

THE LENOX TOWN HALL NEWSLETTER

www.townoflenox.com

September, 2009

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING OCT 15 TO DEBATE ROOM TAX

The Selectmen have scheduled a special town meeting for Thursday, October 15th at 7:00PM at the Duffin Theater to decide if the town should increase the local room tax from the current 4% to either 5% or 6%. The new tax rate would take effect either next April or July, again depending on voter preference. State aid to Lenox has been reduced by over \$250,000 for this current fiscal year. The legislators also have given localities the option of increasing the local room tax if approved at a town meeting. For Lenox, each percentage point on the room tax rate historically has generated some \$200,000 to \$250,000. Early indications for this current year are that revenues from the room tax could be down by some 15% as a result of the recession and poor summer weather.

The town has few options for raising more revenue. We are at our "levy limit" thus the most taxes can increase is 2.5% unless voters approve a Proposition 2 1/2 override. Another option is for the Town to work harder at boosting overnight visits through developing special events and tourism promotion. Come to the High School October 15th to help decide how we best pay for the municipal services people demand.

THE TUB PARADE

The Lenox Berkshire Cottagers started this parade back in the 1890s. "Tubs" (small carriages) were decorated with flowers and driven around town to the train station. This tradition signifies the end of the summer season and the beginning of the fall season. This year it will be a little different as there will be some commercial wagons—a milk wagon, a chimney sweep wagon, a cigar wagon and an historic horse-drawn fire engine! The parade is organized by the Colonial Carriage and Driving Society. It will take place on September 12th at 1:30pm and begins at the corner of Franklin and Main (opposite Hoff's Gas Station). For further information contact Harvey Whaller at 413-441-4682.

APPLE SQUEEZE FAIR WEEKEND

On the weekend of September 26th and 27th from 10:00am to 6:00pm there will be our 30th Annual Apple Squeeze Fair. The Morris School, PTO, will be having many events geared towards children and there will be a more home-town feeling this year. There will be many vendors, displays, and exhibitions (for example one on how to make cider). As in past years, the weekend will feature sidewalk sales, arts and crafts booths as well as food stands, including, of course, apples in every shape and style. For information about a sidewalk table please contact Ralph Petillo at the Lenox Chamber of Commerce: 413-637-3646.

LIBERTY TREE MEMORIAL

Lenox has been invited to be one of 1,000 communities to receive the distinguished "Liberty Tree Memorial" designation. This awarded distinction is by the non-profit Elm Research Institute (ERI) in Keene, N.H. The Liberty Tree lives in American history and is a focus of patriotic inspiration to the birth of freedom. This will be a fine step in restoring the Elms that once graced our streets. This Elm, a purebred descendant of disease-resistant American Elm parent trees, is propagated and distributed exclusively by ERI and carries a lifetime warranty against Dutch Elm disease.

Your help is the key to make it possible for this landmark to be re-established in Lenox. Here is how it works: ERI will donate a 14 - 19 ft. tall American Liberty Elm for public planting in our community. A total of \$1,500 (plus freight charges) has to be raised to cover the cost of a 20" x 12" bronze monument style Liberty Tree plaque, a 5" x 5" donor plaque, a framed print of the Liberty Tree & Thomas Paine poem "Liberty Tree" to be hung in a public building, and a donor's certificate. Would you please help us establish a living legacy for our future generations? Donations of *any* amount will be welcome. Donations may be dropped off at the Lenox Town Hall. A festive and meaningful ceremony around the planting and dedication of the first planting of our Liberty Elms will be planned. All donors will be invited as distinguished guests at the Liberty Tree Memorial Ceremony and their names will be added to the Donor's Certificate - which will be placed on public display. Lenox's Tree Warden, Warren Archey, is leading the efforts for the Liberty Tree Memorial. He can be reached at 413-637-5525 or warchey@aol.com

UPDATE ON CHURCH STREET

Construction started up again on September 8th with work on the new "Curtis Park" beginning a week earlier. For September the work will focus on the west side of the southern half of Church Street as well as the west side of the northern half for drainage work. For the southern half there will be one way traffic. For regular updates please check the town web site. Church Street construction should be completed by the end of November.

FIRE COMPANY TURNS 100

The first event, a Centennial Celebration of our Fire Fighters' 100 years of service, will be a Ball and Dinner (by invitation) and will take place from 6pm to 9pm the 12th of September at the Eastover Resort. Dancing is from 9pm to 1am at Tally Ho and will be open to the public. A \$10.00 admission is asked. The second event will be a filmed parade on September 27th at 1pm beginning at The Church on the Hill, proceeding on Main Street to Walker and on to Kemble ending at Shakespeare & Co. - where apparatus from MA., NY., & CT. will be on display. Donations are gratefully accepted.