

Great River Community Association

General Meeting Minutes

Date / Time: Tuesday, November 30, 2023 at 7pm

Location: East Islip Library

Invitees / Attendees:

Officers

- JoAnn Kukenis, President
- Ellen Shulman, Vice President
- Georgette Lambros, Treasurer
- Rosina O'Shea, Recording Secretary
- Tony Blumenstetter, Corresponding Secretary

Guest Speakers

- Peter Rivera & Al Alvarado – 3rd Precinct COPE Officers
- Kevin Wiecks – Bayard Cutting Arboretum Director
- John Hallowell – SPLASH Volunteer

Residents(12)

Agenda / Meeting Notes

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Meeting minutes from the General Meeting held on May 23, 2023 can be found on our website GRCA11739.com.
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Current Financials - \$29,307.46 Cash on hand
 - b. 2024 Proposed Budget – Budget was reviewed. The motion raised to accept the proposed budget has been approved.
4. Membership – 134 members to date
5. 3rd Police Precinct COPE (Community Oriented Police Engagement)
 - a. Update provided on the November community meeting. Every officer is now wearing a camera and every vehicle also has a camera. Camera will automatically go on based on actions. For example, if emergency lights are turned on, camera will start. Supervisors will be wearing them soon.
 - b. TikTok challenge – posts showing people how to easily steal cars. Hyundai 2015 – 2021. Kia 2011 – 2021. Make sure to turn off ignition, remove keys and install ignition kill switch. Some cars may have recalls.
 - c. Thefts in parking lots / malls. Park Walk & Talk program implemented as a deterrent. Officers are on foot patrol 30 min – 1 hour on Main Street and other areas during the holiday season.
 - d. Porch pirates – people are stealing Amazon packages that are left at your front door. Officers suggest asking neighbors to pick up packages if you are not home.
 - e. Notifications – if you want to reach out via email – SCPD.3rdprecinct@suffolkcountyny.gov. Phone 631-854-8308. Crime Stoppers 1800-220-TIPS. Non-emergency 631-852-COPS.
 - f. Over the last 6 months Great River generated under 200 calls. This is considered low volume. A majority of calls were motor vehicles accidents. Calls also placed for disturbances. Majority of disturbances were from speeding vehicles or erratic driving. Officers strongly recommend community members to call and report all incidents.
 - i. Widgeon complaint raised by person selling furniture on Facebook Marketplace – Officers suggest that residents do not provide their home address for sales, only public address. Do not exchange money prior to receiving item.

- ii. River Road – unknown person entered Ford Fusion and rummaged through vehicle. A neighbor in the community advised that they saw a vehicle with a group of people exit the vehicle and check for unlocked cars / searching around houses. Officers suggest that you do not leave vehicles unlocked.
 - g. Golf carts driving around neighborhood - Residents are concerned because golf carts are being driven around the community by unexperienced / unlicensed minors. Officers advised there are currently no NYS traffic laws related to golf carts as they're considered electric vehicles. They have been confiscating quads and electric bicycles, but not golf carts.
 - h. Home security systems – Officer suggest Ring and not paying for connecting to a central station type system. Advised that noise and lights deter criminals.
- 6. Bayard Cutting Arboretum
 - a. Kevin Wiecks has been the Director for past 2 years. He's also a professor at Farmingdale State College. Kevin joined us at today's meeting to tell us what the arboretum can do for the community.
 - b. The arboretum is a Level 4 arboreta – one of 36 in the world that has diverse documented collections. The institution trades data and germplasm with other institutions throughout the world.
 - c. Black Locust – native to Appalachia. Example of a US native gone bad.
 - d. Kousa Dogwood – resistant, long-lived tree that you can plant.
 - e. Plant hardiness zones have changed recently. This is known as zone creep. Our area is now 7B. Changes to zone impacts the plants that we can grow. We are “losing” northern plants as viable options = too hot. Red oak, paper birch, Colorado spruce.
 - f. Layered landscape protects everything that lays below it.
 - g. A few suggestions that Kevin mentioned for our communities.
 - i. Bald Cypress – top canopy – tolerates heat, pollution, drought.
 - ii. Atlantic Cedar - top canopy
 - iii. Willow oak – top canopy - he thinks this is the plant of the future. Ornamental, withstands all conditions and saves its leaves.
 - iv. Eastern Redbud – central canopy – buds, attracts birds, comes in multi stem form, upright single trunk.
 - v. Sweetbay Magnolia – central canopy - flowering shrub for our area
 - vi. Solomon's Seal – great ground cover, doesn't seed, maintains boarder, great for dry shade areas.
 - vii. Japanese Forest Grass – exotic plant, maintains a boarder, clumping, doesn't seed or spread rapidly. Tolerates all conditions. Great ground cover for weed suppression.
 - h. Presentation will be shared with the community.
- 7. SPLASH Volunteer Overview (Stop Polluting, Littering and Save Harbors)
 - a. SPLASH is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 that keeps the bay and water waste clean.
 - b. 10 boats cover different areas, going out every day to collect trash along the bay and streams.
 - c. Organization also provides education to school groups to educate kids how to keep the world clean.
 - d. Contact info for those interested in joining -- www.operationsplash.org / 516-378-4770 / info@operationsplash.org
 - e. Presentation will be shared with the community.
- 8. Past Events & Accomplishments
 - a. Litter pick-up – Scouts, Ellen Shulman, Carol Hopkins, Christine Carplunk, Dave Jones, JoAnn Kukenis, Tony Blumenstetter
 - b. Memorial Day Parade – Sunday May 29 @ GRFD
 - c. Fellowship Event – Friday October 6 @ Shandon Court
 - d. Halloween Parade – Sunday October 22
 - e. Boat Parade & Fireworks – Saturday October 28
 - f. 13 volunteers across the community watered the hanging plants
- 9. Upcoming Events
 - a. GRCA Christmas Tree Lighting – Sunday December 3rd 3:30pm

- b. GRCA Menorah Lighting – Thursday December 7th 4pm
- c. Great River Fire Commissioner’s Vote – Tuesday December 12th 6-9pm
- d. Bayard Cutting Arboretum Christmas Tree Lighting – Friday December 1st 5pm
- e. El Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tre Lighting – Saturday December 9th 5:30-7pm
- f. Emmanuel Church of Great River Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration - Saturday, December 9th from 4 to 6pm

10. Other notes

- a. Suggestion to improve membership and event turnout
 - i. More advertising around the community
 - ii. Sign up volunteers to do walk arounds to distribute flyers to resident houses
- b. Tom V suggested that we hold a GRCA sponsored educational walk through and/or program at the arboretum. Kevin Wiecks will provide some proposals. Tom V volunteered to be part of the committee.