

# The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

Founded in 1947 to determine community opinion on civic matters and coordinate community action thereon and to plan and promote the general welfare of the community embraced within Union Free School District #6.

Post Office Box 1161

Scarsdale, New York 10583

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EDGEMONT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**June 6, 2011**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Edgemont Community Council, Inc. was held at the Edgemont High School, June, 2011, in the teachers' lounge. The following officers and directors were present: Robert Bernstein, Marc Ackerman, Karen Kelly, Jonathan Faust, John Sganga, John Blakley, Sr., Geoff Loftus, Robert Klerer, Jonathan Kelly, Andrea Weiss, Greg Adams, Jon Coleman and Robert Klerer.

Officers and Directors not in attendance Greg Adams, Todd Garvelink, Schuyler Kraus and Larry Rusoff.

Civic Associations represented: Longview (), Fort Hill (Robin Schaffer), Cotswold (Laura Ricci-Warren), Greenridge (), Old Edgemont (), Northern Greenville (), Southern Greenville (), Central Park Avenue ().

Guests: Arnold Laubich, Michelle McNally, Madelon O'Shea, David DePietto, Susan Newman, Laura Cooperman, Dick Crain, Nick DiCicco (came late).

The May Minutes were approved, unanimously.

The Treasurer's Report, indicating a total \$4,053.57 of cash in the bank was accepted.

The School Budget passed. With 78% voting yes, it was one of the highest approval rates in Westchester County; Marc Ackerman gave a report on civic association representatives on the School Board Nominating Committee.

Geoff Loftus gave a report of the meeting of the new ECC officers with Paul Feiner. Paul said he would not support Fire Department consolidation for Edgemont (Greenville FD); Planning Commissioner Thomas Madden said that he is not in favor of greater residential density on

Member Associations  
The Central Park Avenue Association  
The Cotswold Association  
Edgemont Association  
Fort Hill Association  
Greenridge Association  
Longview Civic Association  
Northern Greenville Association  
Southern Greenville Association

# The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

Founded in 1947 to determine community opinion on civic matters and coordinate community action thereon and to plan and promote the general welfare of the community embraced within Union Free School District #6.

Post Office Box 1161

Scarsdale, New York 10583

Central Avenue in Edgemont, but thought it was a possibility in Hartsdale. Geoff made it very clear to both Paul and Tom that Edgemont does not want any surprises on development.

Bob Bernstein gave an update on the state 2% tax cap proposal. For the school district budget, the proposed cap could be overridden only if the budget is approved by 60% or more of those voting. For the town budget, all that would be required to override the cap is a simple majority of three town board members voting in favor.

Bob reported that the town board has approved an increase in water district rates by more than 70%, effective immediately. The sudden increase is needed to cover increases in costs and to repay the Town \$4 million in subsidies that have been used to keep town water rates artificially low for the past two years. The Town says increases in water costs from New York City were not passed through to water customers when they should have been. The water district covers most of unincorporated and the Village of Irvington. Private water companies service the rest of the Town.

On June 20, Public works commissioners Victor Carosi, who is in charge of the water district, offered to attend a special meeting of the ECC to answer questions about the water rate increase (what is real cost, magnitude of problem). Planning commissioner Thomas Madden has also offered to attend to discuss the status of the Town's proposed comprehensive plan.

The Board voted unanimously to have the special meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Laura Cooperman and Sue Newman spoke about the State Tax Cap. The State Tax Cap would be the lower of either 2% or the inflation rate. Many school districts are opposed to this. They are circulating petitioners; timing is critical. One of the reasons Edgemont school taxes have been increasing is that we get virtually no state support (less than 5%), while the district continues to be subject to unfunded state mandates that exceed the amount of state aid. Sue believes that a get out the vote campaign may be able to deal with getting the necessary 60% approval to override the cap, but it will not be easy. At present, there will be no exclusions from the cap for tax certioraris which alone accounted for 1.6% of Edgemont's 2.3% hike this year. There would also be no adjustment for enrollment increases, unless new houses are built, and in any event, the adjustment would be minimal. There is no addressing of mandate relief. At present, the only exception from tax cap costs is for an increase in pension costs, but that exception is limited.

Member Associations  
The Central Park Avenue Association  
The Cotswold Association  
Edgemont Association  
Fort Hill Association  
Greenridge Association  
Longview Civic Association  
Northern Greenville Association  
Southern Greenville Association

# The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

Founded in 1947 to determine community opinion on civic matters and coordinate community action thereon and to plan and promote the general welfare of the community embraced within Union Free School District #6.

Post Office Box 1161

Scarsdale, New York 10583

As an alternative to a tax cap, Sue said she favored circuit breakers, which is a form of property tax relief that could be given to property owners on limited incomes. While this proposal is no longer under consideration, she and others think it should be. Sue Newman thinks the best way to influence the members of the state legislature before a final vote on the tax cap is through signatures on a petition. The Board voted to put a petition on our Facebook page.

Andrea provided an update on house sales. She said that as of the end of May 2011, there were only 16 sales in Edgemont versus 60 in Scarsdale. (Scarsdale is twice the size of Edgemont in terms of residential properties).

There was a brief discussion about the fact that property tax rates for comparably priced homes in Edgemont and Scarsdale are currently substantially higher in Edgemont than they are in Scarsdale and whether this may be hurting Edgemont's home sales. Bob reported that school taxes in Scarsdale and Edgemont have increased at approximately the same rate over the past five years; over the same period, however, municipal taxes in Greenburgh increased at a substantially higher rate than municipal taxes in Scarsdale (nearly 50% vs. about 30%). Dick Crain said the difference in rate of increase between Greenburgh and Scarsdale isn't significant because municipal taxes are about 18% of the total tax bill, while school taxes are slightly over 60%.

Bob said that the Planning Board would be considering on June 15 an application to replace the abandoned gas station at Old Army and Central Avenue with a combination gas station and convenience store to be operated by Cumberland Farms.

The Town is proposing to exempt the former site of Frank's Nursery, which is now owned by the Town, from the Town's Zoning Code. The Town is considering leasing the site, which is located in a residential neighborhood along Dobbs Ferry Road, for truck storage. Another company is interested in developing the property as a sports complex.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20.

Member Associations  
The Central Park Avenue Association  
The Cotswold Association  
Edgemont Association  
Fort Hill Association  
Greenridge Association  
Longview Civic Association  
Northern Greenville Association  
Southern Greenville Association