

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
June 8, 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

Directors

Cathy Cohen
John Eder

Minutes Recorded by Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org

President Ray Carta called the meeting to order at 7:30pm, and initiated the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice President Feldman suggested waiving of the minutes. A motion was made by the membership and this was seconded. Minutes are posted to the website and via email and hard copies are available in the front of the room.

Treasurer's report: Pat Kassten

Paid members 2009: 142 to date. Total income for the month including the reimbursement from the Oakdale Chamber is \$1457.33. The organizations in Oakdale used to sponsor a Springfest. Since we haven't been doing it anymore, the money has been sitting in the account. Stan gave background and suggested that we put that money in a short term CD. After the executive board review of the budget, we can see if this is possible.

President Carta asked for a motion to waive the rules to allow for the guest speakers to present. A motion was made by the membership, and this was seconded.

OCA Scholarship: Barbara Schermerhorn.

The OCA awards a scholarship to an environmentally conscious high school senior enrolled in a college. Applications are made via essays which are submitted by each student. Ms. Schermerhorn announced this year's winner as Christopher Quinn, who was in attendance at the meeting with his parents. He was selected because he has achieved academic honors, participates in many extracurricular activities and is a captain of the soccer team. He stated that he has two goals for his future, "To serve my country and to serve my community as an educator." He plans on enrolling in a ROTC program and will pursue a major in business or undecided. Mr. Quinn explained that every year he and his dad clean up all the garbage and debris in the wetlands near our house, we like to keep it clean. We see animals near our house, and have started to see snapping turtles and foxes after not seeing them for 5 to 10 years. Christopher and his parents thanked the membership.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment: Maureen Dolan Murphy.

The Citizens Campaign for the Environment has offices in Farmingdale, Albany, White Plains, Syracuse, Buffalo and now in New Haven, Connecticut. The CCE works on a host of issues ranging from federal climate change to local environmental causes. Ms. Murphy stated she

chairs the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve initiative. Tonight she has come with some updates environmental concerns for our community.

First, the CCE has a campaign called "Bring your own Bag." We use a tremendous amount of plastic bags, with each is used for 12 minutes, typically. Between 1 and 5 percent end up being recycled, most end up polluting our landscapes, bays and oceans. Typically you pick up lots of bags on beaches during clean ups – even in other countries and the US. 200,000 plastic bags were collected last year in New York alone. Why should we care they are ending up on the beaches? The bags photo-degrade. They breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces and stay in the environment. Why is this a problem? In the last 5 years, we have seen the development of "the eastern garbage patch." This is located in the Pacific Ocean and the reported size is between the size of Texas and the continental US. This area is filled with plastic. There are 6 pieces of plastic for every piece of plankton in the area. Birds think it is food, ingest it, and end up dying. Sea turtles eat jellyfish; they think plastic bags are jelly fish also. This has become a huge problem. There are several other similar locations in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. In Ireland, there is a 20 cent surcharge on plastic bags. They saw a 90% decline in use as a result. The Ocean Conservancy – tracked they picked up 67 bags total on Irish beaches, which is an extreme decline. Changing human behavior is hard to do but we know this legislation is very effective. The CCE looked originally to ban plastic bags in CT, which was very aggressive. Since then we have looked to put a 5 cent surcharge on them. There is recent legislation for a 5 cent surcharge coming from local legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fischer's office. Five cents is just enough to make us remember. It's very worth it to reduce this use as a society. The reusable bags hold more and they last longer.

Vice President Feldman stated that he bought plastic bins and puts them in his car, rather than use the corrugated boxes Costco gives you. A member asked, "What happened to the paper bag?" Ms. Murphy stated that legislation was introduced last year in December, on plastic bags only, but paper is also an issue. Paper is heavier and still uses trees. The issue is not about paper vs. plastic – it's about reusable bags. Tomorrow there is a hearing on this legislation in Suffolk County. As community members, Ms. Murphy encouraged all of us to reach out and support this legislation, and bring your own bags to the store.

A member asked the question, "What about garbage bags?" Ms. Murphy noted that obviously we don't have widespread availability of replacements for garbage bags yet, this process is one step at a time. There is a movement to go to biodegradable garbage bags and they are available online, but she did not know yet if there are any on the market being sold right now.

The second issue of note is our local horseshoe crabs. There is some good news. This time of year they come up on the beaches at a full moon and lay their eggs, and can lay 90,000 eggs on the beach in one shot. This is critically important to migratory birds. The birds need the eggs to get enough nourishment to make their full journeys. Horseshoe crabs have been overharvested, and the red knots (migratory birds) have especially seen decline. There is a moratorium from NJ, Del and CT on harvesting horseshoe crabs, which are often used for bait. This puts pressure on NY, and the National Parks service has banned harvesting in National Parks – which includes the entire Fire Island National Seashore. Crabs were taken out of the shellfish category and moved into the wildlife category where they can get federal protection.

Ms. Murphy continued that clams in the Great South Bay have also seen a great decline in numbers recently. There is a huge effort by local agencies to repopulate, but the problem is that the clams were seeded too far apart to mate. Now they are being placed closer together and we are seeing progress. Suffolk County has been proactive about this, and is committed to not letting overharvesting continue. We need to let the population lie for a while to have it be sustainable for harvest. This is good news for the future.

A member asked how the red tide contributed to taking the clams from us. Water gets a coffee color which is harmful for shellfish because it blocks light to the bottom. This is toxic for the shellfish.

Ms. Murphy introduced a third topic: pharmaceuticals in the water supply. The Town of North Hempstead has had a "pharmaceutical take back day," where if you have some that are expired or banned, you brought them in and handed them over. Historically we have been told to flush old pills down the toilet, but the problem is these pharms are finding their way into our groundwater, bays, streams and water supply. Water systems do not test for medications or treat for contamination, but they are there. The more we find out the worse the picture is. It is a challenge to set up a program for residents to bring pharmaceuticals in, partially because you need to have a police officer present to transfer to them to an incinerator facility. But the effort is worth it. In North Hempstead, the program collected over 400 lbs of pharmaceuticals and narcotics. If these drugs are in your house you do not want them to be misused, so it makes sense to bring them in for that reason also – it is a health as well as environmental concern. Once this issue started getting press recently, the ECC started getting phone calls from different nurses around the Island saying "our hospital flushes thousands of pills every day." Ms. Murphy asked that this Civic group get involved in asking the Town of Islip to establish a drug disposal program. This evening three reps in audience from Supervisor Nolan's office, Councilman Edwards' office, and Councilman Flotteron's office stated they will take this and make it happen at the Town of Islip. Some drugs in North Hemp dated from 1966 – undoubtedly there are long standing stashes of pharmaceuticals in Islip as well. Drugs are engineered to have biological effects and these have been seen on some species of fish in our waters.

Last, Ms. Murphy spoke about the Fix LIPA Campaign, which the OCA has joined. The platform for this effort includes rate reform. LIPA carries \$6B in Shoreham debt which is 12% of the bill. We need rate relief. If we have some way of paying down our debt it would help every Long Islander. The debt today has grown to MORE than \$6B. Here we are with Chase and JP Morgan getting bailed out, what about us? Second, we need to increase renewable energy. There is a 50 megawatt solar proposal being built at Brookhaven National Lab. NYPA just announced a 100 megawatt solar initiative. We have the potential to do much more. We hope LIPA thinks big and goes for wind and solar energy generation. Right now, they are looking at an interconnection study on how to connect wind to land, this needs to move along as a way to provide more energy to LI. Right now 90% of LI energy is natural gas/oil.

A member made the comment that upstate there were garbage bags that were biodegradable. Ms. Murphy stated that there are some towns on LI that have "pay as you throw" programs. You buy special bags from the town, so there is a fee per bag for disposal. A member stated that in Sag Harbor they have to pay a lot of those garbage bags. Ms. Murphy reminded us that we do pay something in our taxes here in Islip for garbage collection, so we need to weigh it out. A member stated that the 5 cent charge per garbage bag won't work because the fee is not high enough to make an impression. Ms. Murphy stated that the principal of this effort is that it is going to make life better. Getting people to understand the benefits is part of the education process.

Town Report: Stan Feldman

Vice President Feldman came back from Florida on May 12. On May 13 there was a meeting on the Delta gas station. Operations must cease by Dec 31 because of environmental issues with the tanks in the ground. A member mentioned that he is familiar with the fact that over the years the station dumped waste oil in the woods behind the service building. The tanks must be replaced, the existing building would come down, and a new building would be constructed in the image of the Oakdale train station. The Round Table is sitting in the planning department meetings with the architect.

The Oakdale-Bohemia Road reconfiguration is holding up the works on being able to finalize plans. The County Department of Public Works has to give us a report on the traffic.

Suffolk County Board of Health commented on the proposed Chase Bank location, adjacent to Wendy's. The SCBH says they are going to be using too much water since the area has a shallow water table. Question as to how much waste water can go out from a Bank - yet you have a Wendy's - a restaurant - right there. The membership asked the question why Chase can't move into the current WaMu building. Vice President Feldman stated that Chase is trying to modernize the facilities. The new thing is to have one pedestal for the transaction and a second pedestal to punch in a code for cash to be dispensed. Chase will probably close the current branch bank in West Sayville.

Green Cactus: Waiting for asphaltting of parking lot, once this is done they are getting ready to open. Work on the interior is ongoing.

Code enforcement is now getting involved in sign enforcement: Jamie Flynn had discussed this last meeting. At 2:30 this afternoon, there was a photo op at the DPW yard with the Town Public Information Officer. The foremen on the routes are supposed to take down any sign on a pole in the entire Town of Islip. This action by the Town is all because of what we started here in Oakdale by declaring the hamlet to be sign-free.

Member Mario Politi and Stan Feldman asked the membership to congratulate President Ray Carta on being elected to the Connetquot district Board of Education. The membership applauded and wished Ray well in his new endeavor.

Kevin Faivre from Councilman Edwards' office spoke on the Community Gardens initiative. This was modeled after a program that has been in existence in NYC for decades. There are a number of Town parcels that are vacant in the area that present an opportunity for the residents to do use the land to create gardens. The Town would enter into an agreement with organizations like the OCA or others to maintain and improve the properties. Mr. Faivre distributed informational packets that included a description of what the program is about. Vice President Feldman asked about a parcel that has long been subject of conversation in Oakdale: the Peters property. President Feldman stated that if we enter into an agreement on the Peters parcel, we would need it to be cleared. VP Feldman asked to have the Town to start with the Oakdale Roundtable, which handles issues of planning and beautification - and have them pick the parcels to focus on. He mentioned also that Councilman Flotteron is very familiar with the Civics' perspective on the Peters parcel.

Member question: if there is a derelict property, what can be done? Mr. Faivre offered his email, kfaivre@townofislip.ny.gov and stated that the membership can send him any information on derelict properties in Oakdale. Another member asked the question of whether the Town is looking for other groups to clean up and beautify the parcels in question? The answer is yes, the program allows various groups to come in. The Town maintains ownership but contracted residents have the right to maintain it the way they want. Another member question: can you harvest trees? The answer was no, that the program is meant to enhance nature for the enjoyment of the residents.

Another member commented: Let's clean up what we have. The corner of Locust and Sunrise is always littered and overgrown. Many calls have been made to the DPW but no improvement has been made.

Secretary Schwasnick discussed pricing she has gotten on more permanent versions of a banner for the Civic Association. Currently, we have a design printed on paper but would like something more durable to bring to events. Ms. Schwasnick received a price of \$150-\$200 for a printed vinyl banner, and prices for an embroidered fabric banner ranging from a high of \$1,000 down to \$250. The \$250 price seems to be a good deal on a high quality product, and Secretary Schwasnick suggested that for the extra \$50 to \$100 it would be appropriate quality for the OCA. Vice President Feldman asked for a motion to accept expending \$250 plus

shipping for an embroidered banner. Motion made by member Rita Kushner to accept \$250 for a banner. The motion was seconded by member Barbara Schermerhorn. The membership voted unanimously in favor of allocating funds. The size that was priced was 4' x 6'; the membership suggested that this be verified as 4' seemed too high to carry in a parade for most people. Secretary Schwasnick will check the size to make sure it is parade appropriate.

Open Floor

A representative from Phil Nolan's office announced Code FAQ's workshops which are taking place in various locations throughout the Town in May and June. The next one is this Wednesday June 10, at 7pm at Connetquot Public Library. Vice President Feldman stated that if information is sent to us we will email it out to the membership.

Member Joanne Festa stated that she has been promoting the idea of Dowling College having a waste conversion plant on the Bronco Charlie's property, and is hoping to get the OCA's support on the issue. This is in light of Dowling's alleged continued pollution of the river. Vice President Feldman stated that one of the problems with the Bronco Charlie's property is that the water table is very high. Dowling is claiming that the pollutants in the river are not coming from their plant. Vice President Feldman asked for a vote to support this suggestion. Two members voted in favor, issue not accepted.

Member Pam Burner is Administrator of the Cans for Kids program, one that redeems cans and bottles in the area. At the end of the driveway of the parish house are two round bins for collecting cans and bottles. \$2K raised recently went to an outreach programs for kids to go to camp this summer. Cans and bottles turned into gold. VP Feldman suggested that Home Depot be approached about donating more bins, to be brought around to other locations.

Ms. Burner stated that the recent storms have been hard on St. John's Church, and the wind has broken through the walls. She reminded us that they have a shingle program, at \$25 per shingle. This Sunday there will be an outdoor fundraiser concert with a well known Christian singer. A member asked the question as to what the Episcopal Church has contributed in terms of funds towards restoring the church. Ms. Burner responded that the church has paid \$20,000 for the architectural report which is the basis of the church's applications for other grants etc.

Vice President Feldman asked Liz Sullivan if there was a new agent coming in to State Farm since Tom Kerr is retiring. She stated that a new agent is already working. Ms. Sullivan brought up the brick program. Information is listed on the chamber website. Secretary Schwasnick stated she would find it and pull it over to the OCA website as well.

A member asked a question of the outcome of the vote on the stop sign for the corner of Oakdale Bohemia Road and Waterford. Vice President Feldman stated that we need to get Councilman Flotteron's office to get back to us with a response and would email him for this.

President Carta announced that on Saturday June 20 the OCA would be sponsoring a Community Planting event. The whole community is invited: the OCA, Chamber, Brownies, Daisies, Cub Scouts, etc. Come plant and turn over dirt. All interested should meet there at 10am.

The "Keep Oakdale Clean" event that was held on May 30 had a nice turn out and was quite successful. Best yet had a cart and provided burgers etc. Overall this was very productive.

President Carta asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made, this was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm. The next meeting is Sept 14. May everyone have a wonderful summer!