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November 1, 2016

In 2015, the Ossining Public Library retained a professional engineering firm to assess the condition of the retaining wall located on the north side of our property. The engineering firm performed its initial inspection in November 2015, and while cracks and wall block displacement were observed in a portion of the retaining wall, no apparent signs of instability were found. The engineering firm recommended the retaining wall movement be periodically monitored, and that data be collected to help identify corrective measures. Accordingly, throughout 2016, the engineering firm has performed periodic inspections of the retaining wall in conjunction with other professionals.

On Thursday, October 20, the engineering firm and another consultant arrived at the Library to perform additional testing work. They identified gaps between retaining wall pavers in the southwestern portion of the wall that created a significant safety concern, including the potential for collapse. We understand that this condition was significantly different from that observed during the prior inspection. As a result, acting upon our engineer's recommendations, the Library immediately closed a portion of the parking lot in that area of the retaining wall, and ensured that area was inaccessible to the public. Construction fencing has been installed at the base of the wall to prevent members of the public from approaching the wall. We have notified representatives of the Village of Ossining Police Department, the Ossining Fire Department, the Ossining Building Department and the Ossining Union Free School District of the situation. On Friday, October 21, members of the Library's Board of Trustees visited the homeowner who resides closest to the retaining wall to discuss the situation and precautions that may be appropriate. Testing of storm drains and piping on the Library property in proximity to the wall also occurred last week.

The Library staff and Board of Trustees have impressed upon our engineers the need to address this situation promptly. They have recommended that the next step involve periodic monitoring of the wall using survey points. That monitoring is scheduled to begin in the near future. Representatives of the Library are in frequent contact with the engineering firm regarding the situation and necessary actions to take.

We will continue to provide updates to the community, our patrons and our neighbors as more information becomes available, but if you have questions in the interim, please contact Library Director Karen LaRocca-Fels at 941-2416, extension 333, or at klaroccafels@wlsmail.org.