

COUNCIL OF GREENBURGH CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of Meeting – Monday, March 27, 2023

A special thank you was extended to Carmela Greco-Acevedo who arranged this Zoom-enabled meeting which began at 7:30 PM. The meeting was chaired by CGCA Chair Madelon O'Shea (Old Edgemont). Also in attendance were CGCA Treasurer Dorrine Livson (Worthington-Woodlands), Mike Burdi (Suburban Manor), Paul Colten (Hilltop Farms), Lloyd Cort (Parkway Gardens), Ellen Foley (East Irvington), Ella Preiser (Beaver Hill), and Ken Stahn (Sprain Road).

Treasurer Livson stated the CGCA bank account balance as of February 28, 2023 was \$1,122.36. She noted membership dues have been paid for the year and there are no bills outstanding at the present time.

Clarification of February CGCA Minutes. Madelon O'Shea said she believes the flooding of homes on Edgemont Circle during Hurricane Ida in September 2021 was not caused by the Edgemont Circle Drainage District, but rather by problems with Troublesome Brook. Ella Preiser said that at a meeting (11/9/22) with the County, Greenburgh's DPW Commissioner Rich Fon said water from the Old Edgemont area drains into Troublesome Brook. He noted the Town's consultant, Woodard & Curran, will be studying whether water from the Edgemont Circle Drainage District, which is currently piped down and across Central Avenue into Troublesome Brook, can be redirected in a different way.

NEW SHOPRITE OPENED MARCH 26

Lloyd Cort reported that out of curiosity he visited the new ShopRite site on Route 9A on opening day. He said the store was exceptionally clean, parking was good and security was top notch. He noted he was glad it was not in his backyard and expressed concerns that noise would be a problem for surrounding neighbors. Madelon O'Shea said noise and lights from delivery trucks to the former A&P on Central Avenue were major problems for her and her neighbors, even with the windows closed. She noted it took about ten years before a screen was put up to baffle the noise from the HVAC equipment on the roof. Dorrine Livson noted that Mrs. O'Shea at least had a house across the street separating her from the A&P. She said Ella Preiser and her neighbors live directly across two-lane Old Country Road from the new ShopRite.

Mrs. Preiser said for two years she and her neighbors endured noise and filth as dirt was moved around to change the elevation of the site before the store was constructed. She said neighbors whose backyards are almost directly across from the front of the store have made complaints and had meetings with Town officials to address huge lights on the side of the building that shine into our homes, and most recently, delivery trucks arriving at the wee hours of the morning with loud beeping as they back into the loading docks and then leave the refrigeration motors running while unloading. Paul Colten suggested if noise continues as an issue, the store should be pressed to pay for double-paned sound proof windows to be installed.

Mrs. Preiser said she has continued to shop at the ShopRite in Thornwood as she has not yet prepared for the long hike needed to learn where things are located in the new store. Mr. Colten noted on-line ordering and pickup will be provided. He added the new store in Croton is very nice and modern stores are usually very well designed.

TOWN BOARD SEEKING CHANGES TO TIF DISTRICT

Madelon O'Shea inquired about the status of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Ella Preiser responded that the TIF district in the North Elmsford area was established in 1987. Incremental taxes gained

from the assessment on new development within the prescribed district boundaries go into a special fund so money would be available to pay the interest on bonds to address major issues like flood abatement measures along the Saw Mill River which were expected to cost multi million dollars. Supervisor Paul Feiner has been seeking to abolish the district which currently contains almost \$7 million. At the February 28 Town Board work session, Councilman Francis Sheehan announced the idea of keeping the TIF district alive but only allowing “A” budget taxes, not “B” budget taxes, to be accumulated. This would considerably reduce the money available. Mr. Feiner wanted this suggestion placed on the next agenda but Interim Town Attorney Joe Danko informed him it would be necessary to hold a Public Hearing to make any changes to the legislation.

Mrs. Preiser noted that the State enabling legislation required the Town Board to hold Public Hearings biennially (every two years) to provide updates on a TIF district. A Hearing was held in 1989 and some changes were made to the law. She noted she can recall no Hearing scheduled since Mr. Feiner became Supervisor 30 years ago. In recent years Mr. Feiner and apparently other members of the Town Board have decided that the TIF funds should be used to construct a Route 9A Bypass although this was never an intended goal of the TIF district.

ROUTE 9A BYPASS UPDATE

Ella Preiser provided the following update to the CGCA February 27, 2023 minutes. At the February 28 Town Board work session, a NYS DOT design engineer attended via Zoom and noted the DOT is currently working on a 4th alternative to creating a Route 9A Bypass from both Route I-287 and Route 119 eastbound in the Village of Elmsford to connect directly with South Warehouse Lane near the animal shelter. This would reduce traffic at the Route 9A/Route 119 intersection of trucks wishing to head north. The engineer anticipated a draft report would be ready by the end of the year for internal circulation. He noted the cost would be approximately \$60 million and no construction funding from any source is currently available.

Mrs. Preiser said in addition to the September 2021 PowerPoint presentation she obtained from County Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson that was mentioned at the February CGCA meeting, she also obtained a copy of an earlier March 2021 PowerPoint presentation that had been made to selected government officials. Mrs. Preiser said she found some of the March 2021 slides disturbing. One slide appears to represent a zoning change and refers to a large mapped area as the “Warehouse Lane Industrial District” even though many properties on more than 100 acres would have no access to Warehouse Lane. Another slide is entitled “Warehouse Lane District Uses,” and notes a number of facilities having Warehouse Lane Access and Fairway [sic] Park Drive Access. This slide fails to mention major users such as the animal shelter, Thaile Construction, and Sam’s Club to name just a few that must use Warehouse Lane. Likewise the Fairway [sic] Park Drive access fails to mention the huge new FedEx warehouse, Poland Springs, All Weld and the Skating Rink to name a few businesses using Fairview Park Drive. Yet another slide displays results of a DOT traffic study that was conducted in this “Warehouse Lane Industrial District” in October 2020. [Note: the timing of this study was in the depth of the Covid-19 pandemic.]

Mrs. Preiser said she was so glad Elmsford Mayor Bobby Williams attended the February 27 Town Board work session as he was the only person present that really seemed to understand the problems in this area. He pointed out the Route 9A/Warehouse Lane intersection is the first to flood during a storm and he’s had 150 trucks backed up for hours in the Village waiting to head north. He noted the original plan was to create a bypass that went all the way north to Dana Road in Mount Pleasant. Mayor Williams also said he didn’t think that TIF district money should pay for a bypass road as most properties within the TIF district boundaries would not benefit from the proposed bypass.

THREE STATE ROADS NEED REPAVING

The CGCA heard from Hartsdale Park resident Celia Novo who forwarded an email she sent to government officials about the extremely poor road conditions on Central Avenue running through Edgemont and Hartsdale. Those present at the meeting agreed this road is in terrible shape and needs more than simple pothole filling. Madelon O'Shea noted that she was told that Con Edison, which had been installing new gas lines, was supposed to repave the road, but the asphalt plants shut down at the end of November so some temporary patching and plates were put down on the street. Mrs. O'Shea said she sustained damage to her car from these plates. She would like to have the CGCA put government officials on notice that they should be held responsible for repairs to vehicles. She noted it has been warm enough for asphalt plants to re-open. All agreed that repaving Central Avenue must be given top priority.

Lloyd Cort mentioned that he was driving on Knollwood Road today and this road too, from the intersection near the School for the Deaf (Old Tarrytown Road) to Grasslands Road, was in poor condition and should be repaved. Paul Colten noted it is in especially poor condition near Mayfair Road.

Dorrine Livson noted that Dobbs Ferry Road from the intersection with the Sprain Brook Parkway all the way west to Route 9A is also in need of repaving. Ken Stahn questioned whether it is worth repaving Dobbs Ferry Road since it will likely be destroyed by truck traffic while development occurs on the Elmwood Country Club property. It was suggested it would probably take ten years or more for this development to be fully built out and the existing poor road conditions need to be dealt with in the interim. Ms. Livson noted that The Chelsea (former Frank's Nursery property) was forced to repave a section of Dobbs Ferry Road from its property to Westchester View Lane after the road was torn up to install a sewer line.

Mike Burdi questioned whether a guided tour might be necessary to convince those in Albany how poor these road conditions are. Ms. Livson suggested photographs be taken. Paul Colten felt a video from his dash cam might be even more effective than still photos.

It was noted the Town keeps talking about sidewalks. Those present suggested that proper road maintenance is even more important than sidewalks. A resolution was passed to send notice to Town, County and State officials about the urgent need to repave these three state roads.

DEER POPULATION RAISES CONCERNS

Madelon O'Shea said she understands there has been a deer invasion in Old Edgemont. She noted the deer come from the hundreds of acres of open space on the Scarsdale Golf Club, the Greenburgh Nature Center and the Edgemont High School District properties and are feasting in the yards on Old Army Road. When chased, the deer go into the woods behind her home. She said she is particularly concerned about a possible traffic accident involving students because Old Army Road provides access/egress from Edgemont High School. She noted the deer have been observed crossing Old Army Road at 7:30 AM. She said last spring she had to stop her car on the Pipeline and wait while a small herd crossed this road. Mike Burdi noted deer have also been seen congregating on Ferncliff Cemetery property and crossing Secor Road.

Ellen Foley said that over the last twenty years she has learned to live with the deer population in East Irvington. She said there have been numerous accidents involving deer on Taxter Road. The Town has posted signs advising motorists to "Slow Down" and "Deer Crossing" which seem to help. Sometimes the deer can escape injury during a collision but the persons in the car are usually injured when the air bags go off. Ms. Foley said deer are beautiful animals and she has watched as many as six of them lying on the lawn in her back

yard. Once they were standing in her driveway and stood there staring at her as she returned home. They have even come on her deck, apparently hoping to be invited in for dinner. She noted she has learned to plant only flowers that are purple in color as that is a color deer do not eat. Paul Colten mentioned that he has a cousin who lives in the Poconos and he watched the deer eat and enjoy a whole watermelon rind. Ms. Foley said she was advised not to leave food available for the deer as they can lose the ability to forage for themselves.

Mrs. O'Shea noted that development has taken away so much land that deer used to frequent, such as the area near Ken Stahn's house which now is developed with 25 homes. Ms. Foley noted fall is the mating season and one male deer can be seen chasing five females. Babies are usually born in the spring and rarely travel more than a mile from where they are born.

Mr. Burdi reminded everyone that deer are carriers of Lyme disease and we don't need another epidemic. Ms. Foley said most in her neighborhood have already dealt with the disease more than once. Mr. Burdi suggested contacting the Town's Animal Control Unit or the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to see if anything can be done about the deer population. Paul Colten suggested little can be done. Ms. Foley noted about 15 years ago the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson was exploring a program of sterilization but she doesn't know if it was successful. Also, about 5 to 8 years ago a conference with DEC officials was held at Town Hall and they indicated little could be done. Ms. Foley noted there is truth to the expression, "like a deer caught in the headlights." She noted deer become paralyzed by headlights.

CON EDISON RATE CHEAPER THAN ESCO FOR FOUR MONTHS

Ken Stahn reported that it looks like for another month the Con Edison default rate for a kWh of electricity supply will be lower than what users will pay that are part of the ESCO in which the Town Board enrolled them. He said for the last four months, his bill has been about three (3) cents per kWh lower than the standard rate the ESCO is charging. He noted the price of a barrel of oil has risen a bit recently but unless we have a really bad summer, the Con Edison rates will likely remain lower. He said the Town and Sustainable Westchester keep pushing wind and solar energy, but nuclear is the best option although somewhat dangerous.

Mr. Stahn said he didn't like what he heard at the recent Town Board work session about sending a letter. He feels that Westchester Power should pay for the printing and postage for a letter explaining that residents have the ability to "opt out" of the current contract, but he feels the Town Board should compose the letter and explain why they agreed to a two-year contract with an ESCO at such a high cost with no escape clause. He said Westchester Power keeps talking about the carbon saved but that doesn't put groceries in one's shopping cart. He noted everyone on Next Door keeps complaining about the high delivery charges. Con Edison responds that it needs the funds to maintain the poles and wires.

WORK ON TWO BRIDGES NOT STARTED

Ken Stahn mentioned that Supervisor Paul Feiner put out a message on Facebook that people should take another route to get to the train as the DOT would start work on the Underhill Road Bridge on March 21. Seven months earlier Mr. Feiner stated that the bridge work was completed. Mr. Stahn pointed out then that the south side was never done. He said he drove by today and found nothing was started. When he pointed that out, Mr. Feiner claimed they were working underneath. When notified that no work was being done underneath, Mr. Feiner said he would call the DOT.

Mr. Stahn said work was supposed to start three weeks ago on the bridge by his house on Ardsley Road. He said he is still waiting to see when someone shows up to use the outdoor "potty" that was installed there. He

said work on this bridge was supposed to be finished in the fall of 2023, but is already two months late and the iron hasn't been delivered yet. He seriously doubts whether this bridge on Ardsley Road will be finished until 2024.

PARKING & SPEEDING IMPACTS PARKWAY GARDENS

Lloyd Cort reported that his community continues to have problems with excessive street parking and people speeding through neighborhood streets. He noted he brought up these subjects when he met with the Police Chief three months ago. He said it is a nuisance and he will bring the subjects up again at a meeting next week. He noted with the longer daylight hours there are concerns about traffic accidents with children playing outside. Mike Burdi suggested perhaps speed bumps would help and it would be a very easy fix if parking is prohibited and routine police patrols through the neighborhood could be scheduled. He noted if a few people are issued a ticket, the message would get out. Mr. Cort noted the area roads are too narrow to install speed bumps.

Mr. Burdi said he knows Police Chief Powell wants to be police friendly, but something should be done when the quality of life of others is impacted. Paul Colten mentioned the Chief did respond to his concerns about the parking on Hartsdale Road by patrons of Benjamin's Steak House. Mr. Colten agreed that many drivers today violate traffic laws: speeding, blurring out license plates, having tinted windows that prohibit seeing into the cars. Regular police patrols could make a difference. He mentioned that every once in a while troopers crack down at toll plazas and arrest drivers and impound vehicles.

CAR INSURANCE RATES GOING UP

Mike Burdi mentioned that he received his car insurance bill for the 6-month May to November period which increased \$140 from the previous November to May period bill. He called the insurance agent to inquire about this increase and was told they really wanted a 50% increase but settled for much less. He was told that prices have skyrocketed because of the number of accidents, number of uninsured drivers and electric vehicles. Paul Colten commented that we will have to wait to see what contribution driving under the influence of marijuana will have on car insurance rates.

CHICK-FIL-A COMING TO GREENBURGH

Paul Colten mentioned that Chick-fil-A has filed an application to demolish the former CVS store on Route 119 near the Westchester County Center and build a restaurant/fast food facility with double drive-thru lanes and access from both County Center Road and Old Kensico Road. He said the accompanying traffic study is mind-boggling but it appears most traffic will be on County Center Road and there will be a road widening of Old Kensico Road to allow a left-turn lane. Mike Burdi noted Chick-fil-A is also building a facility in Yonkers. Neighbors there are up in arms about the potential drive-thru traffic, head lights and car exhaust. Madelon O'Shea noted that part of the Route 119 property is located in the City of White Plains. Mr. Burdi noted that the County Center is planning to fully re-open to shows, basketball games, etc. When it is back to full operation, it is expected the additional traffic from Chick-fil-A will create a nightmare. Mr. Colten noted the Town is only concerned about the revenue stream.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sunnyside Line Detour Necessary. Ellen Foley mentioned that for the past six months, Sunnyside Lane has not been open to those in East Irvington wishing to reach Broadway because Con Edison is installing new gas lines. The only route available for residents and school buses is to take Taxter Road to Route 119 and head south to Broadway.

PSC Seeks Comment on Con Ed Rate Hike. Dorrine Livson said that she received a message from NY Assemblywoman MaryJane Shimsky that the Public Service Commission is seeking public input regarding a rate increase for Con Edison. The comment period is open until April 7. Ms. Livson said she will forward the information to those on the CGCA email list. Paul Colten suggested posting the information on Next Door. He noted it is possible to close the “comment” section so it is only an announcement.

Town’s Ordinance Regulates Construction Noise. Ellen Foley mentioned noise generated by rock drilling on Mountain Road in East Irvington and inquired whether the Town had any regulations regarding noise levels. The Town has a Noise Ordinance [Chapter 380] which designates the days of the week, hours of the day and decibel levels for construction noise. Ella Preiser said she knows the Police Department has noise meters that can measure the decibel level from a complainant’s property line.

New Furniture Store Coming. Raymour and Flanigan will replace the current Stickley store on Route 119. A parking variance is needed because some warehouse space will be devoted to retail space.

CGCA Sends Best Wishes to the Novo Family. Celia Novo and her husband Guy have had some serious health issues recently. Guy made a “miracle” recovery from an almost two month hospital stay, but Celia continues to have problems. The CGCA sends our thoughts and prayers.

Next CGCA Meeting. The next CGCA meeting will be Monday, April 24 at 7:30 PM via Zoom. Ken Stahn noted there were only eight people at tonight’s meeting and questioned how to get more to attend. Trying to establish a convenient date and time to increase participation has proven difficult. Any ideas are welcomed.

Thank You Dora Ashley. For maintaining the CGCA’s website. All are urged to check it out. <https://cgca.info>