

# *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**

**March 16, 2009**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Edgemont Community Council, Inc. was held at the Edgemont High School March 16, 2009. The following officers and directors were present: Bob Bernstein, Michelle McNally, Lisa Wexler, David Stern, Karen Kelly, John Blakely, Todd Gravelink.

Officers and Directors not in attendance: John Sganga, Larry Rusoff, David Younger, Chris Klerer, Madelon O'Shea, Andrea Weiss

Civic Associations represented: Longview (), Fort Hill (Robin Schaffer), Cotswold (Elizabeth Graif), Greenridge (), Old Edgemont (Frank Kaiman), Northern Greenville (), Southern Greenville (), Central Park Avenue ().

Resident: Robert Klerer

Guests: Linda Schur, Livable Communities, WJCS; Michael Kolesar, Comptroller, Town of Greenburgh; Heather Murray, Scarsdale Inquirer.

Robert Bernstein presided over the meeting, and Karen Kelly took minutes. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM.

**Minutes** – The minutes of February 2 were approved as amended.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob Bernstein delivered an abbreviated report in the absence of John Sganga. The treasury is in good shape, and we will be paying for the recent announcements in the Scarsdale Inquirer. A motion was seconded and approved unanimously to take out a \$125 ad in the Spring High School Musical program of Guys and Dolls to congratulate the participants.

**SBNC:** The SNBC nominated Alan Pepper and Lisa Wexler for the two open school board positions.

**Silver Box Committee:** Bob will sent out an email to the Civic Association presidents regarding the committee and meetings.

**Website:** David will be updating, with help from Rob Klerer.

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### 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

## **Zoning and Planning.**

### **Dromore Road**

The owner of 62 Dromore Road, S & R Development Estates, has applied to the Zoning Board for a Use Variance to build a four story, 87 bedroom affordable housing apartment complex in the Dromore Road single-family zone. The applicant previously appeared before the Zoning Board to appeal the Planning Commissioner's determination that the property was zoned single-family, and that because of an error in the zoning map, the property mistakenly was shown to be in the Central Avenue zone. The Zoning Board upheld the Planning Commissioner's determination. S&R sued in federal court, claiming that the correction in zoning was an unlawful taking. The court dismissed the case without prejudice, holding that the owner had not exhausted his remedies with the Town.

The standards for a Use Variance require the applicant to demonstrate the following before the Zoning Board:

1. The applicant cannot obtain a reasonable return on the property without the variance;
2. The hardship is unique;
3. Granting the variance would not alter the character of the neighborhood; and
4. The hardship was not self-created.

Because this application requires site plan review, it must also be submitted to the Planning Board. Under SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act), the application requires a coordinated review among all involved agencies. The Planning Board is taking steps to establish itself as lead agency for the project, and has preliminarily determined that the application is a Type 1 action under SEQRA, meaning that an Environmental Impact Statement may be required. Some of the environmental impacts include traffic and surface and groundwater quality and quantity. Accordingly, the application will first go to the Planning Board to start the review process before proceeding to the Zoning Board.

The ECC will work with interested parties, including Civic Associations, Greenburgh Nature Center, the monastery, Scarsdale Woods, as the process unfolds.

### **Linda Schulz – Livable Communities**

Ms. Schultz is with the WJCS which is working with the Town of Greenburgh as part of an initiative by the County to help with Livable Communities for Seniors. One in 5 residents in the County is a senior and some may want to "age in place." They are forming a committee to consider issues, including transportation, taxes STAR, shared housing, reverse mortgages etc. She would like someone from Edgemont to join the committee. It would involve a minimum of 4 meetings per year, with the opportunity to do more. Bob will help with putting out information at the High School performance this week.

### **Michael Kolesar – Comptroller, Town of Greenburgh**

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Mr. Kolesar spoke on year to date Town finances and the projected tax increase next year. The mortgage recording tax to date is down 38% from last year, resulting in a \$1-2 million shortfall (in addition to the takedown of \$3 million of fund balance). The Highway Fund has exhausted its annual budget, due to the excess of snow we have had, in addition to the takedown of \$800,000 from the Highway Fund Balance.

Fund Balance policies have in the past helped towns maintain a good credit rating, which is helpful in reducing the cost of borrowing. Greenburgh's Fund Balance Policy was essentially copied from Mt. Kisco's. In the past Standard & Poor noted that the Town will try to live within its means.

The TOV budget started with a Fund Balance of \$6.8 million, but the books have not been closed yet for 2008. The Town Entire budget this year is using Fund Balance earmarked for the courthouse. The Library Fund balance is mostly gone.

Looking at 2010, if there is 0% increase in expenditures, and no takedown of fund balance, taxes will increase about 5 to 6%. With a 3% increase in expenditures and no takedown of fund balance, there would be an 11.2% tax increase.

Historically, the town's budgeting policy was to "low-ball" revenues and leave room in the budget which would result in an increase in the Fund Balance. In 2008, revenue and expenditure projections were more realistic.

Mike went on to discuss the basics of personnel costs, which are the majority of the expenditures (approximately 50%). The pension expense is in essence a percentage determined by the state, and it would be expected to go up in the present environment. The Town is looking to increase the pension and health contributions by employees.

Mike discussed the impact of the Funds borrowing short-term from one another, and said that it did save money. It has eliminated trips to the bond market (each one has costs). In order to access the bond market, the Town prepares an "Official Statement." Mike did not have any comments on the latest draft of such.

Mike went on to indicate that he was not involved with the political decisions of where to cut costs, and that he did not agree with the across the board approach.

He also said that his office does not have control over receipts of outside departments, such as parks and recreation and TDYCC. The departments do not have adequate controls.

Mike went on to say that the accountants engaged to perform an audit of the Town Court issued a disclaimer, which was very rare.

## **Other Business**

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Bob Bernstein provided updates on a few items. The proposed business tax will not be put into effect. The Town will request an opinion from the State Comptroller regarding the legality of a payment to the Valhalla School District, pursuant to the District's latest request, after the previous finding by the Comptroller that the earlier payments were not allowed. Opinions from Herb Rosenberg and Bob will be sent with the town's letter..

The reservoir along Ardsely Road will be enclosed, pursuant to EPA requirements.

The reimbursement of a portion of the expense to the Edgemont Association for checking the ice for skating at Crane Pond during two weekends this winter will be discussed at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be March 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00.

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