

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 EDMONT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

December 6, 2010

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Edgemont Community Council, Inc. was held at the Edgemont High School, November 1, 2010, in the teachers lounge. The following officers and directors were present: Robert Bernstein, Mac Ackerman, Jonathan Faust, Karen Kelly, Larry Rusoff, Schuyler Kraus, Andrea Weiss, Robert Klerer, Johnathan Kelly and Greg Adams.

Officers and Directors not in attendance: John Spanga, John Coleman

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

Guests: Edey McCarthy (Town Assessor), Sue Newman, Mark Rosenblatt, William Greenawalt, Michelle McNally, Wasim Salimi, Arnold Laubach and others.

Bob Bernstein presided over the meeting and Karen Kelly took minutes. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.

Minutes – The minutes of November 1, 2010 were approved, as amended.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer's report was accepted. The ECC has \$5,475.33 in the bank, petty cash and the postage permit accounts.

Fundraising Event: The amount raised at the November 3, 2010 fundraising event at Frankie & Fanucci's was \$175. However given that it involved minimal effort on our part and no cost, the board approved unanimously another fundraising event in the spring. Jon Faust will contact them and see about a date.

School Board Nominating Committee – Marc Ackerman reported back that he has located another volunteer for the SBNC from the Central Avenue district, Brian Blum. Mr. Blum had previously been on his co-op board. The board voted unanimously to approve him. There is still an opening for North Greenville. Robyn Schaffer, and Marc Ackerman agreed, that Marc will contact the appropriate civic associations if any representatives are missing meetings.

Fire District Update – The Fire District Consolidation Committee has issued its report, and members also issued dissenting reports. All reports are available on the ECC website. The FDCC recommends administrative consolidation.

Member Associations

*The Central Park Avenue Association
Greenridge Association*

*The Cotswold Association
Longview Civic Association*

*Edgemont Association
Northern Greenville Association*

*Fort Hill Association
Southern Greenville Association*

Town Affairs – Bob Bernstein reported that burglaries continue and that there were drug arrests at the house in Evandale.

Bob Bernstein reported that the School District had referred to the ECC a request from the Town Board for input on whether or not to support a town-wide revaluation of residential and commercial properties. Town tax assessor Edye McCarthy gave a presentation on reassessment. Because the Town of Greenburgh has not assessed properties since the 1950's, many properties are not assessed at an amount which reflects their market value. As time goes on, there are more and more discrepancies and many more certioraris are filed, resulting in (1) loss of tax revenue to the Town and all tax jurisdictions, including the school districts and (2) increased diminution of the tax base which means other properties must make up the difference. Ms. McCarthy explained the basic procedure for how assessments are updated (a mechanical process). The Town cannot legally reassess properties which are obviously underassessed (has been tried and lost in court), but property owners can and do protest overassessed properties. More owners are doing this, attorneys fees are increasing along with the tax loss.

In order to try to address this problem, the Town Board formed a committee in 2009 to look at this. Representing the Edgemont School District on the committee, which was chaired by Paul Sterne, a resident of Dobbs Ferry, were Susan Newman and Allan Pepper. The committee issued a report recommending reassessment, along with a series of changes in state law. Ms. McCarthy estimated that it would cost between \$3 and 4 million dollars for the town to reassess. Also it should be noted that current state law mandates that coops and condos be assessed via a lower formula. While a reassessment generally results in 1/3 of the homes being assessed at a higher amount, 1/3 lower, and 1/3 staying the same, Ms. McCarthy surveyed homes actually sold in Edgemont over the last five years and found the following:

174 (43%) were grossly under assessed
138 (34%) were within 10% of the appropriate assessment
93 (23%) were grossly over assessed

In short, were there to be reassessment, nearly half of Edgemont households might receive a substantially higher assessment which could translate for those homeowners into higher town and county property taxes, while a little less than a quarter would see a reduction in their assessments, and lower taxes. Arnold Laubach expressed concern that Edgemont properties may have increased more proportionately than other sections of Greenburgh. Ms. Newman pointed out that regardless of how individual Edgemont properties might be impacted, re-assessment would result in a fairer tax situation than is currently the case because those living in homes that are now grossly under assessed are actually being subsidized by their neighbors whose homes are either over assessed or properly assessed.

By conducting a re-assessment, the Town and School District would be eligible to implement a homestead exemption. The purpose of the homestead exemption is to protect homeowners from the impact of a reassessment that might result in a substantial reduction in the value of commercial properties as compared to residential properties. For example, if 60% of a school district's tax base is residential and 40% is commercial, and as a result of reassessment, 80% of

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the base became residential and 20% were commercial, homeowners would immediately see a substantial increase in their school property taxes to make up the difference. Under the homestead exemption, however, homes and commercial property would be placed in different classes, and the percent of tax paid by each class in the year prior to the reassessment would be the same for the first year after the reassessment, and then change slightly every year after that, so as to minimize the impact over time. If the Town elected the homestead exemption, the school district could also (but if the Town did not elect, the school district could not). There are pros and cons to electing to adopt the homestead exemption. Some communities believe the protection given homeowners at the expense of commercial property owners would encourage local businesses to leave. In addition, the homestead exemption treats certain multifamily dwellings, such as condominiums, currently treated as commercial properties, as residential properties. That change in treatment may result in a substantial increase in property taxes for such housing units, which may be problematic in certain communities. The Village of Bronxville elected not to adopt the homestead exemption; the Town of Rye, on the other hand, has adopted the exemption.

Ms. McCarthy said that any townwide reassessment on the part of the Town of Greenburgh would require that assessments be constantly updated so as to be fair to all property owners and avoid a repeat of what led to the current situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00.

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