

COUNCIL OF GREENBURGH CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of Meeting – Monday, May 19, 2025

This Zoom-enabled meeting began at 7:30 PM. The meeting was chaired by CGCA Treasurer Dorrine Livson (Worthington-Woodlands). In attendance were: Alex Anzer (Hunter Lane), Tom Bock (Fulton Park), Mike Burdi (Suburban Manor), Lorraine Cantori (Greenburgh Action Alliance - Hartsdale), Evelyne Cantave (Beaver Hill), Paul Colten (Hilltop Farms), Lloyd Cort (Parkway Gardens), Major Fareed (Juniper Hill), Alan Fishman (Northern Greenville), Alicia Ford (Parkway Homes), Richard Grant (Hartsdale Park), Ella Preiser (Beaver Hill), Louis Sanchez (Fulton Park), Carol Sarcinella (Hartsdale Park), and Carol Wielk (Secor Homes).

Also joining the meeting were: Teresa Tori (Poet's Corner resident and Chair of the Greenburgh Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)), Sarah Hu (a member of the Senior class at Edgemont High School and a student member of the CAC), Garrett Duquesne, (Commissioner of the Department of Community Development and Conservation (CD&C)), and Richard Fon, (Commissioner of the Department of Public Works (DPW)).

Treasurer Livson reported that the balance in the checking account, as of April 30, 2025, remains the same at \$744.31. A vote was taken to approve revisions made to the February 25, 2025 minutes which will be posted on the CGCA website. The minutes of the April 28, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

QUESTIONS ABOUT "ILLEGAL" DRIVEWAY STILL NOT RESOLVED

Ella Preiser reported that the saga about a driveway needed to reach a garage constructed in 1962 at the rear of a house continued before the ZBA at its May 15th meeting. The current owners have made a number of improvements to the site recommended by ZBA members, including moving the driveway two feet away from the property line. However, there is no way to move the driveway 12 feet from the property line so the Town claims a variance is required. Additional issues were raised at the meeting and the case, which was filed last year, has been adjourned again to the June 12th ZBA meeting.

Mrs. Preiser noted the ZBA required the owners to provide proof that other properties in the neighborhood had driveways at or close to the property line. Ten properties were identified and the Building Department issued notices of violation to five of these property owners. Records indicated that the driveway at one of the five nearby properties cited was enlarged at least ten years before the owner purchased his home in 2010 and the original driveway had no setback from the property line. The owner noted Building Inspectors have been to his property numerous times over the years and never mentioned his driveway was "illegal." Another neighbor was also issued a notice of violation for the driveway even though Town records show that a garage on that property was legalized only weeks before the property was purchased in 2013. Mrs. Preiser questioned why the driveway was not noticed at that time. Those present agreed this defies logic.

Carol Wielk suggested contacting the Town Board. Mrs. Preiser said she wrote two letters to the Town spelling out the actual wording in both the 1957 and 1980 Zoning Ordinances which she believes indicate building permits were not required for driveways, but the Building Department disagrees. Dorrine Livson suggested that anyone driving through various neighborhoods in the Town will notice driveways that are often close to the lot line and it is questionable whether any of these property owners received variances, Building Permits or Certificates of Occupancy for these driveways.

Tom Bock noted that the Town fined him because he beefed up his driveway to prevent water running into his yard every time it rains. Alex Anzer mentioned he previously lived in Peekskill and changed a water heater without a permit. He noted the sale of the house could not be finalized until the issue was resolved. He said there is a need for making potential buyers aware of any existing issues. He questioned whether other Towns have regulations to "grandfather" pre-existing uses.

FLOODING IN FULTON PARK

Louis Sanchez reported that work was promised to be done regarding flooding in Fulton Park sometime during a six to nine month period. He noted it is now month “nine” and nothing has happened. He said he has placed calls to DPW Commissioner Rich Fon but has not heard anything. Mr. Sanchez said the lack of response is frustrating and the Town should be providing constituents with regular updates rather than kicking the can down the road. He noted the Fulton Park Civic Association has scheduled a meeting for Friday, May 30th at 7:30 PM to be held at the Westchester County Center building. The Town Board was invited but most members complained about date conflicts. Councilwoman Joy Haber is the only one who will attend. She wants the DPW to answer community concerns.

Tom Bock reminded that the CGCA and civic groups used to be able to meet at Town Hall until Supervisor Feiner decided we were not welcome. Mr. Bock mentioned that a person the County recently hired to address flooding issues in the Bronx River has left for another job. He noted while the Bronx River does abut the Fulton Park neighborhood, most of the area flooding comes from Greenburgh.

CURB SIDE RECYCLING OF FOOD SCRAPS URGED

CAC Chair Teresa Tori, CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne, and DPW Commissioner Rich Fon were welcomed to the meeting. Those present introduced themselves and identified the areas where they live. Ms. Tori introduced Sarah Hu, a student member of the CAC and a senior at Edgemont High School, who was working on a school project regarding recycling food wastes and brought her concerns about expanding recycling efforts to the attention of the CAC and the Town Board. Ms. Tori said she would forward three links to the CGCA of: (1) Ms. Hu’s presentation before the Town Board, (2) a discussion of the economic advantages of composting, and (3) a DPW video of what to do with different waste materials.

Ms. Tori said she operates by the words: “reduce, re-use and recycle.” She suggested everyone should consider their buying habits and only buy food that they can use. She noted she freezes portions of food that are not consumed for later consumption. She said the frozen food is safe to eat and tastes fine.

Ms. Tori noted recycling is economically important. It costs \$35 a ton for the tipping fees for garbage, but it costs taxpayers nothing for the recycled materials collected. She notes Westchester County has a great program subsidizing the cost of recycling. She said food waste is heavy because it contains a lot of water so there would be further savings if the food scraps are removed from the garbage collected. Not only would there be a savings of the tipping fee, but there is an environmental gain since new soil is created from the composted food scraps. Ms. Tori noted that Ms. Hu spells out the advantages in detail in her presentation to the Town Board.

Ms. Tori noted the Town has a successful program, recycling 57% of waste material collected. The County’s rate is 50%, and the State’s rate is 43%. The Town could do better if more food scraps were collected for composting. She noted the CAC is currently working on a survey to learn which parts of Greenburgh have an interest in recycling food scraps and what is the level of that interest.

Currently food scraps must be taken to Town Hall, the Nature Center or Anthony Veteran Park. Dorrine Livson inquired whether any thought had been given to creating more geographical sites where residents could bring foods scraps, such as the TDYCC, various parks, etc. Ms. Tori said that was a great alternative. Carol Wielk suggested that any survey should not just be posted on the Town’s website and sent out in an email blast, which reaches only a very limited number of residents, but rather mailed to all property owners that receive pickups from the Sanitation Department. Commissioner Duquesne said he was making notes of these two suggestions.

Paul Colten questioned recycling food scraps vs. the use of garbage disposal units. Ms. Tori responded that some communities have abandoned the use of garbage disposal units since these disposed food scraps go into the water stream. She emphasized that composting creates new soil, returning the scraps back to the natural cycle.

The problem is what to do with smelly garbage. Lloyd Cort said he used to recycle a great deal of food scraps on his property but stopped doing it because of the stench and the fact it encouraged animals - possums, raccoons, etc. - that would even swim at night in his fish pond. He noted he would put food scraps in a large container and allow them to sit for months and liquefy. He would then dig a hole and pour the contents in, but it still had an odor and would bring flies and other animals to the site.

Ms. Tori noted that sealed cans and biodegradable bags are available from Westchester County that eliminate the stench. Mr. Fon noted they are also for sale at the Nature Center. He said some people regularly stop by Town Hall to leave their food scraps and there is no stench. He said if Town-wide pickup of food scraps becomes available, the Town has two small trucks that can be used. He noted because of the heavy amount of water, it is necessary to have trucks that will not leave a trail of fluid on Town streets.

Mrs. Livson commented that much of the waste material coming to our homes is paper and cardboard or commingled metal, glass and plastic containers. She noted since recycling began in Town on a regular basis, she only finds it necessary to set out garbage once a week and she even requested a smaller garbage can.

Mr. Fon mentioned another area where recycling is needed. He noted in the last two weeks, the DPW received 156 requests for bulk pickup. Ms. Tori noted the CAC agrees that often items that people want to get rid of are in good condition and could be used by others. The Town needs a recycling site where things like unwanted furniture, appliances, books, clothing and other items could be stored and made available to those who could use the items. It was noted other communities have such sites that are open to the public.

Ms. Tori, Ms. Hu, Mr. Duquesne and Mr. Fon thanked the CGCA for listening to them. They encouraged everyone to respond to the survey when it is distributed. All present thanked them for attending the meeting and providing information on this issue.

UPDATE OF TOWN'S ZONING ORDINANCE UNDERWAY

CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne said he and Town staff have been working on updating Chapter 285, the Town's Zoning Ordinance. He said the plan is to roll out the revisions in June and then it probably would take another four to six months for review. He noted he will likely ask for time before the CGCA to discuss the changes. He said changes include eliminating redundancies and making language clearer regarding zoning districts, as well as clarifying requirements for such things as fast food, restaurants and incidental dining. He said there would also be a series of Zoning Map changes, including eliminating the Urban Renewal District [as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan] and replacing the various districts along Route 119 from the White Plains border to the Greenburgh Library with a single district. Dorrine Livson urged that the Town take into consideration recommendations by Ella Preiser. Mr. Duquesne noted the Town has a number of her emails.

Carol Wielk asked whether any changes were anticipated regarding residentially zoned land. Mr. Duquesne assured her the Code would continue to protect single family residential districts, as urged by the Comprehensive Plan. He noted the proposed changes would address different income limits regarding affordable housing units, e.g., 50%, 60%, 70% in addition to the current 80% of median income mentioned in the existing code. Ms. Wielk asked specifically about Accessory Dwelling Units. Mr. Duquesne noted May 28th was to be a continued Public Hearing on the ADU proposed law, but a Town-wide mailing to single family homeowners is planned and a future date for the Public Hearing has not been determined.

"FOUR CORNERS" MEETING PLANNED

Dorrine Livson inquired about the emailed colored flyer regarding the Four Corners meeting set for Monday, June 9th at 7:00 PM. CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne explained that the Town received a grant to hire a Planning Consultant (BFJ) to do community outreach and present the process for future development of the area. He noted in 2019 the Town adopted a vision plan to redevelop the area with mixed use, but zoning regulations

have not been developed yet. He said plans include modest development, somewhat similar to what already exists along East Hartsdale Avenue, and the current CA Central Avenue Mixed-Use Impact District is not conducive to the suggested plans. Mr. Duquesne said there is already a great steering committee composed of twelve (12) area residents.

Lorraine Cantori mentioned the rush hours traffic jams she encounters everyday on West Hartsdale Avenue and said she would like to know the impact of redeveloping the Four Corners. It is anticipated that the hired consultant will provide updates on traffic, storm water, aesthetics, etc. Mr. Duquesne said eliminating some curb cuts will be considered as well as signal updates on the east - west flow of traffic.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNED FOR “FORTRESS BIBLE” SITE

Paul Colten inquired about possible development of the former Fortress Bible Church property off of Dobbs Ferry Road. CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne said interest has been expressed regarding “townhouses.” He noted the current single family “R” zoning allows about 20 single family homes but does not allow townhouses. He encouraged the civic association to reach out to him and he will provide “Cliff Notes” on what else can be developed. Mr. Colten noted that the Hilltop Farm Civic Association will be holding a meeting at 7 PM on June 5, 2025 at the Greenburgh Public Library to discuss the issue. Teri Tori mentioned that she currently has trouble getting out of her neighborhood (Poet’s Corners) and development of this property will create a mutual traffic problem for other area neighborhoods.

ESCO CONTINUES TO COST MORE

Ella Preiser reported that the ESCO in which the Town Board enrolled thousands of Greenburgh residents and small business owners continues to be a costly experience for those enrolled. The current contract began with meter read dates of November 2024, and electricity supply rates have been higher than the average Con Edison rate during four of the last six months of the contract. The average Con Edison rate for the month of April was 11.00¢ per kWh vs. the 12.17¢ per kWh charged by the ESCO. Mrs. Preiser said her rate and that of the Livson family was 11.79¢ per kWh and the rate for Ken Stahn was 11.73¢ per kWh.

As previously noted, the Town Board has already given approval for the Town of Greenburgh to be included in a new contract at the 50% renewable option, beginning with meter read dates in December 2025. At present Sustainable Westchester has not gone out to bid on the new contract. It was noted that those who previously “opted out” of the contract will automatically be opted out of the new contract. Those wishing to enroll can “opt in” at any point.

Mike Burdi reminded that while the winter months was costly for many residents who heat with natural gas, the coming summer months will be costly for all those using electricity for air conditioning.

NOISE FROM CAR ALARMS TROUBLING

Alex Anzer reported that he is waiting for a response to his email to the Greenburgh Police and Supervisor Paul Feiner about the noise created by the adjacent car dealership on Route 9A that uses car alarms to locate vehicles in the parking lot that are there for servicing. Mr. Anzer noted this noise starts early in the morning and continues throughout the day. He said he and his neighbors as well as residents of the adjacent public housing and condominiums can hear this noise.

Paul Colten suggested that today there are rather inexpensive air tag devices that could be used for this purpose. Mr. Colten noted use of car alarms could likely be a problem in other areas as Greenburgh has become home to more and more car dealerships.

ANIMAL CONTROL LAW - WHERE TO WALK YOUR DOG

Dorrine Livson thanked Carol Wielk for providing copies of the regulations regarding where animals are permitted to urinate and defecate. Ms. Livson said she forwarded this information to all on the CGCA mailing list. Mrs. Livson noted in response to some questions she has received, she reached out to Town Attorney Joe Danko about what is meant by “curb to curb” in the law and if there is a violation if the dog owner removes the feces from a property. To date she has not heard back from Mr. Danko. Several present at the meeting felt the language is unambiguous. Animals may only be walked within the curbs of the street, and not on the grassy property lines adjacent to the street curbs. If an animal urinates on the grass it is impossible to remove it and simply picking up any feces from the grass does not guarantee the area is safe for young children to play on or for adults to avoid getting some smear on their shoes which can then be tracked into the house.

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION - PARKWAY GARDENS PARKWAY HOMES SEEKS INCLUSION

Lloyd Cort reported he attended a meeting with the Greenburgh Black Historical Initiative. Mr. Cort said they asked him to form a committee and bring audio and visual information to a meeting. He said he does not have this type of information. He noted he has been living in Parkway Gardens for 50 years and knows much of its history, including that the developers went to Harlem and encouraged people to move here. He said he and his wife Gwen Cort, Wilma France, and the Crichlows have been gathering information about the history of Parkway Gardens.

Alicia Ford asked why no one from Parkway Homes was on the committee. She said she had names of people who have information about Parkway Homes - a sister community to Parkway Gardens - and who would like to serve on a committee regarding historical designation of the two communities. She said she would reach out to Mr. Cort tomorrow to discuss this issue.

MISCELLANEOUS

No Word re Con Ed Delivery Rate Hike. A question was raised about the proposed rate hike Con Edison is seeking from the Public Service Commission to deliver gas and electricity. No information was available. Mike Burdi suggested we should ask the attorney the Town Board hired for \$5,000 [or less].

No Update re Chick-fil-A. A question was raised about the status of the proposed Chick-fil-A application for the Tarrytown Road site. It was noted that the applicant received the necessary variances from the ZBA and site plan and other approvals from the Planning Board, so the next step is likely the demolition of the existing vacant CVS store on the site.

Next CGCA Meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 23, 2025 at 7:30 PM. Hope all can attend. All were wished a Happy Memorial Day.

“Thank You” Dora and Shelly. The work you do in maintaining the web site and arranging CGCA meetings is important and greatly appreciated.