



Construction Projects, Proposed Charter Amendments Highlight Rest of Year

Joe Stefanov, Village Administrator

The year 2009 may be winding down as we approach the fourth quarter, but there is still much to be done.

Our Public Service Department is managing multiple road construction improvements. Already completed projects include repaving Thompson Road and Harlem Road (between Dublin-Granville and Greensward).

Other 2009 road improvements include a reconfigured US 62/Central College intersection with additional turn lanes in all four directions, a signal, and leisure trail; paving five roads in the Cedar Brook subdivision; repaving Kitzmiller Road (north of Smith's Mill Road and south of Dublin-Granville Road); and lane improvements to the SR 161 and US 62 area.

Many of these projects will enhance travel throughout our business park, which is critical to every New Albany resident. Income taxes paid by those working in New Albany (regardless of where they live) fund village services, road work, greenspace preservation projects, and water and sewer improvements. Income tax revenues become even more critical when one considers the village receives only 2.1% of resident and business property taxes (and no Community Authority resident fees).

Your household will soon receive details of proposed amendments to New Albany's Charter (by law, we must inform every registered voter, so don't be surprised if your household receives multiple copies). The Charter serves as our foundation of governance. Every ten years, a group of residents is appointed by Council to review and make recommendations to the Charter. These recommendations must be approved by residents to take effect.

The full list and analysis of proposed charter amendments can be reviewed at www.villageofnewalbany.org, but there are two proposed amendments I'd like to discuss in this guest column.

One proposed amendment would allow staff and Council to discuss the details of negotiations more fully with business prospects in executive session until Council is ready to vote on the matter in question. Companies often negotiate with multiple municipalities at once, so the possibility exists under the current charter language that another community could learn the specifics of our proposal and alter theirs to try to lure a prospect away from the village.

This proposed charter change solely deals with the discussion of economic development issues, not the vote itself. Any Council vote offering incentives to companies must still occur in public and be subject to public comment.

Another proposed amendment, more housekeeping in nature, would allow the Administrator to submit a proposed operating budget for the ensuing year to Council at their first meeting in November. Currently, our Charter states the proposed budget must be submitted at least 60 days prior to January 1 (which is November 2).

The proposed amendment suggests replacing the hard 60-day deadline with language that allows the Administration to provide the operating budget to Council at their first scheduled meeting in November (which would routinely take place no later than November 7). Council would still have at least four meetings, as is currently the case, to fully review and analyze the proposed budget with staff before officially ratifying it. Additional Council meetings would be possible if more discussion was necessary.

Questions about the proposed charter amendments or some other village service can be forwarded to info@villageofnewalbany.org.