

# **COUNCIL OF GREENBURGH CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS**

## **Minutes of Meeting – Monday, September 29, 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), Mike Burdi (Suburban Manor), Evelyne Cantave (Beaver Hill), Paul Colten (Hilltop Farms), Lloyd Cort (Parkway Gardens), Major Fareed (Juniper Hill), Maria Pecora and Bill Sullivan (Sprain Brook Parkway), Ella Preiser (Beaver Hill), David Rosenbam (Ardsley Estates) 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 August 31, 2025, remained the same at \$744.31. Minutes of the August 25, 2025 meeting were approved with two minor changes. Dylan Pyne informed that the "Sprouts" store that Supervisor Paul Feiner said will open in 2027 at the site of the former Christmas Tree Shop must first undergo site plan approval. Mr. Pyne also pointed out that the Tax Assessor can only assess the value of property and does not have any authority regarding the tax levy. It was noted the Approved Minutes are posted on the CGCA website (cgca.info).

### **INVITATION TO JOIN LISTENING CIRCLES**

Madelon O'Shea mentioned the invitation the CGCA received from the Rev. Lane Cobb of the Greenburgh Restorative Circle Project Team, which has partnered with Councilwoman Gina Jackson to convene Community Listening Circles on a range of topics of concern to Greenburgh residents. The next event is scheduled for October 15, 2025 from 6 to 8 PM at the Greenburgh Library. Dorrine Livson noted that the invitation had been forwarded to all on the CGCA mailing list. One must register to attend the event. Mrs. O'Shea encouraged anyone who attends to report back at next month's CGCA meeting.

### **DRIVEWAY VARIANCES SCHEDULED**

Paul Colten mentioned that his application for variances to legalize his driveway has been scheduled to be heard at the October 16, 2025 ZBA meeting. A small amount of macadam was added to this driveway more than a quarter of a century ago, well before Mr. Colten purchased the property in 2010. Ella Preiser said she hoped that the ZBA will grant the requested variances without any of the hullabaloo that has taken place at other recent ZBA meetings. It appears similar variances needed by other homeowners in this neighborhood have not been applied for or scheduled for a Public Hearing.

### **VARIANCES GRANTED FOR BESS IN SHOPPING CENTERS**

Madelon O'Shea reported that both the Midway Shopping Center and the Greenville Shopping Center on Central Avenue received variances at the ZBA meeting (9/17/25) to increase the amount of storage permitted from 6,000 kWh to 7,507.2 kWh at the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to be constructed in their rear yard parking lots. In addition, both shopping centers were granted an additional 12-month extension to complete the installations. Mrs. O'Shea said she understands the Greenville Fire Department had concerns about these facilities and the potential costs of fighting any fires. The applicants apparently responded. During the deliberation session, Deputy Town Attorney Ed Lieberman actually asked to see the response. However, the ZBA members had no concerns and felt it was unnecessary to review the record. During a brief discussion, all ZBA members present agreed that no conditions needed to be placed on the approved variances. Ella Preiser said that as of today the "findings" of these approvals have still not been posted.

Dorrine Livson noted that Tom Bock has published on his blog "A Better Greenburgh" an interesting article about fires caused by lithium ion batteries and the serious impacts of these fires. The article mentions that some New York State communities have refused to allow any BESS. Mrs. O'Shea noted that news organizations report frequently on the difficulty of extinguishing the blaze and toxic fumes resulting from lithium ion battery fires.

### **ESCO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CHEAPER THIS MONTH - WOW!**

Ella Preiser reported that the Town Board has the opportunity to celebrate, because the electricity supply cost for the month of August was less for those the Town Board enrolled in the ESCO than for those who “opted out.” The ESCO cost was only 12.087¢ per kWh for the 50% renewable supply. She noted her cost and that of the Livson family, mainly for the month of August, was 12.87¢ per kWh. Ken Stahn’s cost was 12.16¢ per kWh, and the average monthly Con Edison cost was 12.12¢ per kWh.

Mrs. Preiser noted that August was the third time so far in the ten months of this contract that the ESCO cost has been cheaper. However, each time the difference has been less than a penny per kWh. As Supervisor Paul Feiner posted on the Town’s website, the average Greenburgh resident enrolled in the ESCO may have saved a whole 25¢ in August!!! WOW!!! As the CGCA reported last month, the Town has agreed to a new two-year ESCO contract starting December 1, 2025, at a slightly cheaper rate of 11.81¢ per kWh to residents for the 50% renewable supply.

### **ELMWOOD PRESERVE UPDATE - CLEAN-UP CONTINUES**

Dorrine Livson provided an update on the Elmwood Preserve project. She noted the Town placed a Conservation District Overlay on the property (8/10/22), and the State DEC has determined that because of the applications of pesticides during the long use as a golf course, more remediation of the land is necessary. Clean up must be to “unrestricted residential standards.” That means the entire site must be thoroughly cleaned, including the 14+ acre parcel that will be dedicated to the Town for parkland. The applicant has requested and been granted additional time for this necessary clean-up.

Mrs. Livson mentioned that originally the State DOT wanted to close the current entrance to East Rumbrook Park and move it further west on Dobbs Ferry Road. The Town will now continue to use the entrance until the 14+ acre parcel is dedicated and a new entrance to the existing Park is constructed through this parcel. Then the DOT will take control over the current entrance. She noted an application for funding to construct the new entrance has been sought from the State. She questioned if we put the application in too soon and the State gives us the money but the dedication of the 14-acre parcel has not taken place, is there a time frame where we may lose the grant money. She is still awaiting an answer.

### **SPEEDING CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR CONCERN**

Madelon O’Shea commented that over this past weekend she had the opportunity to visit someone who lives at the top of Old Kensico Road. She said the road winds and is very narrow and she couldn’t believe how quickly cars were racing down the road. She said this morning she saw a “one-armed bandit” garbage truck flying around Edgemont Circle. She suggested that we should invite Police Chief Kobie Powell to the December CGCA meeting to discuss the issue of speeding. All agreed to invite the Chief to a future CGCA meeting.

Ella Preiser said she was informed that speeding along Central Avenue has been somewhat reduced and fewer tickets are issued because of an App called “Waze.” Drivers can use the App to inform other drivers where a police car is stationed in the area and that encourages other drivers to slow down. Paul Colten suggested this App performs a positive function. He noted he drives on Central Avenue fairly frequently and has noticed significant Greenburgh Police presence with a police car in the parking lot of Blinds to Go. He said cars are generally going about 40 mph. But he agreed there is tons of bad driving on our roads and it is not easy to solve a lot of different issues. Carol Wielk agreed and said she rarely sees cars speeding on Central Avenue lately.

Dorrine Livson invited people to come to her neighborhood to see the speeders. She suggested we need a greater police presence in other areas. Mrs. O’Shea said she was recently at a restaurant at dinnertime on Central Avenue between Old Army Road and the Yonkers border. She noted the noise from speeders and cars without mufflers outside was so loud you could hear it inside with the door closed. Lloyd Cort commented that the police are doing a good job and their presence in any area does slow drivers. However, he said he suggested to the Chief

the need for stationing police cars more frequently in other areas. Those present agreed with Mr. Cort that it is important to have the police presence moved around.

Mrs. O'Shea inquired if there is still double parking on East Hartsdale Avenue in the business section. Mr. Colten said if we want the businesses to succeed, it will continue. For example, he noted that those who order food at an eatery frequently double park to pick up the food. He said one solution is to remove the curb side parking and restrict it to "five-minute" parking only. Those needing to park longer would have to park in the garage.

### **SUPERMARKET COMING TO EAST HARTSDALE AVENUE**

Paul Colten mentioned that Supervisor Paul Feiner sent out an email this week that a new supermarket will locate in the vacant Rite Aid store on East Hartsdale Avenue. Mr. Colten noted this will be a wonderful convenience for the people who live on the Avenue who can walk to the supermarket, but questioned where others will park. Mike Burdi noted the supermarket could deliver the food for those who don't drive. Carol Wielk questioned whether there could be a back door that people could enter from the parking lot. Mr. Burdi noted there used to be access to the parking garage when Daitch-Shopwell was located at this location decades ago. Mr. Colten said a number of the businesses on the Avenue do have back doors to the parking garage.

### **ALIX DUNN - NATURE CENTER AT GREENBURGH**

All present welcomed Alix Dunn, the Executive Director of the Nature Center at Greenburgh. Dorrine Livson noted that she sent out the photographs and flyers that Ms. Dunn had provided and hoped everyone had the opportunity to review them. Ms. Dunn actually provided documents to share on the screen at the meeting, and Mrs. Livson was successful in providing access for those present on the Zoom link to see them.

Ms. Dunn thanked all for the invitation to attend tonight's meeting. She noted she joined the Nature Center in the spring of 2021. She said she has been in this industry almost three decades and saw so much potential and quickly became partners with the Town to start implementing new ideas. There have been significant changes in the last four years. She noted environmental changes keep occurring and we need to learn how to adapt to protect the environment. Ms. Dunn provided the following information about the Nature Center.

The property was purchased by the Town with state and federal money in 1973. A nonprofit was formed in 1975, with a 25-year renewable lease, that operates the educational programs on the property, takes care of the buildings in partnership with the Town and handles the landscaping on the 33-acre property. The nonprofit is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and using the occasion to look back on its legacy and also to look forward and think about the next 50 years. A new 25-year lease has been signed with the Town.

The Nature Center's vision and mission was very clear. The 33 acres would remain open space, a wildlife refuge and a place for environmental education. Ms. Dunn noted that holds true today. The continued mission is to inspire passion, curiosity, respect and action for the natural world. That means not only falling in love with nature, but learning what you can do in your household to protect nature and to think about the environment in daily decisions. It means not only seeing an animal and learning about the animal's habitat when you come into the manor house, but also learning how to protect natural habitats, grow native plants, set up a pollinator garden and think about storm water runoff from your property.

Programs focus on every age. The Nature Center will teach anyone who comes in wanting to learn how to interact with the environment and be a responsible steward. Eight college age interns are hired and paid to work for ten weeks during the summer. This is a science based stewardship program open to those studying ecology, biology, or environmental resources. It helps with what they learn in the classroom and with their resumes. There are environmental educational programs for grades K - 6. This year also had a pilot program for grades 6, 7, 8 and high school.

The Nature Center works in partnership with other centers and community groups about the best sustainable practices and how to live in harmony with nature. E.g., there is strong partnership with the Garden Club of Irvington which grows all their plants for plant sales in the Nature Center greenhouse. Nature Center staff members learn a lot while working with Garden Club members nine months of the year. The Garden Club offered a workshop on beginning a kitchen garden.

The Nature Center has 790 active members, a number that has been growing over the years. There are 90 active volunteers who work in the animal museum and help with docents and also on the grounds. There are 10,813 social media friends who follow on the website. There are trail counters and car counters. Through August of this year, there have been 56,000 park visits and 50,336 visits with animals in the museum.

Current plans are in the permitting process with the Town to construct a Welcome Center pavilion. The reason for this structure is because a lot of people don't know what to do when they reach the Nature Center. The Welcome Center will provide additional educational space for guidance and orientation. Those arriving will be welcomed by a staff member and a large map reachable through mobile devices. The map follows visitors on the property so they will never get lost. The Welcome Center will also provide a place where school buses can more safely load and unload students. In the back will be waterless composting toilets that are ADA compliant. There will be two stalls with one wide enough for a wheel chair. There will be no potable water but a hand sanitizer will be available. At present the only bathrooms are in the Manor House, although a Porta-Potty is provided in the parking lot in the summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The idea is for the Welcome Center pavilion to mirror the current style and look of other structures on the property. The Manor House, built in 1918, is a beautiful wood and stone structure. The other major structure is a butterfly arbor down in the meadow. The Welcome Center will become the main entrance or front door to the Nature Center preserve. It will be set off the visitor parking area along the main trail. The existing main trail from the visitor parking lot will be closed and "re-wilded." The Welcome Center will be ADA compliant, however the trails from the pavilion will not. Handicapped parking and access will remain up at the Manor House.

The Welcome Center kit has a footprint of 1,200 square feet. It will have a roof but no walls. Some pull down clear walls can be included so the site can be used for events scheduled in the evening. There will be fans to keep it cool. Possibly heat may be added at a later time. A timber framed kit has been ordered from a Pennsylvania firm which will assemble it on site after the foundation has been completed. Then electricity will be installed. The budget is \$350,000 which is already available and families are coming forward that want to sponsor benches, exhibits and educational material.

Mike Burdi inquired if there are any plans to incorporate solar panels on the roof of the Welcome Center. Ms. Dunn responded there have been discussions but it would be a challenge since there is a thick canopy of oak trees. She said she has been discussing the possibility of solar panels in the parking lot but there also are some hurdles. She noted the Nature Center uses little power and there are few evening events. Mr. Burdi said he was glad there would be plastic covers to keep people dry in the event of rain. Ms. Dunn noted a rain garden will be created next to the Welcome Center and the gutters on the roof, barrels and rain garden will be used to demonstrate how to capture and treat storm water. Carol Wielk mentioned her area would need a demonstration of a "storm garden."

Mrs. Livson inquired when the Welcome Center will be up and running. Ms. Dunn responded they are pushing hard for a ribbon cutting in the spring. If they get the necessary permits from the Town, work can start on the foundation in November, before the ground freezes. It will take only two days to raise the Welcome Center structure on site. The Nature Center has the personnel to start the changes to the trails.

Some present at the meeting mentioned past experiences at the Nature Center. Mrs. O'Shea recalled bringing her infant son when the property was purchased, and the times when her husband Rod did radio shows from the site. Mrs. Livson recalled her young son brought "Mr. Toad" to the Center. She noted his daughters, her granddaughters who live in Rockland County have participated in school field trips to the site. Ms. Dunn commented that the Nature Center is a magical place and this is a beautiful time to visit. She encouraged the CGCA to share her email - [alix@naturecentergb.org](mailto:alix@naturecentergb.org) - and visit. She noted her team is composed of wonderful people who love greeting people and helping them understand all the Nature Center has to offer.

All present thanked Ms. Dunn for attending tonight's meeting and the excellent information she provided.

### **INVITATION TO TAX ASSESSOR TO ATTEND OCTOBER MEETING**

Dorrine Livson said she had some questions about assessments and taxes. She noted she has been told the budget is what drives the tax rate. Madelon O'Shea expressed concerns about a neighboring house like hers that sold for more than she thinks her house is worth. Mike Burdi mentioned his taxes went up over \$900 this year and he knows it has to do with "comps" in the area.

Maria Pecora said she has a 40-year background in taxes. She agreed absolutely if area homes sell for more money, your house's assessment will go up. She said it would be a very hard fight to get your assessment lowered. Mr. Burdi noted the reverse will never happen, as it is very unlikely taxes will go down if a neighboring house sells for less. Ms. Pecora said there may be a situation when prices will go down because people can't afford to purchase the houses and interest rates rise. Homeowners may have to take a substantial cut to sell. Mrs. Livson said she heard prices continue to go up. Mr. Burdi noted it is dictated by inventory.

All present agreed it would be helpful to invite Tax Assessor Edye McCarthy to a CGCA meeting to seek more information. A vote was unanimously passed to invite her to the October 27, 2025 meeting.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Public Hearing to Continue on ADU and Tax Proposed Laws.** Madelon O'Shea noted the Town Board will hold continued Public Hearings on October 8, 2025 for both the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) law and the proposed taxation law that will offer tax refunds to homeowners who have experienced 50% or greater loss of the value of their homes as a result of a declared disaster (flooding, hurricane, etc.). The CGCA has already raised concerns about these two proposals.

**Juniper Hill Enjoys Newly Surfaced Roads.** Major Fareed reported that things are doing well in the Juniper Hill area. He praised the DPW for their efforts in milling and repaving all the roads in the area very quickly, in less than two weeks. He also mentioned a couple of weeks ago, a very moving ceremony was held renaming a street in memory of Millie Sheehan, the wife of Town Councilman Francis Sheehan.

**Street Naming in Memory of Cleo Oliver.** Dorrine Livson mentioned that she sent out the still photographs of the street naming in memory of former CGCA Vice Chair Cleo Oliver. Ms. Livson said she is waiting to receive the video of that ceremony and will forward it to all when she receives it. She also inquired about photographs or videos of the street naming in memory of Millie Sheehan.

**Street Naming in Memory of Millie Sheehan.** Madelon O'Shea asked Councilman Francis Sheehan if there was a video of the street dedication in honor of his wife Millie. Mr. Sheehan responded that there was, but he has not seen it yet. He said he understands there is both a short version and a long version. He agreed that the CGCA could circulate the video when it becomes available.

**Thanks again Dora and Shelly** for all you do on behalf of the CGCA.

**Next Meeting** - October 27, 2025 at 7:30 PM via Zoom.