

Dear Residents of Babylon Village,

It is with great sadness that I feel the need to write this letter to our community regarding our most trusted and valuable employee, Charles, "Skip" Gardner. Skip's personal life was recently the object of a Newsday article which was extremely unnecessary and very hurtful. As many of you know, it was recently discovered that our method of payment to employees was not done appropriately. Unfortunately, we did things in accordance with the guidance of our village attorney. The advice was not accurate and led to this situation. When the raises and payments were discovered as inappropriately done, it was noted that Skip's salary was the highest in the Village. From there, there were many inquiries and documents obtained regarding Skip. I felt this was totally inappropriate, though not illegal. It was discovered that Skip had been late on tax payments, as many others are in this Village and Town. This now became fuel for an article.

In many ways, I found this comical. Imagine if we dug into the lives of everyone in this village. What would we find? How many of us have ever been late with a payment? When my wife and I were paying high tuition costs for our children, we were often late on many things. How many of us struggled through those tuition years and were so grateful when they were over so we could start digging out of the hole we were in.

How about other aspects of people's lives? Many of us live, work, and volunteer in this community. We know many things about our neighbors because of our jobs or volunteer work. Is it our business to discuss this or make judgement upon them? I don't think so. Who is anyone to comment on someone's personal life? If we are going to claim that we have a right to know everything about public servants, then let's take a look at all of them. In our community, we have many teachers, police officers, fire fighters, village, town, county, state and federal workers. Maybe we should put each of them under a microscope. Or, maybe we should allow everyone to have a private life, deal with their problems in private, and just judge their performance at work.

If we are going to judge someone's performance at work, then no one compares to Skip Gardner. If you know Skip, you know that there are only two things that matter to him.....his family, and Babylon Village. He is usually the first one at work in the morning and the last one to leave. He is the reason that the village looks the way it does and operates so smoothly. Skip has saved this Village an enormous amount of money with his expertise and problem solving skills. He knows where every pipe is, when every tree was planted, what needs to be replaced because it's about to break, how to fix something that no one else can fix, and how to prepare for any emergency that may come up. He has been a Village employee for 48 years and a historian of people, land, equipment, procedures, and preparation. Skip is the reason that things get done around here. I would like to think that I am the reason, but it's Skip.

As far as the Village administration, we will be correcting our procedures to insure that everything is done in an appropriate manner. As far as Skip, we can only hope that he will be with us for many more years to come.

Ralph A. Scordino, Mayor

Village of Babylon