

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
February 9, 2009**

2009 Officers

President:	Ray Carta	560-4650
Vice President:	Stan Feldman	523-8835
Treasurer:	Pat Kassten	589-8222
Recording Secretary	Carol Schwasnick	589-7455
Corresponding Secretary	Marilyn Triolo	589-5981

Board Members

Cathy Cohen
John Eder

Minutes Recorded by Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org

President Ray Carta called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Minutes were presented from last month's meeting. These have been posted on the website and hard copies are available up front. President Carta requested a motion to accept minutes as posted and presented. Chuck Triolo motion. Cathy Cohen seconded.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Carol Schwasnick gave updates on a few items.

Connetquot Fish Hatchery

Many of us participated in a letter writing campaign to Governor Paterson and the NY State Parks Department in support of continued operation of the fish hatchery, in response to the State's reluctance to issue a renewed permit for this season. Some of us received response letters in the mail from Ronald F. Foley, the Regional Director of Parks for the Long Island Region, which stated that the permit would not be renewed for this season due to IPN in the fish. This was echoed in a recent article in the Suffolk County News. In response, the Friends of Connetquot has stated that NY State incorrectly overestimates the threat to humans that IPN poses and that the State still has not acted in the best interest of the hatchery. Although Mr. Foley does end his letter on a positive note stating that the State recognizes the local and historical importance of the fish hatchery and they will look to ensure it operates in the future, we as a community will need to be diligent about staying on top of the State and making sure they follow through with their stated intent. Once something like this is shut down, it often becomes a victim of inertia – it is easier to do nothing to restore it rather than work to enable reopening. Going forward we will look to Friends of Connetquot to advise us as to how we may provide additional assistance as a community. The Friends are sending a few members to address the OCA membership as guest speakers for the March meeting.

Montauk Hwy sidewalk/drainage improvements

Ms. Schwasnick spoke to Jim Anthony at County Legislator Bill Lindsay's office as a follow up to Mr. Lindsay's visit in the fall. At that time, Mr. Lindsay had spoken about the Montauk Hwy. improvement project, which has already been completed for the leg between Bayport and West Sayville. He mentioned that plans were in development to go from West Sayville through Oakdale to the railroad bridge, the work would entail drainage and sidewalk upgrades on the North side of the road. The update is that the plans are still not completed; the project has run into a delay due to the state of the economy. Mr. Anthony advised that

it is still the intent of the County to fully develop design plans for the project, targeting a spring completion for this phase of the work. Once the plans are complete, the county will implement the work as funds are available. There is a thought to focus first on the Oakdale business district to address the concerns of the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce, and then fill in other areas. Secretary Schwasnick will check back with Mr. Anthony in the spring to see how plans are developing and if they can be made available to the membership for review. Ms. Schwasnick also discussed with Mr. Anthony what OCA members can do if they have a concern about potholes or the need for curbing, etc. along Montauk Hwy. or another County maintained road. Mr. Anthony advised that we can contact him directly with any concerns that we have regarding County maintained roadways.

Fix LIPA Coalition

Secretary Schwasnick had contacted the organization "Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE)" which champions many issues that affect us here in Oakdale, including those affecting waterways and pollution. The CCE is currently looking to put together a coalition of local organizations aimed at redesigning how LIPA operates and how it charges for electricity. This includes lobbying for federal bailout dollars to relieve ratepayers of a portion of the \$6B debt burden from the failed Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant project, increasing LIPA's focus on renewable energy sources, and on restructuring how it is managed and governed. Platform materials were distributed to the OCA membership via email and hardcopy, and we will vote at the March meeting on the OCA's participation in this Coalition. There is no cost, and we are not required to attend meetings, though we can send a delegate if we are able. The bottom line is that the CCE would like to enlist the support of as many local organizations as possible that are interested in driving change at LIPA. Please be present to vote in March on this important issue.

Town Report: John Eder

- No new applications have been made with the town.
- Sidewalks on west side of Oakdale-Bohemia Road (between LIRR station and the school): The town engineer will be inspecting the sidewalks soon; he will let planning know what his determination is.
- Nothing new on the CHASE bank at the old KFC site - an application was submitted for a building permit but has not yet been approved
- Rollstone Estates: process is moving forward at the county level, but purchase has not yet been made
- Dowling College and Bronco Charlie's: the same - that is, the special permit applications would not be scheduled for a decision until Bronco Charlie's is demolished
- Traffic signal at the intersection of Waterford Road and Oakdale-Bohemia Road: I will be contacting the Town Commissioner of Public Works, Division of Traffic Safety to see what our next step is

Mr. Eder also asked the Association if anyone had any specific topics that they would want Congressman Israel to address at our 04/13/2009 meeting. Please contact John Eder with your ideas.

President's Report: Ray Carta

The OCA had a table at the Bosti Wizards fundraiser. Thank you to Bob Mirro for organizing the table. We displayed our new banner concept and spoke to some community members.

Surveys have been placed out on the chairs this evening; it is very good to get these back. Please fill one out and return one, and feel free to take one back to another OCA member who could not attend this evening.

President Carta asked the membership if we want to bring back refreshments to the meeting. If we vote yes, someone has to run with it and organize it. On this vote, Ray makes a motion to bring back refreshments to the meeting. John Eder: friendly amendment: cap of \$50 per meeting. Do we vote yes to bring back the refreshments?

The vote was 10 for, 9 against. The vote was close but we have approved it for now. President Carta asked for volunteers to coordinate refreshments: To provide a case of water and some crackers etc. A member generously volunteered to do so for the March meeting.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Thomas Isles: Director of Suffolk County Dept of Planning

Mr. Isles discussed a study that was recently done on the Sunrise Corridor.

The study began with meeting of South Shore Alliance with Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy. The community has many concerns: there are many current applications for development, especially on the line between the Town of Islip and Town of Brookhaven including a Lowe's near Church St., on the south service road; and development of condos on 135 acres near Costco. The study looked at impacts to adjacent properties and traffic. Not too long ago there was a problem on the merge at the intersection of Montauk Hwy & Sunrise Hwy. Due to an accident, everything was jammed up and emergency vehicles could not get through. This also hit everybody very hard; people could not get out of their neighborhoods. In addition, overall traffic volume has grown very high, and Steve Levy asked that someone look at this comprehensively. The Suffolk County Dept. of Planning worked with the Towns, Suffolk County dept of Public Works, and the NY State DOT. First, the team looked at the economy of this area and population trends, etc. This was related back to development and land use. Discussions were held with the South Shore Civic Alliance. The area of study begins at intersection of Sunrise and the Southern State, all the way out to the Bellport outlets. The study area became 13 miles long. They looked at every property and land use along this corridor. Sunrise Hwy goes through Oakdale, Sayville, Holbrook, Patchogue, etc. – total of (14) communities touch Sunrise in this zone. The study was interesting because it looked at Sunrise itself, not the specific communities or specific notes in the corridor, and Sunrise was not looked at before to this extent. Facts include that there are 154,000 people living adjacent to Sunrise in this area. It includes two industrial areas – picking up the Vets Hwy and Yaphank industrial corridor areas, which represent 11% of jobs in the county. This is a significant population and employment center. Looking at population growth, we have only seen 1% growth per year since 2000. It's not on the outskirts of Phoenix AZ – which is seeing explosive growth of 10% per year. Looking at the types of jobs, they are only growing modestly. Study of the current corridor development reveals that 1/3 of the corridor is vacant land. Some parcels are right for or have pressures for redevelopment such as Island Hills Golf Course, or the driving range in Oakdale. There would not need to be a lot of investment in these parcels, they are easier to repurpose than parcels that have never been touched and are still in their natural state. The perception is that this stretch of Sunrise Hwy is all commercial, and there is 2.5M SF of retail development on Sunrise in this corridor right now. There is also 1.8M SF of industrial space, and over 3,000 housing units; two-third of those housing units were built since 1990. At one time there was a push for residential projects.

The next thing the department looked at is zoning in terms of what's possible and the markets - to assess individual market strength. Suffolk County overall has had one of the lowest vacancy rates in the country for industrial (4%). Although this has probably increased in somewhat in the current economy, it has generally been very healthy. Vacancy rates for office space have not been as robust, but still relatively healthy. There is not a lot of office along the corridor. Vacancy rates for retail in downtowns and shopping centers were surveyed from Copiague to Montauk in 2005 and found one of the lowest vacancy rates every recorded. At the time, downtowns were looking better than the shopping centers. In 2007 vacancy rate went from 11% up to 17% - markedly higher vacancy rates. Sunrise Hwy. is serving its purposes serving the County, as one of two limited access roads in this part of Suffolk. Currently it carries 100K to 140K cars per day. Comparatively, Nesconset Hwy carries 74K cars per day. The question becomes what we will be doing in the future and we must steer development for Sunrise Hwy. to make the best choice. The County is looking at the potential build out, and the Towns help evaluate proposed projects based on existing zoning. We found that there is a tremendous amount of retail proposed.

Costco is one half million SF of retail on its own, compared to 214K SF of retail in all of downtown Sayville and 800K SF on Sunrise in the Sayville/Bayport node. All the proposed projects add up to about 800K SF and this scale is pretty significant. There is limited population growth here, without added demand for retail from the population base. One cornerstone of the study is that the proposed retail is detrimental. We have an obligation to look at the bigger picture. Rezoning for more shopping centers does not appear to make sense based on population trends and it is important to encourage redevelopment of property where possible. Open land is limited. A lot of shopping centers have come in to apply for redevelopment. One example is the Gardiner Manor Mall in Bay Shore. This was 80% vacant and was razed to make way for Lowe's. There is some reinvestment in the South Shore Mall; Macy's is looking to do improvements. TSS was where Kmart is now in Bohemia. Another recommendation is to have the Towns consider the idea of generating nodes. There are currently 3 nodes in Islip and 3 nodes in Brookhaven such as the Locust Ave. node, Johnson Ave (Kmart) and Broadway Avenue. The 3 in Brookhaven are Waverly Ave., Rte 112, and Station Road. They have discreet identities and the focus in these areas can be made stronger. Also important is looking to not connect the nodes. There is benefit for this. In Selden and Centereach along Rte. 25 there is continuous development and you can't tell what town you are in. We have the option on where to develop, and left unchecked it could create traffic and other problems. Those nodes should be recognized. Also, there is the option for mixed use development in the longer term. This could be done with some retail with residential on upper floors. Sunrise Hwy. tends to be an afterthought. Its out there and not affecting our life so much, but it is part of what identifies it as a town, keeping breaks of open space and residential, etc. The recommendations need to be looking at better standards of signage and landscaping. One other point: when looking at this from traffic and transportation standpoint. How much traffic comes out of a condo development? On page 53 of the study is some interesting data. If you take a hypothetical one acre of land: One weekday generates 8 trips per day for single family residential. If we build 10 condos per acre that generates 60 trips per acre per day – which is 600 trips per day for 10 acres. Industrial park: 72 trips per day per acre, weekdays. Medical office: 300 trips per day per acre. Home center: 324 trips per acre during the week; 422 per acre per day on weekends. The bottom line is that condos generate lots of traffic based on density, but lots less than office or retail. There are many other recommendations on traffic in the report, such as adding park-and-ride lots out east by Yaphank and Bellport; ramp metering; and interconnecting sites: groups of shopping center. K mart is good sample, that shopping center is actually (4) parcels interconnected. This is so people don't have to drive out on the service road to get into another shopping center.

Isles noted that Assemblywoman Ginny Fields is working on some emergency procedures with the NY State DOT for the Oakdale merge. We need to be managing traffic now, and learning to "grow" traffic better. Traffic management recommendations in the study include the following: Planning to accommodate current peak capacity. Increasing capacity is not easy to do based on money and environmental/political issues with going through a park resource, in that Connetquot State Park borders the merge. We have to ask the question as to whether there is something we can do to reduce the peak traffic load. Shaving the peak load would be a better way to improve highway performance than doing an expensive highway project. The report is currently out for public comments and input. The County is looking to complete the process of public comment in the next two months. At that point, the County will meet back with Town officials and the South Shore Alliance. The things that count the most are land use recommendations. Those decisions are made right here in Islip and Brookhaven on the Town level. Mr. Isles noted that we should feel free to contact him with any questions or input. The report is also being circulated to property owners along the Sunrise corridor. Property owners have rights too, in terms of developing their land.

The full copy of the report is posted on the Suffolk County website. Responses from Towns of Brookhaven and Islip have been very positive, with Town representatives attending meetings with county supervisors. The Town Supervisors were provided them with a courtesy meeting when the County began the outreach process. The membership posed the

question about land along Sunrise Hwy. to the east of Patchogue, where this study leaves off. Mr. Isles replied that largely once you get past the Patchogue nodes, that Sunrise Hwy is flanked by 53,000 acres of Pine Barrens that cannot be developed. Much of it is State and County land that is permanently protected. Some is owned privately, and the private landowners cannot develop, but can sell and get their value. They can also transfer property development rights somewhere else, or can apply for a hardship if they can't or don't want to sell. A hardship would allow them to build on the land. A comment was made by the membership that it is good for quality of life to maintain open space along the Sunrise corridor. There is already plenty of business space, but we don't want to look like Nassau, where development along Sunrise Hwy. is entirely continuous. Mr. Isles stated that Long Island was developed mainly after WWII, and the focus of this development was to support suburban residential properties. The problem we have today is that traditional family households are not the majority. Our housing stock is set up for the typical 1950 or 1960 nuclear family. Our population on Long Island is going to continue to change and diversify. Other elected officials should raise the bar and work to have our communities reflect our values. Another question by the membership was whether anyone has given any thought to noise issues from Sunrise Hwy., because sound travels and the impact is loud even for neighborhoods that are somewhat removed from the highway, and the membership wanted to know whether the report included any recommendations for sound barriers. Mr. Isles stated that NY State must consider noise impacts and address them. There are accepted noise levels/thresholds and if noise increases above the accepted levels they have to do something to prevent that from happening. The presentation was concluded. We thank Mr. Thomas Isles for his informative discussion.

Suffolk County's website is: <http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/>.

The report, by the Suffolk County Dept. of planning can be found at the following link: http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/upload/planning/pdfs2/sunrise/draft1_sunhwyf111708.pdf

President Carta had raised a few more discussion points with the membership.

1. **Nonresident memberships.** We have them now because we have a number of politicians who pay dues. There are a number of areas where we have Bohemia residents, West Sayville, Sayville residents, they overlap with Oakdale. They cannot vote, but are impacted by and interested in Oakdale issues. President Carta suggested that we could tweak the bylaws to formally allow "nonresident" members, possibly expanding the area to include folks that reside within the boundaries of Connetquot school district. At our next meeting in March we will vote on changing the bylaws to allow non-resident members.
2. **2009 Membership dues are due today** if you want to be on time. You may pay your dues tonight, or please send them in as soon as possible to Oakdale Civic Association P.O. Box 415 Oakdale, New York 11769-0415
3. **Bricks-Around-the-Clock are still for sale.** Please don't forget about this initiative, a very nice way to help improve your community and get your family's name or inscription on a brick for the clock tower at the train station. A new order form will be posted on the OCA website.
4. **Town of Islip's Anti-Bias Task Force.** The Task Force's next meeting is Feb 10th, and the OCA has an opportunity for representation on this team. Pam Burner from St. John's Historical Landmark already participates and has offered to extend her representation to the OCA. Thank you to Pam.

Secretary Schwasnick and President Carta presented a banner design for the OCA that has been in development over the past month. The version presented was a paper print out of the current favorite version. A vote was held to accept banner: A nearly unanimous vote confirmed the design as the accepted OCA banner. Carol Schwasnick will pursue pricing for a fabric banner to be presented at a future meeting for acceptance. The membership suggested making lapel pins of the design.

Member Denise Conte met with the East End Farmers' Association over the weekend, to drop off some clothes to them. She noted that there are about 30 needy children out East that

have very little. As Easter is coming, Ms. Conte stated that she would like to hold a clothing drive for these children. President Carta advised her to put together a blurb about what is needed and where to drop items off and we will get it posted to the website.

Pam Burner reminded us about the "buy a shingle" program for St. John's Church; so far we have sold or have promises on the entire front tower. If everybody in Oakdale bought a shingle we could restore the roof today. Information for how to contribute will be posted to the OCA website. One shingle is \$25. Ms. Burner also mentioned that full Victorian Teas will be served on February 15th and on April 19. The teas include a tour of the church and cost \$25 per person.

Member Pat Hogeboom that on April 18th there will be a historical tour of the area. The tour will begin at Connetquot State Park, then move on to the Vanderbilt Mansion at Dowling College for lunch and a talk. The day will end at St John's church. The cost is \$55, covering tours, lunch, entrance fees and raffles. Information, when provided, will be posted to the OCA website.

President Carta made a motion to adjourn meeting at 9:05pm. This motion was seconded by the membership.