



Indian Lake Borough

Office of the Mayor

Mayor's Newsletter

1ST ANNUAL HALLOWEEN TRICK/TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT A SUCCESS!

The first annual Indian Lake trick or treat event was a great success. Three hay wagons of kids (approximately 25) and adults traveled through the Borough escorted by the Indian Lake Police Cruiser and a Fire Engine from Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department. We had an amazing response from residents along the route who came out to give treats to the kids. Those not along the hay wagon route participated in the "Trunk or Treat" and provided treats for the kids at the lodge from the backs of their cars upon our return of the Hayride.

Thanks to my wife Susie for planning this event. Many thanks also to Pat and Terry St. Clair of Indian Lake resort for making the Wigwam pub available and for providing the pizza's/drinks (free) for the kids following the hayride. Terry also provided the hay and one of our hay wagons as well as two vehicles to pull them. We also need to thank Scott Swank/Indian Lake Realty for providing the other trailer used as a hay wagon and my brother Geoff who brought his antique tractor and hay wagon to lead the procession. Thanks also to the many friends who helped with decorating the Wigwam pub. Finally, thanks to our fire department for supporting this event. Please remember them during their next fund drive.

We hope to build on the success of this year's event next year.

2012 BUDGET

After much effort, the Borough Council has developed a proposed 2012 budget and authorized its publication. Next year, the Borough is faced with the full debt service expense of our dam remediation efforts as we anticipate securing long term commercial financing. This means that instead of paying interest only, the Borough will now be paying principle and interest payments on the debt associated with the dam, which is estimated based on current proposals to be \$450,000 per year. The impact of this without any cuts to our other necessary expenses would have required a millage increase from the current 16 mils to **22.4 mils** (a 6.4 mil increase). Concerned about the impact of such a large tax increase, Council energetically looked for ways to reduce spending to minimize the millage impact. As a result of a broad spectrum of cuts, Council was able to limit the millage necessary to **19.3 mils**. While still a 3.3 mil increase over our current Borough tax rate, this represents a 3.1 mil reduction from the millage rate that would have been necessary without any spending cuts.

Council had to make some tough choices in its efforts to minimize the tax impact associated with the conversion to long-term financing. One of these was the decision to convert our Police force from a full-time force with two officers to an entirely part-time force. This change in the budget accounted for slightly more than 1.1 of the 3.1 mils cut from the original proposed budget.

It has long been recognized that two full time officers was a luxury here in the Borough. The annual expenses not including capital equipment such as the police boat or the cruiser are approximately \$125,000 per year. The expenses of the Dam have forced us to think hard about what we absolutely need. In the past, we have had periods with no police coverage (except for State Police), part-time coverage, a single full time officer with occasional part-time support, and two full-time officers. While all on Council are committed to idea that we need some local police coverage here at the lake, it was believed, with my concurrence, that we could provide sufficient protection of property while ensuring safety on the roads and lake by converting the force to an entirely part-time force. A part-time force will give us the greatest flexibility to schedule officers when we need them the most while at the same time meeting our budget objectives.

As the other cuts were not in areas under my control, I will not address them here; however, I am happy to report that assuming we receive the remaining easements and unless we encounter some unforeseen expenses associated with completion of the Dam, Council has indicated that this should be our final tax increase associated with Dam remediation expenses. Council will consider any public comment as it formally considers the budget for adoption at its December meeting. For those that would like to review the budget, it is available for inspection at the Borough office.

I am pleased at the result and commend the Council for its diligent efforts at finding creative ways of holding the tax increase to a minimum. While tough decisions had to be made; Council did not make them lightly. The proposed budget was the product of many meetings and significant debate over the past few months. All members of Council should be commended for their efforts.

WINTER SAFETY REMINDERS

Roads: As winter is approaching, residents are reminded to be especially cautious traveling the roads as they can be quite slippery. Consider also that you may unexpectedly encounter pedestrians or plow trucks on the roads here in the winter. Please slow down as a means of keeping yourself and others safe.

Lake Activities: Because the Borough is not lowering the lake this fall, access to the lake for a variety of winter activities such as ice fishing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling will be permitted this winter. That said, exercise caution. Be certain of the thickness of the ice before proceeding onto the lake. Be aware that many residents are using “bubblers” around docking structures to preclude ice formation. Even where the ice forms adjacent to these areas, it is usually significantly thinner. While our local fire department has a device specifically for accessing a person that has fallen through the ice, let’s not create a reason for them to use it!

Winterizing: If you don’t anticipate visiting the Borough this winter, make sure you properly winterize your home. A heating system failure with resulting frozen pipes will no doubt be followed by flooding once the pipes thaw out. Not only does this cause significant damage to your home, but the noticeable increase in water usage causes the Borough to waste time

looking for a water line break. Help yourself and help the Borough by ensuring that your home is prepared for winter.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Patricia Dewar, who was re-elected to another four-year term as a member of Borough Council, and to Lynn Shimer and Terry St. Clair who also were elected to Borough Council. These individuals will be sworn in at the Borough Council re-organization meeting after the first of the year. Thanks to all who took the time to come out and vote in this past election. We had a substantial turn-out and it is nice to know that so many take the responsibility of voting so seriously. Outgoing members of council Dick Stern and Bob Vogel deserve our thanks for their service to the Borough as members of Council over the last four years.

With kind regards,

Mike

Michael Miscoe
Mayor