



ROTTERDAM FIRE DISTRICT No. 7

Town of Rotterdam

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Sept 2011- Third Quarter 2011 Commissioner Newsletter.

The Fire Company

For many of us in Fire District 7 Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee caused us an inconvenience of losing our power for a number of hours or possible or a wet cellar. For many other people the storms were effective in destroying their homes, property, and loss of all of their possessions.

The Schonowe Fire Company was called into action on Aug. 28, 2011 and over the next 7 days your volunteers spent in excess of 495 man-hours of service to our District and helping our neighbors. On average this was approximately 71 man-hours per day of our volunteer's time. The resident of Fire District 7 can be proud of the personal sacrifice of time, help, and service your firefighters provided to those who have suffered so much at the hands of these storms. To view a small sample of the conditions our volunteers work at visit our web site at "schonowe.com"

August 28th 2011 our response was initially for trees down in our District. The next calls became more involved as the firefighters proceeded to assist the Rotterdam Police Department (RPD) with an evacuation of the Long Pond Apartments on Campbell Road and later River Road. Additional services provide were, numerous cellar pump outs, assistance to residents that had special needs, and assistance to families that had to leave their pets behind. (We have not heard of the loss of any pets during the storms in our District.)

When our Chief was convinced that our District was secured and properly covered with adequate manpower a number of our volunteers answered a call from RPD to use our boat to rescue resident from Lower Rotterdam Junction. This was a mandatory evacuation by RPD because the Junctions three means of exit were blocked by rising water coupled with fears that the Gilboa Dam may fail. Our response was to the flooded route 5-S just past the Kiwanis Park. During the course of the day Schnowe headed an evacuation of 375 residents from Lower Rotterdam Junction to buses that took the residents to the Schalmont School where an evacuation center was established.

The Auxiliary

The Schonowe Auxiliary held an Ice Cream Social on July 21, 2011 from 6 to 8 pm. Strawberries, Hot Fudge and Root Beer Floats were provided. Turn out from the District and neighboring area was great with many residents having the opportunity to visit with their neighbors and enjoy the delights of the ice cream social.

The Fire District

Noted in our second quarter newsletter the decision of the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) has required the Board of Commissioners to pursue options for safe and compliant means of access to the second floor of the fire house. The decision of the hearing office allowed for one years access to the second floor for only the active volunteers of the Fire Company and Auxiliary. If the Board decides to ignore the decision it would result in the NYSDOL issuing an order barring all access to the second floor. In effect the second floor area would not be available for use by anyone at the fire house.

Facing this decision the Board has proceeded during the third quarter with an investigation of alternate means of providing a compliant access to the second floor. This decision was approved out of necessity as we can not afford to lose the use of the second floor. (Many Fire Districts used their stations as a gathering spot during Hurricane Irene and Tropical storm Lee. Fortunately our Fire House was not needed during the storms because the mandate of the NYSDOL would have prohibited its use.) The board is in the process of developing options with an architect for a compliant access to the second floor, and for options that will meet the present and future firematic needs of the fire department. The investigation of options is ongoing and when completed all options will be presented at a public hearing with District residents.

The Board of Fire Commissioners has the responsibility and authority to make proposals to the resident tax payers of the District for their approval by a District vote. Any items of a capital improvement or expense that has not already been approved by a capital reserve account must go to a District vote. This Board will do its homework investigating options that comply with the NYSDOL mandate given to us and provide a proposal for resident approval. The Board will strive to present the most cost effective option that will cover the needs of the fire service while placing the minimal burden on the resources of the residents The Board is working toward and is hopeful that a hearing can be conducted by year end with a vote by the District shortly thereafter.

Sincerely the Board of Fire Commissioners.