

by Jeffrey Kaplan, Mayor, Village of Ellenville

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

As a resident of the Village of Ellenville, the Town of Wawarsing, and the Ellenville School District, I have found the inability of these organizations to work together, at times, to be both surprising and disappointing. Competition between institutions with competing interests (such as Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors) is readily understandable; but what of institutions that are oft times funded by the very same taxpayers?

With municipalities and school districts facing significant reductions in state revenues, plus in the possibility of a gambling casino coming to our area, we will all benefit from working together.

Being a bit naive, and having served as Town of Wawarsing's Attorney for several years, as well Chairman of the Ellenville School Building Committee, I am hopeful that, as Village Mayor, I can help to resolve these past differences, so that we may work together while facing the following issues:

1. *Casino Gambling:* I am deeply disturbed that, to date, negotiations between the Modoc Indians and Ulster County have proceeded with little, if any, input from the Village, Town, and School District. In my humble opinion, the impact upon the County, if a casino were sited within the Town of Wawarsing, would be insignificant compared to that of its impact upon the Town, School District, Village, and Napanoch Fire District. I shudder to think that these local entities would be subject to the discretion of the County in deciding what allocations (if any) of the monies paid by the Modoc Tribe to the County are to be paid to the Town, Village, School, and Fire Districts. I propose that an alliance between the four local entities at this juncture would be much more effective in ensuring that our interests are properly protected.

2. *Municipal Building:* Although the Village must either renovate its existing municipal building or proceed with plans to construct a new one on **Center Street**, the **Town Hall** is somewhat antiquated and does not fully meet the needs of our Town government. I would propose that both the Town and Village consider a state-of-the-art facility constructed on **Center Street**, with one side servicing the Town, the other side servicing the Village, and the middle section consisting of a courtroom/meeting hall to be shared by the two municipalities. Not only would this provide a more efficient use of space but, in addition, the two existing municipal buildings could be sold and returned to the tax rolls. If future events should warrant a dissolution of the Village, consolidation in the



(Village Mayor Jeffrey Kaplan spoke at the **Chamber's** public information meeting on the proposed casino on April 24th at the Ellenville High School Auditorium. More extensive coverage of the meeting will be in the June issue.)

then existing municipal building would make dissolution that much easier and less expensive.

3. *Joint Purchase of Equipment:* There are a number of items of equipment used by a water and sewer district that the Town and Village have purchased on their own, or as a result of the cost of the equipment rented from a private contractor, at significant cost and expense to the municipality. For example, the Village will use a private contractor to clean out the sewer mains with a sewer jet from time to time. Similarly, the Napanoch and Kerhonkson Sewer Districts will pay outside contractors for the same service. I believe it would be cost-effective for the two municipalities to jointly-purchase such equipment. A meeting between the various Town and Village departments to review equipment needs and discuss those items that can be jointly-purchased and shared should be scheduled in the near future.

The Town of Wawarsing, Village of Ellenville, and Ellenville School District share many common goals and interests. We will all benefit from a cooperative environment.





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