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Village of Ossining, Village of Briarcliff and Town of Ossining Make Significant Progress in Intermunicipal Agreements

(March 19, 2010) On February 24, 2010, a historic event occurred in the meeting room of the Ossining municipal building that many thought would never happen. After a solid year of working together to examine the best, most cost effective way to provide Police and Highway/DPW services to the residents of the three municipalities, the three elected boards got together to discuss all of the possible ways the two villages and the town could consolidate or merge to create more efficient local governments. On March 17, the three municipalities submitted a grant to the NYS Department of State to help fund the analysis of all the consolidated local government options.

Briarcliff and the Town and Village of Ossining have a long and successful history of working together to share services for the benefit of our citizens. In early 2009, the three governing boards first came together to discuss a strategy for working with a consultant firm, International City/County Management Association (ICMA), whom the boards had jointly engaged to study how DPW/Highway services and Police services were currently being delivered in the Town and the Villages, and to make recommendations about how services could be integrated, shared, or consolidated to create efficiencies and save taxpayer dollars. The three boards chose to create a small working subcommittee consisting of two representatives from each elected, policy-making board, and two citizen representatives to vet the work of the consultants and to make sure the facts and figures they presented as part of their analysis accurately represented what was happening in the municipalities. Briarcliff resident Richard Wishnie, who has served as Town Supervisor and County Legislator, was selected to chair this subcommittee.

On February 24, 2010, the three elected boards met in a public session to do a “course check” on the work being done by ICMA, and to discuss the bigger-picture issue of what new, consolidated municipal structures might work best for the communities. As a result of this conversation, the municipalities agreed to apply together for a High-Priority Planning Grant from the NYS Department of State to look at all possible consolidated structures, including dissolution of one or more governments and consolidation of two or more of the three governments. A subcommittee was formed to write the application, and the grant was delivered to the Department of State on March 17, 2010.

Public comment and suggestions are very welcome in this process. Once the three elected boards have recommendations, many public meetings and other forms of public input are scheduled to occur. Residents should feel free to contact any elected or appointed official in the three municipalities with their ideas.

For more information, contact Town Supervisor Catherine Borgia in Town of Ossining at 914-762-6001, Village Manager Phil Zegarelli in the Village of Briarcliff at 914-941-4800, or Mayor Bill Hanauer in the Village of Ossining at 914-941-3554.

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