

A bright idea

Test program in village to check out LED street lights

By ALEX COSTELLO

In early August, Rockville Centre engineers started a three-month trial of new street lights, on loan from a local company, on Varick Court. If deemed successful, installation of the lights could help lower energy costs and usage in the village over the next few years.

The lights, arrays of light-emitting diodes (LEDs), are different than the standard bulbs in street lights, which are high-powered sodium (HPS) bulbs. The LEDs use about 70 percent less energy, are brighter and last five to six times as long as the standard HPS bulbs.

“We all need to be more green in the way we approach things,” said Rockville Centre Mayor Mary Bossart. “And also, the LED lights last longer and they’re brighter.”

The project, spearheaded by Rockville Centre Village Engineer Paul Pallas, is part of a broader initiative in the village to be more energy efficient, but the LED street lights are a large part of it, according to Pallas. The trial lights were donated by Greenhouse Strategies, a Rockville Centre company, and were installed on Varick Court between Hempstead and Harvard avenues.

“We’re fortunate that we have a local vendor working with us,” Pallas said. “It’s quite an advantage.”

The new LED light “heads,” each with two panels of LEDs, cost about \$500 each (each panel costs about \$130), compared with the coast of \$50 for a HPS bulb. However, the HPS bulbs need to be replaced every two years, while LED lights should last more than 10 years. The longer-lived LED lights would save purchasing and maintenance costs, as well as use less energy.

But because of the initial high cost of the LED lights, if the village decides to install them in all 2,500 of its street lights, the



Village of Rockville Centre

ROCKVILLE CENTRE LINE SUPERVISOR JESUS DELVALLE shows the new LED street light “head,” left, with its two LED panels that is replacing the HPS bulb on the right.

project would take many years to complete. As of now, Pallas is still evaluating the effectiveness of the lights and also their feasibility.

“Changing those arrays, they’re very small connections,” he said. “And you’re up in a bucket and the wind is whipping a little bit and you’re trying to tie this very tiny wire. The crews aren’t going to like me very much.”

The funding for this, and the village’s other energy efficiency programs, would come from a small surcharge to residents’ electrical bills.

“A tenth of a penny per kilowatt hour is what [the surcharge] is contemplated at now,” Pallas said. “It’s very small.”



Village of Rockville Centre

ROCKVILLE CENTRE ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT WORKERS install new LED street lights on Varick Court. The lights are on loan from Greenhouse Strategies, a Rockville Centre-based company.