebook pages to view the merchandise and learn about all the specials; and perusing the Covert Avenue and Floral Park Chambers of Commerce Facebook pages and/or websites to see all that our local businesses bring to a joyous holiday season. And, now, please SHOP, EAT, SPEND AND ENJOY LOCAL as we all support our Floral Park and Stewart Manor businesses.

Our Holiday Season - Trustee Pombonyo

Thanks to our residents and businesses for the sparkling holiday decorations and lights that have begun to adorn our neighborhoods. Enjoy walking and driving throughout the Village to take in these beautiful displays as well as the magnificent Christmas trees which will shine brightly in the coming weeks.

Fire Department – Trustee Cheng

Inasmuch as I could not respond to the house fire on Webster, I want to thank Lynn for giving the report on our Department's response. We are all thankful that there were no injuries and as always thanks to the Fire Department for their bravery and dedication.

Third Track & LIRR – Trustee Cheng

The three new elevators at the Floral Park train station are currently being tested and testing should be completed by the end of December. They all should be in service the first week of January if the test results show safe operation. Sound and retaining wall installation on the north side of the main line Right of Way (ROW) near Charles Street is now slated to begin the end of January. All materials have been procured so there should be no more delays.

Library – Trustee Chiara

At the Library, the “Food for Fines” program was very successful. The overwhelming generosity of the patrons allowed the library staff to make multiple trips to the Our Lady of Victory food pantry with a large amount of food donations. With all that is going on with this pandemic our patrons showed how much they cared for all others who are in need. I’m sure it helped make for a Happy Thanksgiving. THANK YOU to all who donated.

The Library virtual programs continue and a Holiday Concert with Niamh Hyland will be held on December 13th at 4PM. Niamh, a former Floral Park resident, will sing well-known holiday tunes. Her performance of ‘Silent Night’ in several languages, including Gaelic, is not to be missed. Those interested can register online or call the reference desk for assistance. This Library Holiday Concert will be held on zoom.

On Monday December 14th from 10AM to 2PM the St. Francis Hospital health van will be curbside at the Library. The van will offer free health screening, including free flu shots. No appointments are necessary.

Building Department – Trustee Chiara

The Building Department, with the assistance of DPW, installed a mail slot to the right of the front door for use during times when the department is closed or for those wishing to maintain social distancing. Starting January 1st, all Building Department forms will be updated and posted on the Village website. There will be minor modifications to most forms and some new forms will be added to expedite disapprovals if a variance is needed and a process to implement full electronic review of drawings.

A Covert Avenue debris clean-up will start on Monday Dec. 7th, weather permitting. This clean-up will include debris outside and inside of the buildings affected by the recent fire. The main structures will remain, until all debris removal is completed and the buildings are further evaluated.

Police Department – Trustee Chiara

The Floral Park Police Dept. is helping coordinate Tricia’s Kids 2nd Annual Toy Donation Drive-by on Saturday Dec. 5th starting at 12PM. Participants please arrive at the Carlton Parking Lot at 11:30AM. The car parade will start in the parking lot across from 1 Floral Blvd., ending at 200 West Poplar St. Unwrapped toys can be donated to make for a brighter Christmas for children who are in need. The rain date is Sunday Dec 6th. This event is in support of the efforts of the Big Brothers and Sisters and the John Theissen children’s foundations.

Check out the “Tuesday’s Traffic Tips “on the Floral Park Police Dept. Facebook page for updates on helpful traffic tips. With the holiday season upon us, the Police Dept. reminds all to be careful while driving within our community and please obey all traffic laws. Also remove, as soon as possible, packages that are delivered to your homes or ask your neighbors to do so to avoid any unwanted events.

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Longobardi

Mayor Longobardi reported that the Annual Tree Lighting at Memorial Park is scheduled for December 4, 2020 at 6PM. The Junior Women’s Club of Floral Park and Our Lady of Victory help coordinate this wonderful evening. Fr. Tom Fusco will be blessing the Manger at 6PM followed by the lighting of the tree. Due to Governor Cuomo’s most recent COVID-19 regulations, the Tree Lighting will be virtual only. You are all invited to join us on Facebook for the live streaming of this special tradition. The recent Governor’s Executive Orders unfortunately do not allow crowds to gather so to keep everyone safe please enjoy it virtually and visit the tree with your family during the holiday season. The Village and many of its organizations are creating special events to help all of us enjoy the holidays safely this season. Perhaps you can enjoy dinner at a local a restaurant, shop locally and enjoy the neighborhood to celebrate the holidays.

Thank you to the brave volunteers of the Floral Park Fire Department who responded d to the fire on Webster Avenue. It was a very serious fire and fortunately, resident and their family pets were evacuated safely and the fire was extinguished in under two hours. It is a testament to the amazing group of volunteers in the Fire Department and Rescue Squad along with our DPW, Building Department and Police Department employees who provided their expertise in these dangerous situations. Thank you to Trustee Lynn Pombonyo who responded for the Board of Trustees and reported details earlier.

Finally, on behalf of the Longobardi family, I would like thank everyone in the community for their outpouring of well wishes and texts to express their concern for all of the members of my family during the past few weeks. We are very touched and truly appreciative.

There is one more meeting on December 15th for the 2020 year. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank everyone for their kindness and patience throughout the unprecedented events of this past year. Floral Park is the model community of showing what we can do to help each other when we all work together. We wish all of you and your families and friends a very safe and Happy Holiday season. Please support the local businesses and enjoy the holidays close to home in Floral Park, truly the greatest place to live. Thank you.