

Village of Mamaroneck – Committee for the Environment Meeting Minutes – FINAL
12/16/14

Attending: Phil Horner, Marc Karell, Sarah Richards, Joan Heilman, Martin Hain,
Kristin Carpenter, Village Planner Greg Cutler, Trustee Liaison: Dave Finch
Absent: Shonna Keogan, Monica Barach, Cathy Hiller

November Minutes: Approved.

Administrative items: The appointments for three new members of the CFTE were approved by the Board of Trustees and the Mayor. Kristin Carpenter and Martin Hain will serve the three-year terms of Jean Peron and Jillian Ammerman who will not continue. Phil Horner will serve another three-year term. Katie McManus, whose term expires December 2015, has resigned from the Committee, and has been replaced for the remainder of the term by Maria Karsou.

Agenda items:

Committee webpage. It was agreed that the Committee’s webpage could contain more relevant content and can be made easier to use. Greg stated that Dan Sarnoff, who is in charge of the whole VOM website, is planning to implement a major upgrade, which would allow the webpage to improve, as well. Shonna is in charge of content for the webpage. Martin, who has experience in such areas, has offered to help.

Harbor Island Conservancy. Mr. Fred Longacre, who heads the Harbor Island Conservancy, was invited to attend, share views, and see how the two can work together. Mr. Longacre could not make the meeting due to a family emergency, but will come at a future date.

Presentation by Save the Sound and VOM. On Dec. 3, a meeting was held about the status of the water quality of the streams feeding Long Island Sound. About 40 people attended, including the Mayor and the Board of Trustees. The session was filmed by LMC-TV. The session was considered positive in terms of transmitting information. There were a few discrepancies in the water quality data presented (Save the Sound measured some areas of high pollutants, while VOM measured baseline levels in the same areas). The two will compare notes and determine whether the time in between measurements may explain discrepancies.

Save the Sound made recommendations which it will incorporate into a report: a recommended “To Do” list for VOM for 2015. Phil will review the report and write a summary of CFTE. The Save the Sound report is expected to urge VOM to use the Army Corps of Engineers flood plan report to address private sewers and upgrade local water infrastructure (find grants).

Release of crushed stone from Harbor Island Park tennis courts. On Dec. 15, the NYSDEC Region 3 sub-office in White Plains issued its response to VOM’s letter containing short-and long-term actions to resolve the NOV for the release of material into Long Island Sound. The NYSDEC agreed that swales were an acceptable short-term action, but that sandbag filters were not acceptable. The NYSDEC stated that additional swales would be acceptable. A letter re-stating the committed short-term actions must be issued by VOM by Jan. 9, 2015.

Other water issues. A resolution was passed by VOM as required by a Consent Decree with the NYSDEC stating that the Village will spend at least \$350,000 per year on upgrading sewer lining. There was also a resolution authorizing the use of FEMA funds to study and develop plans to improve the water quality of the Guion and Beaver Brooks.

A draft of LWRP was sent to the NYS Dept of State to determine preliminarily what they think. It was thought to be a “place holder” to meet the Dec. 31, 2014 submittal deadline. It is understood that it needs to be modified before a “final” is submitted. There is a concern whether that draft will be released for public comment.

A concern was brought up about the use of salt on local roads for snow. Salt will wash into the Sound and the local rivers and may have adverse impacts. Greg was not aware of any laws that prohibit or regulate the use of salt in areas near bodies of water. VOM also uses brine as a pre-treatment of streets before a snowfall, to prevent snow from sticking to the surface. Brine contains less salt. VOM will research potential alternatives.

A discussion was held about park benches at Harbor Island Park, and that the newer ones were being placed on a larger and larger concrete (impervious) base. A citizen sent an email demonstrating this and showing pictures, which were distributed. Older benches had no apparent concrete base, while the newest ones had a concrete larger in size than the bench itself. Greg said he would have VOM research why this is occurring. Greg stated that VOM has looked into pervious concrete and related materials. VOM is investigating a potential future project to create a pervious pavement parking lot for kayak access at Rushmore Park. VOM will look into whether future new park benches can be anchored with a pervious concrete base. Although not directly related to park benches, Martin mentioned a new technology that can replace gutters on homes to direct rain water into a larger yard area, rather than a small, intense stream which could oversaturate and flood an area, called Rain Handler.

Solarize Westchester. The new non-profit group Sustainable Westchester, of which VOM is a member, will shortly begin its first project, Solarize Westchester, a program that has been successfully implemented in other municipalities around the nation where for a short period (generally, 4 months), a vetted vendor of solar panels is given exclusivity to sell solar PV panels under the program at a guaranteed low price and with expedited permitting (a decision by the Building Dept and Architectural Board within 2 weeks) and reduced fees. The Town of Mamaroneck and Village of Larchmont submitted a joint proposal and was awarded entry into this program (one of four communities in Westchester). They reached out to VOM to join the program, but only if VOM would commit to expedited permitting and reduced fees. At a working meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Mayor and Board agreed, and will enter the program.

The vendor(s) for this program are currently being vetted, and a decision is expected by next week. Marc is on the sub-committee reviewing vendors. It is expected that the program will cover both residential and commercial buildings. The program will begin Sun., Jan. 25, and last for 18 weeks. The launch event will be a gathering at Tequila Sunrise in Larchmont on that date at 2 pm.

The vendors will be present and demonstrations and educational material about solar PV will be distributed.

Recycling. The question was posed whether leaf mulching, which has been promoted with signs and other materials throughout the Village, was having an impact. Greg said he would check whether there was any measureable decline in leaf pickup this year. The question was posed about how we can promote this more. Someone asked whether it was right to have residents pay for leaf pickup, but others thought that was either premature or a bad idea. It was understood that getting people and gardeners to mulch leaves is a long-term educational idea.

Joan, Phil, and Kristin re-stated that they felt that the Recycling Center is too tight with bins overflowing, and a rearrangement may be in order. The foreman stated that there is not adequate space to fit an additional container. Dave mentioned considerations for long-term growth and purchasing of land and potentially moving the recycling center as it relates to the upcoming study in the Industrial Area. The Village office will bring the issue up internally, in light of the idea to increase the frequency of collections to alleviate overflowing bins.

Earlier this year there was agreement that there is a good opportunity to install a fabric recycling bin in the Tompkins parking lot, located at the bottom of Prospect across from House of Honda. A vendor would pay for a bin there and regularly pick up and haul away fabric. Everyone, including VOM, appears to favor the action. CFTE is waiting for VOM to take action and allow the company to install the bin.

Greg stated that new recycling brochures are being prepared. However, VOM is looking for qualified Spanish translators to complete the translation, and that is why they have not been issued yet.

I-95 construction runoff. CFTE was told that the NYSDEC notified NYSDOT that they need to improve runoff capture. at the I-95 ramp on Mamaroneck Avenue. CFTE asked that the Village management physically check to see if proper runoff control has been taken. The NYSDOT has made some physical changes to the location, but it is unsure how effective they are and whether they meet NYSDEC requirements. It was also noted that the NYSDOT trucks, which work at night, are very noisy, and probably a nuisance to nearby residents.

Deer problem. The Jay Heritage Center in Rye is conducting a study of the local deer problem. Nobody is aware of the results, if there are results. VOM will contact the Center to see if they have results and are ready to them.

TOD Project. The TOD overlay and zoning changes are adopted and any development projects that come in currently will work within the legislation—it is the current law. However, Trustee Finch indicated a possible scenario, pending the next Board of Trustees work session and subsequent regular board meeting, could be a “suspension” for further independent environmental review, and consideration of possible amendments.as the Board recognized that some type of environmental impact study needs to be performed to assess impacts on the area

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aquifer and on flooding. It may not need to be a formal “EIS”, but some type of evaluation of impacts, potentially requiring a professional hydro-geologist, may need to be performed.

Sub-committee (“Team”) reports:

Water Quality: Kristin will join Phil on this sub-committee, and will be joined by non-CFTE members Jean Peron, Kathy Desmond, and Sara Evans (former members). CFTE found it acceptable to allow non-CFTE member citizens join sub-committees, as long as they are headed by CFTE members. This sub-committee will continue its work from the past, particularly concerning the USEPA Consent Order and the Save the Sound study.

Energy/Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): Marc and Laura are on this sub-committee. Marc is using information in the VOM carbon footprint report prepared earlier in 2014 to recommend areas of energy savings for the Village. It will issue a brief report with numerous recommendations for the Village management to review and decide which to implement. A draft report will be submitted to CFTE in advance of next month’s CFTE meeting for discussion.

Recycling: Joan, Monica, and Sarah are on this sub-committee. In addition to following up on the recycling issues discussed above (recycling center and textile recycling), this team wishes to focus on reducing VOM food waste. There is a pilot program currently ongoing in White Plains focused on restaurant food waste and separating it out to use to make compost for the City. Can this program be applied in VOM? Schools will be contacted, as well. The team will also make recommendations concerning excess pesticides and fertilizer use by VOM and residents.

Quality of life (noise, cleanliness, open space, parks, community garden) Cathy, Sarah, Martin are on this sub-committee. There are a number of issues they are interested in, and will meet to reduce the number to a manageable one. They have been introduced to Stephen Moser, a resident of the Town of Mamaroneck, who has done work for them to make our area more bicycle friendly.

Outreach/Education – Shonna, Martin are members of this sub-committee. They need to meet and coordinate plans for 2015. However, educational campaigns are the backbone of what CFTE wishes to do, so effective outreach and education will be important.

Meeting adjourned. Next CFTE meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015.