

## Message from the Mayor: Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah

Here we are at the midpoint of December and the Dickens Days festivities are in full swing. I would like to thank WOW and the BID for doing all they do for us this time of year to make Westfield a special place. I must say as construction projects wind down, the future of Westfield is looking bright.

I had the very unique honor of being asked to be a guest conductor at Look Park this past Monday. If you haven't seen their Santa and Christmas train exhibit, you need too. The experience was impressive. Check it out at this link...<http://www.lookpark.org/>

And I especially liked the idea of making a Westfield night there a reality. On Monday night, guest conductors included State Representative Don Humason and Westfield News owner Patrick Berry. And you can top the night off with a train ride through the park.

On December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6PM we will be lighting our community Menorah. For more information check out this link...  
<http://www.thedistrictwestfield.com/2011/11/10/westfield-athenaeum-a-chanukah-celebration-for-everyone/>

### Now for some pulse line tidbits...

**September 28...**The caller asked for a list of roads that were paved this year. They said there wasn't much improvement seen.

1/3 of East Mountain Road, Orange Street, Morris Street...\$335,388.87

Pontoosic Road...\$180,387.47; Part of Shaker Road between Colony Circle and Family Lane, Pilgram Drive, Plymouth Lane...\$125,669.67

Noble Street, Springdale Road, Livingstone Ave, Stratford Ave and Fowler Road...\$168,678.33.

**October 4...**The caller asked why it took so long to cut the weeds back on So. Maple Street.

Since I took office, I have initiated a permanent presence by the Hampden County House of Correction, community corrections team. This team, along with our DPW and Natural Resources Departments have been actively cleaning up overgrown locations and we are starting to get caught up. As for areas like So. Maple St. and Clay Hill, we contract with a company to mow those areas with a tractor. These are very heavily traveled areas and the tractor moves much faster than our crews and it is safer. The contractor starts in the summer and works until early fall and it simply takes some time to get to those areas.

**October 6...**The caller is concerned that we are borrowing and bonding too much. They also wanted to see term limits on the ballot.

Well, as was reported numerous times in the Westfield News and in this column this Fall, the "How are we going to pay for it" question has been answered.

As for term limits on the ballot, contact your city council members to create legislation that would put that question on the ballot.

**October 10...**The caller inquired as to the use of the Ralph Sanville Little League field. There was also a comment about the cross walks along East Silver Street and Broad Street being dangerous.

It will be available to the Little League next year.

I would agree that at times, crossing those streets is a risky endeavor. In general, people drive too fast. And certainly on major corridors like those two, speeding is rampant. In fact there have been two pedestrian fatalities on East Silver Street in the last few years. We try to mark them the best we can, but in the end, being vigilant when you cross the road is my best advice.

**October 24...**The caller asked why the Water Department was driving around in Cadillac Escalades.

The Water Department does not have an Escalade in its inventory. In fact, vehicles are purchased from the statewide bid list and are much less expensive than the price a consumer would pay.

**November 1...**The caller commented that Park Square looks like a theme park and the bone heads should be thrown out of office. There was also a call about the parking enforcement officer hiring being a mistake.

They had a chance to throw out the "bone heads" in November and it will come around again in November 2013.

As for downtown parking, the majority of spaces are free for up to 3 hours. That should not deter shopping in anyway. As to why I decided to return to sticker parking. It was simply due to the demand we now have for parking. Last winter was a disaster trying to keep cars out of the lots so that we could plow the snow. Many merchants contacted me about how bad the situation was. Without stickers we could not effectively identify who was squatting in the lots. With stickers we will now know who they are; this aids in clearing lots. Additionally, unlike in years past, all money collected through sticker purchases will be deposited in a special maintenance fund. We recently renovated the Thomas Street Parking Lot and with additional improvements scheduled next year, we need to make sure that our investment stays in good repair so that our citizens and visitors can have clean, well lit and well maintained lots to park in.

**November 25...**The caller was concerned that we are not business friendly here in town.

I would simply suggest that the caller read the Westfield News a bit more closely as there have been a number of stories written about how this city is now truly a partner with its businesses. In fact, to highlight this, check out our newsletter, my TV Show or come to one of my monthly coffee hours. I think you'd hear that things are a lot different for the better here in town.

**December 2...**The caller asked about the cable contract negotiation.

The city will engage next year with COMCAST our current cable provider. And it is true, that clearly like with any service, we pay for it all. But you do have a choice today in that you can use a satellite service, your computer or simply get just basic cable. That wasn't always the case. And it is true, that today, there is a better likelihood that a city could leverage better service. As for getting a cheaper rate, well I'm not aware of too many utilities that are cheaper today than they were years ago.

**December 12...**The caller asked if local landscapers had a say in the planning of the "Green."

As reported extensively in 2010, the design effort on the Green started about a decade ago. See the following link for more information.

[http://www.cityofwestfield.org/?page\\_id=1799](http://www.cityofwestfield.org/?page_id=1799)

And no, it wasn't done by Boston politicians.

**November 12...**The caller asked about the lanes of traffic on the Great River Bridge Project and if they were designed years ago. The patterns are confusing going from 2 lanes to 1 back to 2.

The project is not done yet and there will be some lane adjustments when it is finished. In addition, as reported in the Westfield News earlier this week, the city will start a reconstruction project along Elm Street between the two projects to address the railroad over pass, traffic lights, sidewalks and pavement. That project should be done by the end of the summer next year.

We have just published another edition of “around the Whip City.” So please check that out at <http://www.cityofwestfield.org/?p=3894>. Don’t forget to watch my TV show... “It’s Your City.” We are featuring Pilgrim Candle and The North Elm Butcher Block for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Holiday Season episode. It can be seen on Channel 15 on Sundays at 4PM, Wednesdays at 8PM and Thursdays at 10AM and 10PM. It can also be seen anytime at <http://vimeo.com/channels/201443>.

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Mr. Al Ferst on Friday. Mr. Ferst was a legend in Westfield and he will be missed by all of us. I had the privilege of working with Al years ago in the construction of the Amelia Park Children’s Museum. When the board of directors was looking to build a new facility, Al stepped forward and shared his dream with us to make a children’s complex on South Broad Street. Years before the Boys and Girls Club was constructed and the Amelia Park Arena and Garden. The complex is now complete with the Children’s Museum. Every now and again, I will run into someone from out of town that had recently discovered one of the jewels of the complex and they rave about how lucky Westfield is to have such a complex and how much fun their kids had visiting. Stories like that are what Al had in mind with his vision of all those years ago. Thanks Al for all you have done for us, and we all take comfort in knowing that you’re with Millie again.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amelia\\_Park\\_Ice\\_Rink\\_and\\_Memorial\\_Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amelia_Park_Ice_Rink_and_Memorial_Garden)

And lastly, if you still have brush in front of your house, call the department of public works at 572-6226 to schedule a pick up. As always if you have any questions call or email me at 413.572.6201 or [mayor@cityofwestfield.org](mailto:mayor@cityofwestfield.org).

Respectfully,  
Dan Knapik, Mayor