

Assessments (Continued from page one)

that removal of the program would cost residents more in taxes, and there would also be a reduction in STAR funding, which refers to the state taxpayer relief program.

Mohan stuck by his statement that the removal of the program in 2007 would not have an impact on tax amounts.

On Monday, the two sides met during a work session with Joseph Muscarella, regional director for the office of real property services for the State of New York, to receive answers.

Muscarella said that one year out of the program would not have an impact because the previous year's numbers, based on the 2006 100 percent assessment program, are used for equalization calculations.

"If they go back to the program for 2008 it would be figured at 100 percent because the town would be doing a reassessment project at 100 percent or what the assessor reports," he said.

But that is easier said than done. Muscarella said that with the size of Amherst the assessment of each of the 42,000 parcels should have been started.

"The faster you move, the better," he said at Monday's work session, adding that the town is under a tight timeline to assess 42,000 parcels.

"According to everything I heard (Monday), the town plans on doing a 100 percent assessment program in 2008, but I know the assessor has some concerns with that," he added.

Muscarella told the board that if the town does not get back into a reassessment program for 2008, the new lower equalization rate would be used for exemption calculations and would result in exemption amounts for veterans to be lower.

"We don't have the money," Williams told the Town Board on Monday, adding that the assessor's department staff is still logging permits that need to be done. "We are doing what we can within our budget."

The town had been using GAR Associates, a private contractor, to retain the 100 percent assessment program. By staying at that level the town was receiving \$250,000 annually for the program from the state. That money was not granted for 2007.

Mohan was not available for comment following the work session. His comments will be published next week on how the town plans to fund the assessment of the parcels and finish in nine months.

Field review of values must be completed by December. By Oct. 1, 2007 Williams must have an Annual Reassessment Six Year Plan submitted.

If the town is able to start in April, and completes the assessment process by December, that is 4,777 parcels a month, and 238 parcels a day (based on 20 work

days in nine months).

On a brighter side, Tom Maturiski, the Williamsville Central School District's assistant superintendent for finance and management services, said he was encouraged by the information gathered at Monday's work session.

"Not being in the reassessment program will not affect STAR rebates in 2007-08," he said. "It is better for town taxpayers if STAR is at the maximum level."

However, based on several other variables, the tax rate could be affected. That information will be

available at the end of May.

In the Amherst School District the equalization rate is based only on Amherst, but Sweet Home needs the rate from Tonawanda, and Williamsville has to include information from Cheektowaga and Clarence.

Muscarella advised the town on a schedule to return to 100 percent reassessment, which includes the suggestion of hiring a consultant.

The next Town Board meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, April 2 at town hall, 5583 Main St., Williamsville.

National hockey (Continued from page one)

Buffalo's North Campus.

"It's an honor that USA Hockey would even consider our facility," Pepsi Center general manager Erik Guzdek said. "This is national exposure for the Pepsi Center."

The Amherst Pepsi Center is host to the 12 and younger, and 14 and younger (tiers I and II) competition. Teams from Arizona to Connecticut, and Alaska to Los Angeles have been arriving throughout the week — generating an estimated revenue of \$800,000 in hotel bills alone.

The overall minimum economic impact is expected at \$2 million for the five-day event. Ice time will total more than \$40,000.

Guzdek said the games will be played by 48 teams, approximately 950 athletes, with the semifinal games being played on Saturday and the championship games taking place on the feature rink on Sunday.

Amherst's own Knights will have teams playing in each age bracket at the tier I level. Guzdek said Amherst Youth Hockey is one of the largest organizations of its kind in the country, and this will be a great opportunity for the



teams playing and the organization.

All day today, Wednesday, the Stanley Cup will be on display in the lobby of the Pepsi Center, 1615 Amherst Manor Drive. It will also be available for viewing during the opening ceremony in Alumni Arena at 8:30 p.m.

The Easton Skills Competition will be held at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, March 29 on the feature rink.

Robert Schreck, president of Amherst Youth Hockey, said bringing the national competition to Amherst was a huge endeavor, beginning with the pitch made two years ago in Colorado. Described as a mini-Olympic pitch,

Amherst's request was well received, and the tournament is placing Amherst on the hockey map.

"The Pepsi Center is a jewel ... it's well known," he said.

The Pepsi Center has already been named a site for the 2008 championships. Last year the center was host to the girl's and women's championships.

This is the first year USA Hockey is using "super sites," which, Guzdek said involves hosting four championship games. In the past, each city hosted one tier in one age group.

USA Hockey has yet to determine how the 2009 championships will be run, which will affect Amherst's bidding process.

For information on weekend events, call 631-7555. For information on USA Hockey, visit www.usahockey.com or www.amherstyouthhockey.org. Tickets are available at the Pepsi Center.

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Business News

BNI Business Makers will conduct its weekly meeting from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Thursday, April 5 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst, 6320 Main St. in Williamsville. Dave Snell of Carstar Collision of Amherst and Eastern Hills will speak. Visitors are welcome. Contact Bryan Castro at 907-4456 for further information.

Sharon Beckmann of Williamsville was promoted to coordinator as an independent distributor for Market America, an Internet marketing company.

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