

COUNCIL OF GREENBURGH CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of Meeting – Monday, June 23, 2025

This Zoom-enabled meeting began at 7:30 PM. The meeting was chaired by CGCA Chair Madelon O'Shea (Old Edgemont). In attendance were: CGCA Treasurer Dorrine Livson (Worthington-Woodlands), Alex Anzer (Hunter Lane), Mike Burdi (Suburban Manor), Evelyne Cantave (Beaver Hill), Lorraine Cantori (Greenburgh Action Alliance - Hartsdale), Paul Colten (Hilltop Farms), Major Fareed (Juniper Hill), Ellen Foley (East Irvington), Maria Pecora & Bill Sullivan (Sprain Brook Parkway), Ella Preiser (Beaver Hill), Dylan Pyne (Edgemont Community Council), David Rosenbaum (Ardsley Estates), Carol Sarcinella (Hartsdale Park), Ken Stahn (Ardsley/Sprain Road), and Carol Wielk (Secor Homes). Also in attendance was Greenburgh Town Councilman Francis Sheehan.

Treasurer Livson reported that the balance in the checking account, as of May 31, 2025, remains the same at \$744.31. The minutes of the May 19, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

INFORMATION SOUGHT RE CIVIC GROUPS

Madelon O'Shea reported that she responded to CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne's June 10th letter seeking information about civic groups that the CGCA would discuss the matter at tonight's meeting. David Rosenbaum said that this letter may have resulted because he spoke out at a recent Planning Board meeting regarding a proposed subdivision that the Ardsley Estates Civic Association received no notice of the meeting. The application claimed there was no civic association within 500 feet of the property.

Carol Wielk said some of the information requested in Mr. Duquesne's letter was intrusive. Why does the Town need to know how often a civic group meets, how many residents are active, or how members are contacted? It was agreed that many people do not want their information made available, and the Town should be provided only with the name(s) and contact information of a group's leadership. Councilman Francis Sheehan said no ill intent was meant. He noted the Town maintains a map of civic groups that is not up-to-date or accurate. He urged civic groups to provide their geographical boundaries.

Ellen Foley noted that civic groups don't have access to email addresses for everyone living in their area. Bill Sullivan pointed out that not everyone lives within the boundaries of a civic group. Dorrine Livson said that is one of the reasons she maintains a list of "Friends of the Worthington-Woodlands Civic Association" to which she forwards information. She urges those receiving her messages to forward them to their friends.

Ken Stahn mentioned that the Town does not readily provide names of those on the Town's gblist. Mrs. Livson reminded that she sued the Town and won access to the gblist. She noted that Tom Bock and Ella Preiser received copies in response to a FOIL request. The list includes the email addresses of many employees, developers, lawyers, etc. Mrs. O'Shea noted it also contains names and addresses of people who have moved out of the area.

REVISED ADU LEGISLATION SCHEDULED FOR ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING

Everyone present said they received the letter the Town mailed to property owners about the Public Hearing scheduled (6/25/25) on the revised Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) legislation. Madelon O'Shea said the proposed law does not comply with recommendations of the Town's Comprehensive Plan about preserving density in single-family neighborhoods. Carol Wielk said she forwarded information to her civic membership, but she questioned how many people really understand that this will be the beginning of the end of one-family residential neighborhoods. It was noted the Town claims only one or two ADUs will be permitted in any neighborhood. Ellen Foley questioned whether that will be enforced and noted one can always seek relief from the ZBA. She questioned whether the next door neighbor's house will be de-valued if an ADU is added.

Ms. Wielk said she understands the need for affordable housing, but questioned whether creating an ADU is affordable. Questions were raised about the costs of adding an ADU and installing separate lines and meters for various utilities. Bill Sullivan noted that some owners don't charge their tenants for gas and electric. Paul Colten noted mini-splits to provide heating and air conditioning are relatively inexpensive.

Lorraine Cantori questioned the impact on traffic, which is generally ignored. She noted West Hartsdale Avenue is a nightmare for an hour to an hour and a half every morning. She said that happens during the summer too, because of the camps in the area.

Ms. Wielk reminded that Assessor Edye McCarthy said assessed value would increase based on the cost of any ADU addition. It was noted if the assessed value of one house in a neighborhood increases, everyone's assessment goes up. Ms. Cantori said increased assessment is unfair. She noted many people are already enduring financial hardships and paying bills late. The Town gets more money and so do the schools, but as Mrs. O'Shea noted, the schools cannot turn any children away. Depending on the class size, one or two additional students in a grade can create a need for another teacher and classroom. Mr. Sheehan asked Dylan Pyne if he thought the Edgemont School District could absorb additional students. Mr. Pyne responded that Edgemont has had a 10% enrollment decline over the last five years so he thinks additional students could be absorbed if only 25 units were permitted in the entirety of the unincorporated portion of the Town with further limits on the number of ADUs permitted within each neighborhood.

Mrs. Foley noted when the idea of ADUs was first introduced, it was for "Grandma," one's children or other family members. Under the proposed law, occupancy is not restricted to family. Councilman Francis Sheehan noted there continues to be nothing about affordability, but there now is a "family friendly" provision adopted based on a definition of family from a Poughkeepsie law that has been tested in the courts. A family cannot have more than three adults, locked entrances or an increased driveway size. Although families frequently eat together, he noted some family members would like to have a second kitchen. It was noted that many Italian families frequently had a second kitchen in their basements. He also noted the revised law has a one year sunset clause. No one present had seen this latest version. Mr. Sheehan added a copy to the Town's website.

Mr. Sheehan urged everyone to attend the Public Hearing and speak out. He noted it is unlikely the Hearing will be closed, but something will be passed eventually. It was pointed out that only two members of the Town Board live in single family homes and will be affected by this law. Two live in condominiums and one lives in Dobbs Ferry. Mrs. O'Shea said she is not comfortable attending Town meetings. She questioned whether board members are actually listening or paying attention since many are playing with their cell phones or talking to each other when the public speaks. Mr. Sheehan noted if you see him on his computer at a Board meeting, it generally means he is checking the accuracy of something said or informing the studio about the audio. The lengthy presentations at the beginning of Town Board meetings was also mentioned as a reason people do not like to attend meetings since it could mean having to wait until very late to speak at a Public Hearing.

DRIVEWAYS - VARIANCE FOR ONE GRANTED - MORE TO GO

At the June 12, 2025 ZBA meeting, a variance was finally granted for a driveway to reach a two-car garage that was built at the rear of the house in 1962. It was a long drawn out process and has been rather costly for the owners, who have decided they will not be moving into the neighborhood. It was noted that none of the other five nearby properties cited by the Building Inspector have applied for variances for their driveways. These owners must now seek meetings with the Town to determine what is required. At least two of these driveways were constructed years ago before the properties were purchased by the current owners. In fact, the previous owner of one house obtained approval to legalize a garage only weeks before the sale of the property. Ella Preiser said that seems to prove that the Building Inspector at the time did not feel a permit was necessary for the driveway to reach that garage. She noted that it is questionable whether most property owners in Greenburgh have Building

Permits and Certificates of Occupancy for driveways on their properties. Councilman Francis Sheehan noted that he is aware of the issues, but because of provisions in the Town's Code of Ethics, he cannot get involved.

SUBDIVISION SOUGHT IN ARDSLEY ESTATES

David Rosenbaum reported that two weeks ago he learned that a neighbor had applied for a subdivision, tree removal permit and wetlands permit. He said he has lived in the area for 29 years and this is the first subdivision request since Toll Brothers built the Ardsley Estates. He thanked Madelon O'Shea and Dorrine Livson for recommending that he FOIL documents and noted he received 2500 pages of documents the same day. He ordered a title search and discovered a restrictive covenant regarding building any other structures or improvements that the attorney for the applicant failed to mention. He noted originally Toll Brothers planned to build 37 homes but the number was reduced to 34 because of low water levels and the fact the County Health Department would not allow individual pumps on properties. The lot next to his home was reduced from two homes to one because of water pressure issues. He noted there is also poor drainage on the lot across the street which is combined into one lot instead of three. He commented the owners plan to sell the property.

The Planning Board Public Hearing will continue on July 2, 2025. Mr. Rosenbaum said he and other neighbors plan to oppose the subdivision. He noted the Town's Comprehensive Plan recognizes the Ardsley Estates as a one-family neighborhood and contains policies seeking to preserve the character of the neighborhood. He commented that records indicate two other neighboring civic associations opposed the original Ardsley Estates subdivision. The CGCA will provide information from its old records and he will attempt to reach out to them.

UPDATE OF ZONING ORDINANCE

Ella Preiser reported that CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne called her last Friday and dropped a copy of the draft revisions to the Zoning Ordinance at her door. The draft is about 370 pages long. She has started to read it and has jotted down comments on many of the pages. She told CGCA representatives that it is sad to see that a complete re-write is not included. She noted the official title is the "1980 Town of Greenburgh Zoning Ordinance," and she finds it embarrassing that the Town plans on continuing to refer to a document that is more than four decades old.

Councilman Francis Sheehan mentioned that there was a plan to refer the document to the Planning Board for its review and recommendation in May of this year. He noted he objected because he had not even seen it. He said he and Amanda Magana, First Deputy Town Attorney, and Liz Gerrity, Deputy Building Inspector, have met for hours reviewing the document. All agreed it was good that a number of people are reviewing the document before it is referred to the Planning Board. It was recalled how upset some Planning Board members became when the Town Board suggested changes to the ADU proposed legislation after the Planning Board recommended it.

GAISMAN MANSION WORTH SAVING

Madelon O'Shea inquired about the visit Councilman Francis Sheehan made to the Gaisman Mansion which is surrounded by the Hartsdale Park and Preserve. Mr. Sheehan responded that he took some pictures on a recent visit which are not great. He said money was not spared to build the mansion and it would be a shame to take it down. He noted the Building Inspector said there was little damage caused when water pipes broke. He indicated he was fascinated by a refrigerator that had a real compressor. There is also an elevator in the building, which is not used.

Mrs. O'Shea noted that the mansion was built by the nephew of the American Minister to Peru in 1920. She said Henry Gaisman held 84 patents so there may be more interesting things inside the house. She mentioned Eric Gaisman, a nephew living on Long Island, who is in charge of the foundation which oversees the property containing the home for the aging nuns occupying the property. She said Kyra Jones has the address and telephone number of Mr. Gaisman and sent a note to CD&C Commissioner Garrett Duquesne about contacting

him. Mrs. O'Shea said if the Town landmarks the mansion and can get it on the national register, there would be money available for any restoration needed.

TOWN ATTORNEY RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ANIMAL CONTROL LAW

Dorrine Livson reported that in response to questions she received about the animal control law, she reached out to Town Attorney Joe Danko about what was meant by "curb to curb" and if there was a violation if the dog owner removed the feces from a property. Mr. Danko replied that the owner can only let the dog defecate or urinate in the area of the street that abuts the sidewalks, and the owner must remove any feces from the street. He stated: "It is a **violation** if someone lets their dog defecate or urinate on private property, **even if such person removes the feces.**" His response indicated that animal waste can be harmful to a lawn "but even if it was concrete, a property owner has the right to keep animals and persons from encroaching on their land."

ESCO COSTLY FOR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

THREE TOWN BOARD MEMBERS AGREE TO ANOTHER CONTRACT

Ella Preiser reported that Greenburgh residents and small business owners that the Town Board enrolled in the ESCO for electricity supply have now completed the seventh month of this current 14-month contract. The ESCO cost for the 50% renewable supply is 12.087¢ per kWh. Once again the ESCO cost has exceeded the cost paid by those who opted out. The reported average Con Edison cost for the month of May was 10.73¢ per kWh. The cost mainly for the month of May (4/29/25-5/29/25) for the Preiser and Livson families was even lower - 10.18¢ per kWh. The cost for Ken Stahn (5/8/25-6/9/25) was 10.21¢ per kWh.

A question was raised about how the Con Edison monthly average cost is figured. There was no answer. However, it appears that the monthly cost to users may have something to do with their meter-read dates. While the average cost varies for users, it has been less expensive than the ESCO for five of the last seven months.

The Town Board has already agreed to participate in another contract when the current contract expires at the end of this year. A "Memorandum of Understanding" to participate in a new contract was approved at the April 24, 2025 Town Board meeting. Interestingly, Council members Francis Sheehan and Gina Jackson voted "no."

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF "FORTRESS BIBLE" PROPERTY DISCUSSED

Paul Colten reported that close to 100 people from Hilltop Farms, Orchard Hill and Poet's Corners civic groups attended a meeting (6/5/25) regarding potential development of the property known as the Fortress Bible Church property, off of Dobbs Ferry Road abutting the northbound entrance to the Sprain Brook Parkway. The 5.3+ acre property is zoned R-10 and could accommodate about 20 single-family homes, but the developer claims it would be too difficult to build single-family homes. Two alternatives were proposed: a data center and 50 units of garden apartments. Mr. Colten noted neither proposal received a receptive greeting from those present. A question was asked about ownership. Mr. Colten said it is presumed the property is still owned by the ministry in Texas. He said the community is waiting to see what the owners will come back with.

CONTAMINATED SOIL BEING REMOVED FROM ELMWOOD PROPERTY

Dorrine Livson reported that Parks & Recreation Commissioner Joe Lucasey said work is ongoing on the former Elmwood Country Club property to clean up the contaminated soil that was brought on site. The work should be completed by year end and then the Town will be given the 14+ acre site for parkland (required by NYS law and Greenburgh subdivision regulations), which will be added to the East Rumbrook Park property. She noted the NYS Department of Transportation is planning to re-align the entrance and exit ramps to the Sprain Brook Parkway on Dobbs Ferry Road and add a traffic light. This will require a new entrance to the enlarged East Rumbrook Park property, which will be located further west along Dobbs Ferry Road.

MISCELLANEOUS

Next CGCA Meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2025 at 7:30 PM. The Zoom link and agenda will be forwarded to those on the CGCA list prior to the meeting.

“THANK YOU.” “THANK YOU.” Dora and Shelly: your work in maintaining the CGCA website and arranging CGCA meetings is essential to this organization. The CGCA is extremely fortunate to have you. Don’t know what we would do without you!!