

VILLAGE OF MAMARONECK COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
July 18, 2023 Meeting

Members Present: David Freeman (Chair), Lou Young (Trustee), C, Dan Kushnick , Liam Robb O'Hagan (on phone), Jen LeClair, Lindsay Reitzes, Debbie Sullivan, Mandy Forlenza Sticos, **Absent:** Renee Crabtree, Christi Young, Katherine Dehais, Dinah Koehler.

Guests: Ellen Silver, Kristen Andersen. Michaela Loughran

The meeting is called to order at 7:36 p.m. at the VOM Courthouse.

Minutes of the June 20, 2023 Meeting are unanimously approved.

Report on Recent and Upcoming Events

- **Campaign for Energy Smart Homes event—September 24 (Debbie).** This will be at the Mamaroneck Library. Leah Roffman, the student volunteer, is working on both a press release and a flier. Sustainable Westchester will be helping with content. The event will also qualify for a CSC priority event, PE9 Climate Change Education and Engagement.
- **Monarch Festival—September 30 (Lindsay)** Mandy will be doing the Marketing. Lindsay is organizing the event overall. It is the same day as the Larchmont Food Truck Festival. Jerry states we can get one day permits for food trucks if needed, since only 7 trucks are currently approved at the Harbor. We will start earlier than last year 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to coordinate better with the Larchmont event. Jerry states that we can collect donations for plants, as long as there is signage to that effect. Vendors are able to sell at the Harbor if they have insurance and are cleared through Sally Roberts. Lindsay will check with Jeff about expanding the Milkweed Patch. We need to get a plaque for the Monarch Garden.
- **Repair Café—October 15 (Debbie)** This will be at the Senior Center again this year. We will need to be promoting the event.
- **Scheduling of Fall Community Cleanup event.** Date is to be Saturday, November 4, with a Raindate on Sunday, November 5. Dan will talk to Robert Ingenito about scheduling the shredder. Brief discussion on location of the event; Harbor Island vs Columbus or another park; TBD.

Report on Progress Towards CSC Certification. Ellen Silver briefly describes the CSC and CEC programs. We currently have 120 points which are needed for Bronze CSC. We need 3 priority items; currently we have 1 priority item, we are 90% there on the 2nd priority item, the Comprehensive Plan, and are looking at either EV charging

stations or a Climate Action Plan for the 3rd item. Dan, Liam, Ellen and Michaela have been working on the CAP. The next date for submission for the Bronze designation is January 2024. Then for Silver Designation, we will need an additional 180 points and 4 more priority actions.

- **Unified Solar Permit** At last night's BOT Work Session, Ellen presented on the Unified Solar Permit. It is a standardized permit which streamlines the process for both installers and customers. It will be up for a vote at the August 14th BOT meeting. There is a CEC grant connected to the Village adopting the USP. Jerry reports that 5 or 6 applications are typical each month. The VOM attorney needs to review the USP; if there are questions this could push the USP to the next session. Norah Lucas had questions about landmarked buildings at the presentation; Carolina Fonseca will look at this issue and get back to us.
- **EV Charging Station Delay** We contracted for 12 stations with Blink, but ConEd is behind on installation. Jerry is working with Jane Solnick at Con Ed trying to fast track 4 stations.
- **New Logo for CSC.** Ellen reports that a design has been selected by using Logo Tournament.

Discuss possibility of grant application(s) Updates. Jerry states that the CFTE and CSC need to articulate to our grant writer what kind of grants we are interested in. If we tell her our objectives, she can look for grants in those areas. Jerry agrees to ask her to attend the September 19 meeting. He suggests that she and Sara Powell talk about grants that are appropriate for us. Small grants can be handled directly if the Committee submits them to Jerry's office.

Leaf Blower Policy. Kristin Andersen from the VOL Environmental Committee presents on their Leaf Blower Policy and discussed the possibility of a tri municipal policy to decrease confusion for landscapers and residents. The VOL's policy completely bans gas blowers and allows electric blowers from March 15 to April 15, and October 15 to December 15. They highly recommend mulch mowing, even for driveways, and to stop municipal leaf pick up, which they are working toward. She reports that the policy has been very successful. They did a lot of education before implementing the policy; first pointing out all the negatives of leaf blowing, then all the positives. They fine property owners, landscapers and the crew. She states the community really appreciates the quiet, and the Village uses it as a selling point, especially with so many people working from home. The VOL municipality also follows the policy.

Jerry reported that Larchmont is very aggressive in policing leaf blower calls; the calls are frequent. He is not sure that the VOM police are ready to be as aggressive. He will be having a blitz date for violations. Much more education is needed in the VOM before we are ready to adopt a policy similar to Larchmont's. We are currently planning the gas blower buy back. The Village has just signed for 3 electric leaf blowers. Jerry states that the Village now has the structure to work on implementing the policy. The leaf piles in the fall are expensive, and they encourage blowing. Lou relayed to the Committee a recent BOT discussion regarding a ban on gas powered blowers. The CFTE agrees it would support a ban on gas powered leaf blowers, but not a change in the dates that would allow electric blowers.

David suggests a subcommittee to look further into promoting mulch mowing, moving away from gas blowers and eliminating leaf piles. Liam and David volunteer for the subcommittee; Jerry volunteers himself and Robert Ingenito.

The committee agrees that Step 1 is to eliminate gas blowers, promote mulch mowing, and keep the dates October 15 to May 15 for electric blowers. Long term goal is to move closer to the VOL policy. Jerry agrees that the Village can go all electric for its work.

Kristen reports that the VOM and TOM have the leaf blower ordinances under Noise Violations, while VOL has a separate section for Leaf Blower Regulations.

Leaf Blower Buyback. Jerry agrees that the Village will have 2 Buy Back days in the fall. Residents would turn in any type of gas powered lawn care equipment at the DPW for \$100 vouchers good for exchange for electric lawn care equipment at KBR and Foley's. The DPW will ensure that the gas equipment is disposed of properly. Jerry will see if the new Ace Hardware on Mamaroneck Avenue is also able to participate. David calls for a vote, and the Committee unanimously approves this proposal.

SLR. Per Jerry, SLR will be attending our September 19th meeting.

Taylor's Lane Jerry reports that he has proposed to the Town of Rye that the area of Taylor's Lane owned by the TOR be traded to us for needed work the Village would undertake on the Otter Bridge. David continues to follow up with Mike Murphy at DEC.

Strengthening Protection for Wetlands and Wetland Buffer Areas Per Jerry, Dan Sarnoff and Greg Cutler are looking into this, including collecting materials developed when this issue was considered previously, and will present it to the BOT on August 14.

Their report will be available August 11, which the CFTE members should review for any comments prior to their presentation.

Comprehensive Plan Jerry reports that public hearings are still open; he hopes to have the Plan discussed at the August 14 BOT meeting and finalized for approval at the September 12 BOT meeting.

Bike Lane Project. Jerry states that the reason the Village is not moving forward on this is that they have too many projects going on right now. He feels the grant needs to be supported by all 3 municipalities and the 2 school districts. The next step is to have Mike Smeets present to a joint meeting with the 3 municipalities and 2 school districts.

I-95 flood mitigation issues Next meeting with Thruway will be after the SLR report comes out.

Lou raises 2 issues that Trustee Leilani Yizer-Reid asked to have addressed. She proposed that all the committee chairs have a joint meeting. The Committee agrees that this is a good idea. She also asked that there be some instructional materials on native plants for residents. Mandy proposes a subcommittee on beatification; she would like signage in the parks which will need funding. Jerry suggests bringing ideas to the BOT on March 15 when the budgets are discussed. Alternatively Lou can petition the BOT for funds.

The meeting is adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Sullivan