



Thank you, County Executive Jenkins for inviting me here today. I am always delighted to have the opportunity to talk about the Village of Ardsley, the little Village that could.

For those that don't know Ardsley, we are a small Village – 5,000 residents just over 1 mile square in the southwest corner of the county. Yet despite our small size we are a vibrant, close-knit community that is making great strides in improving our Village for our current residents and for the future.

And while we look to the future, it is important to note that Ardsley's history reaches back to the founding of our country. This past weekend the nation celebrated the 250th anniversary of the declaration of Independence. During the American Revolution, George Washington's army camped and trained in Ardsley on what is now the ground of Ardsley High School prior to their final victory over the British in Yorktown, Virginia.

Then Ardsley was open rolling hills and farms. Today, Ardsley is a modern residential suburb with easy commuter access to New York City.

Over the past decade, we have focused on planning for Ardsley's future. We started with our first comprehensive plan in over 50 years, which incorporated Downtown Revitalization plan and we have been working diligently on implementation since. It was followed by a Downtown Area Revitalization Plan, a masterplan for Parks and Recreation, stormwater and sewer mapping and repair project, and a Natural Resources Inventory.

All this planning has led to thoughtful tangible projects reflecting community input that have helped move our Village forward. This past fall we reopened our newly renovated Pascone Park, one of two main parks in the Village. The renovation included new inclusive playground equipment, a great lawn with a new bandstand, a lighted walking path and much more. We were proud to receive a Planning Achievement Award for this renovation from the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation, but the true measure of success is to see the park filled with

residents enjoying all the new amenities. We are looking to build on this success with a Phase 2 which would include a new natural playground area and a splash pad water feature.

In addition, last week we opened a new dog park at the back of our McDowell Park. This was an amenity that was highly prioritized by our survey of our residents in conjunction with our Parks Master Plan and the large turnout of dogs and dog owners at our ribbon cutting ceremony was a testament that we were truly addressing an unmet need.

For a village its size, Ardsley has been a leader in sustainability and environmental protection. In addition to the Natural Resource Inventory that will help guide our preservation and enhancement of our natural resources, we were recertified for bronze through New York State's Climate Smart Communities program for our sustainability efforts and, with the assistance of Ardsley's Green Task Force, we recently submitted our application for Silver certification. If successful, Ardsley would be the smallest municipality ever to achieve this designation.

We have installed solar panels on our Highway garage facility that opened last fall. The energy generated will offset xx% of the energy used by Village buildings. Through a collaboration with Westchester County, we have installed 28 electric vehicle charging stations at our two parks, with more to come at Village Hall. We have embraced the shift from gas power to electric with the purchase of two electric vehicles for our Department of Public Works and an aggressive program for replacing our landscaping equipment with electric.

As with many municipalities in the County, Ardsley has long battled issues with flooding. Located between the Saw Mill River and Bronx River watersheds, Ardsley has faced a significant challenge. We have repaired and expanded many of the stormwater catch basins in the Village. We are finalizing a grant from the County to address flooding in the Powderhorn/Captain Honeywell neighborhood, which will address one of our remaining problem areas. And we are in the process of awarding a contract for a new pump funded by a grant from FEMA that will work in conjunction with our Corp of Engineers Flood Control project to better protect our downtown businesses and municipal assets from flooding.

Finally, we are a community that loves to come together and a Village that celebrates its diversity. Nine years ago, we established our Multicultural Diversity and Inclusion committee and a decade later it is still going strong. Spring is a busy time for us with celebrations of Asian American/Pacific Islander Month, Jewish Heritage Month with our Mitzvah Mixer in May and Eid, and Juneteenth in June. Except for the County itself, few communities offer such a rich menu of cultural events. And beyond our heritage events, the annual PBA sponsored Ice Cream Social and the Rec Department's Food Truck Friday drew huge crowds to Pascone Park during the last week in June.

Looking ahead, we are working on finalizing an overhaul of our downtown zoning code to encourage smart growth and walkability, our Arts Commission, having already established a rotating art display, in our Village Hall gallery will be awarding our first public mural and a renovation and transformation of our Addyman Square that will be the linchpin for the future transformation of our downtown.

While I have only been mayor for 7 months, I have been on the Village Board for over 8 years and I am so proud of the progress Ardsley has made over that period. To mix metaphors, I think the Village of Ardsley is a hidden gem and one that always punches above its weight.

Thank you, County Executive Jenkins, for the chance to highlight Ardsley's progress. Our community is strong and our future is bright.