

# *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**

**September 12, 2011**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Edgemont Community Council, Inc. was held at the Greenville Elementary School, September 12, 2011, in library. The following officers and directors were present: Geoff Loftus, Robert Bernstein, Marc Ackerman, Alex Clarke, Matt Jaffe, Greg Adams, Aubrey Graf-Daniels, Monica Sganga, John Blakley, Sr., Jon Guttenberg, Robert Klerer, Robin Schaffer, Jonathan Kelly, Peter Mellis, Joan Pachner, and Todd Garvelink.

Officers and Directors not in attendance: Schuyler Kraus, Larry Rusoff, Karen Kelly, Jonathan Faust, and Andrea Weiss.

Civic Associations represented: Longview (x), Fort Hill (x), Cotswold (x), Greenridge (x), Old Edgemont (x), Northern Greenville (), Southern Greenville (), Central Park Avenue ().

Guests: Arnold Laubich, Madelon O'Shea.

Geoff Loftus called the meeting to order and Bob Bernstein took minutes. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.

**Minutes** – Mr. Loftus said approval of the minutes of the two meetings held in June would be put off until next month because copies were inadvertently not included with the agenda for tonight's meeting.

**Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Adams reported that we have a total of 123 paid members, and \$4,617.80 in the bank and postal permits.

**Candidates' Acknowledgement** -- Mr. Blakley introduced the following candidates for town judge in tomorrow's Democratic Primary: Delores Scott Brathwaite, Bonnie Orden, Sandra Forster, Walter Rivera and Doris Friedman (who arrived later). Each gave a short presentation. Mr. Blakley also introduced Sherron Fantauzzi, a candidate for town clerk, and Ms. Fantauzzi gave a short presentation. Mr. Blakley said Arlene Gordon-Oliver, a candidate for town judge, and Judith Beville, a candidate for town clerk, had also been invited to attend, but had other commitments.

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The Cotswold Association  
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**SBNC Update --** Mr. Ackerman said that there were two school board members whose terms were ending this June, Lisa Wexler, who will have served one three-year term, and Gerry Stoughton, who has already served one term and will be completing the remaining two-years left on Allan Pepper's term. Mr. Ackerman did not know yet whether either will be seeking another term. As far as membership is concerned, Mr. Ackerman reported that the SBNC currently has representatives and alternates from all civic associations except Northern Greenville, Southern Greenville and Central Park Avenue. He said that Southern Greenville is planning to hold its annual meeting on Sept. 18 and is expected to choose representation at that time. Mr. Ackerman said he will continue to advertise for candidates to serve from Northern Greenville. As for Central Park Avenue, Mr. Ackerman said he would recommend the ECC reappointing George Rho and Brian Blum for one-year terms.

**RESOLVED**, on motion by Ms. Graf-Daniels, seconded by Mr. Bernstein, the ECC unanimously reappoint George Rho and Brian Blum to serve as Central Park Avenue's SBNC representatives for the 2011-12 school year.

Mr. Schaffer raised a question concerning the residency of one of the SBNC representatives duly elected to serve by the Longview Association. Mr. Ackerman explained that the individual in question had been duly certified in writing as Longview's representative, having been elected at an annual meeting of the Longview Association and that, in accordance with SBNC bylaws, she would be recognized as Longview's representative.

**Town Affairs –** Mr. Bernstein first gave a brief overview of the Town's capital budget, and the anticipated 5% increase in town property taxes for unincorporated Greenburgh.

**RESOLVED**, on motion by Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Mr. Garvelink, the ECC unanimously agreed as follows:

**Whereas**, the Town Supervisor has recommended a "capital" budget for 2011 to borrow \$7.4 million, of which more than half is to cover judgments against the Town, including \$2 million for additional cleanup at Taxter Ridge and \$2.5 million to cover expected tax cert judgments and settlements;

Whereas, no money is being appropriated to repair or replace any of the Town's aging water mains, or for curbing, sidewalks, and drainage areas;

Whereas, there is also no money allocated to address problems at the Town Court, including inadequate lighting, security and parking, that is preventing the Town Court from holding sessions at night to address the huge traffic ticket problem;

Whereas, the amount of money for road repair is being cut \$500,000 to \$1 million which means, because of the continued high cost of asphalt, that even more town roads will continue to deteriorate;

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Whereas, at the same time, the Town Board has no plans to eliminate the Town's two separate recreation departments, each with its own separate commissioners and staff, programs, day camps, and facilities; there are no plans to eliminate the Town's after school program, even though all the Town's school districts already have their own such programs; and the Town will apparently continue to provide free bus service at taxpayer expense for children in the Greenburgh Central school district who wish to attend the Town's after school program;

Whereas, the Town is also expected to continue funding its own SWAT team, even though the county already provides one, and the Town is again planning to provide taxpayer subsidized meals on wheels to residents of the Towns of Mount Pleasant and Eastchester, instead of privatizing the program so that taxpayers pay only for meals on wheels to senior citizens living in Greenburgh.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That we, the directors of the Edgemont Community Council respectfully request that the Town Board immediately restore money to the Town's capital budget for 2011 to address the Town's decaying infrastructure and offset any increase in town spending resulting from such borrowing by appropriating less money for Town programs that duplicate services provided by the county and schools.

Mr. Bernstein also briefly discussed the Cumberland Farms dispute, noting that the Town was planning to sidestep charges that, in granting a special permit to allow Cumberland Farms to reopen a gas station and operate a convenience store at the corner of Old Army Road and Central Avenue, it was violating the Zoning Code, by introducing a change to the Zoning Code that would give property owners along Central Avenue the right to operate a gas station at any time by "special permit." Mr. Bernstein suggested that a better alternative might be to amend the code in order to permit gas stations along Central Avenue that need to close for more than six months for purposes of renovating the right to reopen by special permit.

Mr. Bernstein next discussed the backlog of at least 80,000 traffic tickets in town court, the potential recovery of several million dollars in revenue, and the Town's apparent decision to rely only on interns to process the backlog instead of hiring temporary personnel to expedite the matter, as well as the lack of town resources be allocated to improve lighting, security and parking at Town Court so that the judges could address the backlog by holding night court.

**RESOLVED**, upon motion by Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Mr. Adams, the ECC unanimously agreed to respectfully request that the Town Board appropriate the necessary resources to hire paid personnel to deal with the backlog of traffic tickets and to appropriate the necessary funds to improve lighting, security and parking so that the Town Court can operate a night court to handle the backlog.

Mr. Laubich suggested that it might also be a good idea if the Town Board were to impose a limited form of amnesty so that those paying the tickets could receive a discount for not contesting the charges.

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Mr. Bernstein reported that the Town Board has apparently decided not to reappoint Nicholas DeCicco to a second term on the Zoning Board. DeCicco had been found guilty of an ethics violation earlier this year. Mr. Bernstein also said that Jordan Glass had not attended any Zoning Board meetings since the Ethics Board notified him that it was planning to find him guilty of an ethics violation. Mr. Bernstein reported that there had been a discussion with the town attorney about whether, if Mr. Glass resigns from the board, the ethics charge against him would be withdrawn.

Mr. Bernstein also provided updates on several lawsuits against the Town. One was brought by an Edgemont couple seeking to compel the Town to recalculate their sewer taxes. He also said a decision is expected soon on the Valhalla School District lawsuit against the Town.

Mr. Loftus said he planned to attend the upcoming “back to school” nights to discuss the ECC and said he would call on directors to attend in his place if he could not make it.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

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