

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

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10-26-2017

Letter to the Editor: Ashford Town Board works toward the betterment of the town

Editor:

In the month of November the Town of Ashford, like many towns, face an election cycle for town board.

I have been a councilman for the Town of Ashford for the past two years and am not running for election on this cycle. Before our community heads to the ballot box I'd like to share a few thoughts. Unless you have attended meetings on a regular basis, most people aren't aware of the hard work and dedication it takes as a board member.

The meetings, which are open to the public, only represent the tip of the iceberg. Countless hours are spent on committees working toward solutions for the betterment of the town. Everything the board does affects the budget, which in turn, affects the taxpayers.

Our Ashford Town Board is in the final stages of completing a municipal water district, is presently working toward a future solar project, Community Development grants for energy as well as for the growth of business, meetings on the 219 expressway and land bank programs addressing zombie homes. Insurance audits are done each year to ensure our community is protected at the lowest possible cost.

What makes our town unique is the **West Valley Demonstration Center**. Working with the government entities is no easy task and closely monitoring the cleanup and its effect on our community is an awesome responsibility. Working with the federal government (DOE) and New York State requires its own unique talents. It encompasses environmental issues, employment, community safety, emergency management and economics. While all board members are involved, it has been the main responsibility of John Pfeffer. John's dedication to this particular committee has been outstanding and I cannot stress enough to our community the need for him to continue his work. I would urge all to support John in this next upcoming election for town board.

Councilman Richard Bernstein

Town of Ashford

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Letter to the Editor: Ashford needs dedicated, experienced leaders

Editor:

When I was first elected councilman to the Town of Ashford, I set out to make sure that the future of our town was always one we could be proud of. One of my first initiatives as councilman was to see that our sidewalks were plowed.

It took a lot of convincing to have the town plow the sidewalks, but the result was that children would no longer have to walk in the road to get to school, and residents would be able to enjoy the sidewalks year-round. As the gateway to Cattaraugus County, it is vitally important that we showcase the beauty we have to offer those passing through and visiting the Town of Ashford.

I would like to continue this effort by focusing on all the hamlets in the Town of Ashford. For example, we expect to see another phase of the 219 extension passing through Ashford Hollow.

We need a seat at the table to demand that our needs are met. What do the residents of Ashford Hollow want and need?

My second initiative is focused on the vitally important cleanup and funding of the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. We know that long term or even permanent storage is not a viable end state for the wastes at West Valley. The geology will not support it. We also know that funding levels need to be maintained at the level as prescribed in the most recent Record of Decision.

Regardless of what the “required” funding levels are, we still need to maintain an almost constant lobbying effort with New York State and the Federal Government for that funding. It is just as important that the Town of Ashford and the West Valley School District be compensated for the loss of tax revenue due to the presence of this facility. The compensation we receive now is a pittance compared to what we would be receiving were the site taxed at its current assessment. I will continue to use vacation days from my other job to travel to Washington to fight for what we deserve.

Coupled with the above, we need to start thinking about possible reuses of the uncontaminated land at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. New York cannot and should not continue to hold land that was taken from our residents. I do not believe there is an adequate reason to not begin to release it for use by the town. Currently, we are making rapid progress in establishing a solar farm on some of the unused land that will directly benefit Ashford residents.

The Town of Ashford needs dedicated, experienced people leading the way forward. I have been and will remain committed to seeing through on what our residents want from their town government. There are many wonderful opportunities in front of us that we need to take advantage of. I’m asking for your vote for councilman for the Town of Ashford. I will not let you down.

John A Pfeffer

West Valley