

THE VOICE OF WESTERLEIGH

Newsletter of the Westerleigh Improvement Society, Inc.

PO Box 140-043, Staten Island, NY 10314

www.wisonline.org

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Serving the Westerleigh community for 121 years



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The colors of autumn are in full display all over Westerleigh. Each street in our community is a palette for the colors of fall. Residents have decorated their homes for the coming of Thanksgiving. It is a joy to visit and even better to live in Westerleigh.

By the time you receive this newsletter our elections will be history and we will have elected many representatives on the state and federal level. The Society will work with all of our elected representatives and do the utmost to serve the interests of our entire community.

Land use continues to be of vital concern to the Society. We have tried to make sure that our community remains stable and that the "look and feel" of Westerleigh remains as it is. We have recently opposed a variance application that would allow the construction of a new home in what was the rear yard of an adjacent one. This runs contrary to the zoning resolution and all of what our community tried to protect. The full story is in this issue of the newsletter.

There are a few capital projects on the list for Westerleigh. Most are DEP projects dealing with storm and sanitary sewers and some old water mains. One involves the renovation of Westerleigh Park that will reduce erosion and control the onrush of water from neighboring streets. If you feel there is a new issue we can address, please contact us.

There is a flyer enclosed in this newsletter concerning the Holiday Reception that the Society hosts each year at Immanuel Union Church. All residents and members of the Society are invited to attend. Space is limited so please send in your reservations as soon as possible.

MONTHLY MEETING

Everyone welcome.
Meeting begins at 8 pm.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Immanuel Union Church

693 Jewett Avenue

VICTORY BOULEVARD MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

An association to promote business activity and beautify the shopping area along Victory Boulevard from Manor Road to Jewett Avenue has been formed by a group of merchants in that area.

At a news conference on September 29 Borough President James Oddo and Council Member Steven Matteo announced the group – called simply the Victory Boulevard Merchants Association – has been able to secure public funding to finance its activities. In addition,

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165 WOOLLEY AVENUE: ZONING IGNORED

A challenge to the area's strict zoning laws is threatening to violate all the hard work the Westerleigh Improvement Society and many of the borough's elected officials did in passing the new restrictions in 2008.

The owners of a property at 165 Woolley Ave. have asked for a variance that would allow the construction of a home on a subminimum size lot, an action that is opposed not only by the Society, but by the property's neighbors, the borough president, a city councilman and Community Board 1.

First, a little background: After more than three years of hard work the Westerleigh Improvement Society was able to convince the Department of City Planning to rezone much of Westerleigh that would permit only single family homes on a lot size of at least 3800 square feet. The new zoning, designated R2, conformed to much of what Westerleigh

already had in housing type. The City Council affirmed this change in zoning in April 2008. Former Councilman Michael McMahon and then-Councilman James Oddo both supported this change and voted to enact it.



In addition, the Staten Island Growth Management Taskforce proposed many changes to the building code that would prohibit some of the most egregious abuses in construction on Staten Island. The entire borough was designated a Lower Density Growth Management area. One of the practices that was curbed was the construction of new homes in the rear yards of existing ones. This practice destroys the character of the neighborhood

and creates unwanted density. Now, in 2014, an application has been submitted to the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) to override the zoning resolution to allow the construction of a home on a subminimum size lot at 165 Woolley Ave. The lot was severed from the home at 234 Garrison Avenue leaving that home without a rear yard. The Department of Buildings could not issue a building permit "as of right" since it would violate the zoning for the area.

Neighborhood residents and the Westerleigh Improvement Society appeared at a recent Community Board 1 meeting to oppose the variance application. The Board overwhelmingly voted to deny the application. The application now proceeds to the BSA for a hearing. Both Borough President Oddo and Councilman Steven Matteo have joined with the Society in opposing the application.

We will keep you posted as to our progress. ☺

MERCHANT'S ASSOC..CON'T

many of the merchants and property owners have contributed their own funds to enhance the shopping area. A steering committee, which includes the Westerleigh Improvement Society, has been formed to elect a temporary chair and create a budget for the coming year. Some of the planned improvements include:

- Holiday lighting from Manor Road to Bradley Avenue
- Private street cleaning
- Pole banners with the merchant association logo
- Website design

More than 100 merchants operate businesses between Manor and Jewett on Victory Boulevard. Many Westerleigh residents frequent these stores and have an

interest in seeing the area thrive commercially. While most of the work organizing the association has been done by the merchants, the Westerleigh Improvement Society supports this effort wholeheartedly. We will keep you informed of new developments and we are sure you will notice a welcome change to the appearance of this portion of Victory Boulevard in the near future. ☺

WESTERLEIGH TALKS:

MAKING OUR COMMUNITY COME ALIVE

For the past several years The Westerleigh Improvement Society has hosted presentations almost every month prior to our regular business meeting that highlight different aspects of our community's history.

The monthly goal of the "Talks" is to highlight the uniqueness of Westerleigh. Carefully researched by Vice President Mark Anderson, the "Westerleigh Talks" are about an hour long and have covered many topics such as:

- The Prohibition Park Map of 1897
- The Women of Westerleigh
- Westerleigh Park
- The Westerleigh Tennis Club
- Temperance Music



- Westerleigh Real Estate 1899 and Today

Some presentations feature guest speakers and have been done on the Internet via Skype.

All are informative, well presented, factually accurate and highly recommended, not only to Westerleigh residents, but for anyone interested in the history of this unique area of our borough.

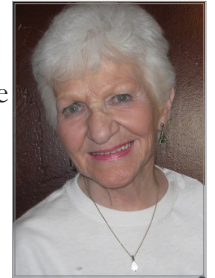
If you are interested in exploring our community's history and the influences that created the Westerleigh of today, we cordially invite you to attend one, or all, of our presentations. We promise you won't be disappointed.

For "Talks" topics, log onto the Society's website at <http://www.wisonline.org>.

Thank you Evelyn Otten MacDonald

After more than 20 years of service, Evelyn Otten MacDonald recently stepped down as secretary of the Westerleigh Improvement Society.

Rarely absent, she has faithfully recorded the minutes of each Society meeting and maintained meticulous records during her entire tenure in office.



Evelyn will continue in her role as a Director of the Society. She retires as the longest serving secretary in recent history!

Thank you Evelyn for a job well done! ☺

NEWS FROM THE DOT: STREET RESURFACINGS

The recent street survey of Westerleigh submitted to the DOT has resulted in the following streets tentatively scheduled for milling and resurfacing during the next paving season:

- Crystal Ave. between Forest Ave. and Watchogue Rd.
- St. John Ave. between Watchogue Rd. and Lathrop Ave.
- Margaretta Ct. between Jewett Ave. and South Greenleaf Ave.



Merriman Avenue between South Greenleaf Avenue and Manor Road will be resurfaced later next year. In addition, Miller Street between Constant Avenue and

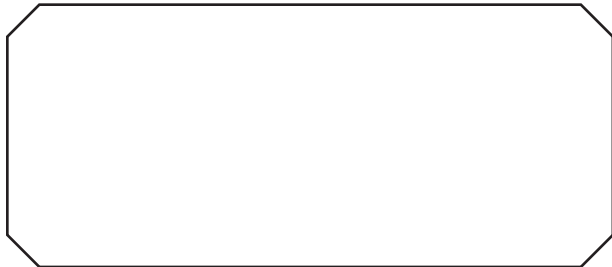
Keiber Court and Maine Avenue between South Greenleaf Avenue and Manor Road have met the necessary criteria and have been submitted for approval.

Numerous pothole repairs were completed during the summer on the following streets: O'Connor Avenue, Livermore Avenue, Bryson Avenue, Collfield Avenue, Marianne Street, Pontiac Street and Arnprior Street.

We urge Westerleigh residents to contact the Society with any requests for street repairs and resurfacings. ☺

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NYC 50th Council Member Steven Matteo: 718-980-1017
Public School 30: 718-442-0462
Community Board 1: 718-981-6900

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NEWSLETTER DESIGN: Regina Paleau
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 **WIS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

ANNUAL DUES:
Regular Membership \$10 ___ Associate Membership \$20 ___

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
E-MAIL: _____
PHONE # (OPTIONAL): _____
IF RENEWING: MEMBERSHIP # _____
(3 digit number on upper left of mailing label)

Please mail this form with your check made payable to the Westerleigh Improvement Society, P.O. Box 140-043, Staten Island, NY 10314