

VILLAGE OF MAMARONECK COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
September 19, 2023 Meeting

Members Present: David Freeman (Chair), Jerry Barbiero (VOM Manager), Dan Kushnick , Liam Robb O'Hagan, Jen LeClair, Lindsay Reitzes, Debbie Sullivan, Mandy Forlenza Sticos, Renee Crabtree, Christi Young, Katherine Dehais, Dinah Koehler. **On phone:** Lou Young (Trustee). **Guests via Zoom:** Miguel Castellanes and Mark Carabetta (SLR), Taryn Pronko (Millenium)

The meeting is called to order at 7:32 p.m. at the VOM Courthouse.

Minutes of the July 18, 2023 Meeting are unanimously approved as corrected.

Presentation by SLR. Miguel Castellanes presents key points from the SLR Flood Mitigation and Resilience Report. The presentation focuses on the need to study the acquisition of property to convert areas around the Sheldrake and Mamaroneck Rivers into flood plains. Discussion focus is on the interconnection of these plans with the CFTE's proposed Greenway and the need to work with the ACOE integrating both the SLR plan and the Greenway plan. Castellanes offered the example from the report of returning the Jefferson Ave. parking lot to a floodplain function by removing the asphalt and lowering the ground by 3 ½ to 5 feet. Kate observed that this was very close to the proposal that she and Tony Gelber prepared in June '22 which was presented to the BOT and verbally accepted by the Army Corps. Jerry stated that having SLR's report supports the implementation of Kate and Tony's by the Corps. This environmentally beneficial plan is a central element of the Greenway.

Presentation by Taryn Pronko on Grant Funding. Taryn will look at the SLR report and see where money can come from to fund projects. Her process is to look at grants available and see if any fit our needs. She reports that she is currently working on a Food Scrap grant to purchase a truck for pick-up, and on NYS RISC Program grants for predevelopment activities, i. e. engineering and feasibility studies. She is also working on grants that, along with VOM funding, would provide for raising houses in floodplain areas. She advises that she has not looked at grant possibilities for the Greenway project as she lacks information about it. David suggested that Kate send her information. Liam brings up grants for CAP and bike lanes. Dinah and David raise the issue of having a separate meeting to work on grant issues; Jerry supports the idea and will look into how it can be arranged.

Report on Recent and Upcoming Events.

- EnergySmart Homes: Debbie reports there were 28 attendees at the very successful event on September 17.
- Monarch Festival on September 30th; rain date October 1.: Lindsay reports that there are 1200 registrations. Butterfly Milkweed has been declared the official flower of the

VOM. Jen has painted 2 large Monarch butterfly wing structures for people to have their pictures taken with. Jen used exterior paint and they can be varnished if needed. Jerry says they can be installed permanently. He asks for some places to be identified. Food Scrap bins can be sold at the Festival; Jerry will be helping to man the CFTE booth to sell them.

- Zero Waste Event Policy. David brings up recommendations provided by Ellen Silver on having a Zero Waste Policy at VOM events, both indoor and outdoor. Examples include compostable or reusable dishes and silverware, stations for refillable water bottles rather than having plastic water bottles, composting bins. Vendors would have to comply with regulations. The Committee unanimously recommends that the VOM adopt a Zero Waste Policy to be used at events when possible.
- Proposed Mamaroneck Greenway. Kate reports that Rockland Pocket Park preparations are underway; ribbon cutting on October 18. She presents a site plan for Nostrand Pocket. The river bank area has been planted; the center area will be further filled in with sand and gravel, and large wooden planters are going to be built for native plants to be planted in the spring.
- I-95 flood mitigation issues. There is a Zoom meeting with the Thruway on Thursday.
- Leaf Blower Issues. David reports that at the last work session the BOT agreed to a ban on gas blowers entirely and to allow electric blowers only from October 1 to May 15. This would be put into effect in October 2024. The Committee agrees that we support the BOT's decision on this. This is moving in the direction of Larchmont's policy of banning all gas blowers and allowing electric blowers for 6 weeks in the spring and 2 months in the fall. Our goal is to move toward this with the eventual aim of having the same regulations in the 3 municipalities. David will be the spokesperson for the CFTE at the next BOT session when this is on the agenda either 9/26 or 10/10. Liam points out that the lesson we heard from Larchmont at our last meeting was how important education is. Jerry reports they did a mass mailing on the issue to landscapers. The current practice in the VOM is to send the violation to the landscaper even though the current law says either the landowner or the landscaper can be fined. Judge Derrico wrote to the VOM, ccing the CFTE, about the recent spate of leaf blower violations which had come before her. David proposed writing back to her stressing the importance of the law in regard to noise, environmental harm and health concerns; to discuss the issue of landowner vs landscaper being the violator with discretion of enforcement being up to the VOM; to state our position of trying to move toward consistency across municipalities; and our move toward allowing electric blowers for part of the year. The Committee suggests attaching the Leaf Blower door hanger and a copy of the letter recently sent to landscapers. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously supported to move forward with the letter. Kate points out that the door hanger still needs to be added to the DPW information.
- Leaf Blower Buyback. Jerry reports the Buyback is scheduled for Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30 and Friday, October 4, and Saturday, October 5, at the DPW. It will be in the next newsletter. Only Foley's and KRB will be participating.
- Involvement with OCRA (Original Civic Research and Action) at MHS. David and Ellen Silver met with Joe Liberti to talk about mentoring MHS students on projects that last 1½

to 3 years. The Committee supports involvement with OCRA. Possible subjects that the Committee suggests are: the Greenway, Pollinator Gardens, the Food Scrap Program. Past OCRA projects have included: terms for local elections, educating 4th graders on participatory budgeting, proposing a county ban on plastic utensils.

- Taylors Lane. David spoke with Mike Murphy at the DEC, who has agreed to talk to the Remedial Project Manager to get movement on the site. Jerry reports that he and Lou met with leadership in Rye. They own about an acre of the site, while we hold about 6 acres. They are interested in selling or leasing their portion to the nursery. Jerry and Lou spoke with them about installing a solar field with passive recreation around the perimeter. The DEC will have a say in what happens.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted by,

Debbie Sullivan