

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
June 14, 2010**

2010 Officers

President:	Ray Carta	560-4650 – not present
Vice President:	Stan Feldman	523-8835 - present
Treasurer:	Pat Kassten	589-8222 – not present
Recording Secretary:	Carol Schwasnick	589-7455 - present
Corresponding Secretary:	Marilyn Triolo	589-5981 – not present

Directors

Cathy Cohen – present

Minutes Recorded by Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org

President Ray Carta could not attend this evening and Vice President Stan Feldman presided. OCA Scholarship winner Emily McGowan was asked to lead the pledge of allegiance and obliged.

Minutes of the May meeting were made available. Member Rita Kushner made a motion to waive reading of the minutes. This was seconded by Buddy Cohen.

Treasurer's report

Vice President Feldman presented the report for May on behalf of Pat Kassten. Highlights include income from dues of \$120, and a \$600 disbursement to the scholarship winner.

Oakdale Civic Association Scholarship Winner

Vice President Feldman introduced Emily McGowan as our scholarship winner this year. Barbara Schermerhorn and Rita Kushner were kind enough to present at the High School awards ceremony. The OCA Scholarship is awarded annually to a promising graduating senior. Emily was selected because she has achieved academic honors and has participated in many extra-curricular activities such as track and soccer; working in a soup kitchen; and the PTA clothing drive. Ms. McGowan also travelled to New Orleans to provide assistance after hurricane Katrina.

Emily thanked the OCA for granting her this scholarship. She stated that because it comes from an organization based in her own community she feels very honored to win. It was in her heart to go to New Orleans, to go there and help bring some joy in the face of destruction. This experience has started to open her eyes to what she can do. Emily will attend Suffolk County Community College this fall, and currently works at Clark's farm stand in Oakdale.

Guest Speaker: Long Island Maritime Museum Director Natasha Alexenko

Stan Feldman introduced the director of the LI Maritime Museum, Natasha Alexenko. Ms. Alexenko stated that her community is important to her and that is why she works so hard to help it. She noted, "Research has shown that there is a measureable increase in membership in cultural organizations recently, and "That here at the museum and in the community we are learning to appreciate the resources we have." The museum has had a recent increase in volunteers, especially young volunteers. There are six junior counselors volunteering for summer programs, ranging in age from 12-17. Through its programs, the museum is looking to nurture young minds. This museum is important because it highlights that we would not be here without the history and heritage our ancestors gave us. Ms. Alexenko stated that her door is always open, and she wants

the community to be proud of this resource.

Ms. Alexenko reviewed the upcoming calendar of events. The museum has partnered with the Pine Barrens Association to create "Barrens to Bay," an ecology based summer camp which focuses on local flora and wildlife. She noted, "Currently we have a crisis in the gulf so the camp will bring attention to this, our community and local ecology is very similar to this, especially in our fishing past." A goal is to help kids understand the struggles that some folks down there are having. Other upcoming events include the seafood festival in August, the kite festival - which keeps getting bigger - and the Halloween boat burning to cap the season. All of these activities help to create a community around the museum. Ms. Alexenko stated that, "Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay, also in attendance tonight, is a superb example of someone who supports our community. In fact, the museum gave him this year's Polaris award for government relations, and he will be going for a sail on the Priscilla with us." She continued, "The reason the Priscilla has gone through such a remarkable restorations because of the community support the museum has. The Priscilla is now the floating ambassador for the museum. Hopefully you will come support us and come see us for one of the many upcoming events."

Guest Speaker: Suffolk County Legislator and Presiding Officer Bill Lindsay

Mr. Lindsay was kind enough to come down tonight to fill us in on what is going on in the County. He reported that Suffolk County is struggling like everywhere else. There are lots of people out of work, and sales tax revenue took the worst hit last year in history of the county - we are down \$110M in tax revenue. He noted, "We have significant challenges to try to provide services without raising taxes and continue to keep things afloat. Sometimes things that fall off the table in these times are cultural events, museums, mansions and historic sites. This was challenging for us last year, but we think we are over the hump. The Vanderbilt museum was 2-3 weeks away from closing at one point but we got funds together to keep it going. The Walt Whitman museum in Huntington was another example." Mr. Lindsay stated that a great deal of his time is spent figuring out how we are going to keep everything together. The County Executive is again pursuing plans to sell the County's nursing home. Mr. Lindsay is of the opinion that we need to figure out how to manage it and not sell it. He stated, "It's a great facility; the building has been a County-run nursing home for the past 100 years. The mission it serves is much different than other homes in county in that the population is not geriatric, it includes much younger people with traumatic brain injuries such as victims of auto accidents, etc. The average patient age is under 50 and people stay there longer than in other homes, so there is not as much turnover. The fact is that it is hard to find the revenue to keep things going."

Mr. Lindsay addressed the topic that the State has passed enabling language to allow early retirement for the County workforce. He noted, "If we let people start retiring we still have to provide services and it staffing is already very tight. We all use the services and experience them. For example we need probation officers, sheriffs and jails to separate people who do not obey the law. Social Services goes after deadbeat dads to make sure they provide child support to their children. There are many services the county provides - such as hundreds of thousands of acres of active and passive parklands that needs to be watched and maintained for everyone's benefit. We will get through this economic downturn, just like everybody else. Residents going out and spending money - this is one way to support the recovery."

Mr. Lindsay noted that with summer coming, some cultural arts funding has been secured for this area. The NY Philharmonic cancelled last year due to funding, this concert is being revived this year with the LI Philharmonic and will take place on July 17. Local concerts have been planned as well; On July 2nd in Sayville we will host "Big Shot" - a Billy Joel imitator. On August 11, at Bosti Elementary School there will be a free concert sponsored by the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce and the Bohemia Civic Association. He stated, "We are hoping these events will get people out and generate some enthusiasm."

Mr. Lindsay outlined a recent struggle with policy on how to handle homeless sex offenders. He

explained, "We have a voucher system in place. Offenders are given \$90 per night go find a hotel room. We have had a number of offenders in this area. Offenders first appeared at Lakeland Motor Inn, in Bohemia. The manager there is very cooperative, and does not want this type of clientele. The manager asked them to leave and wrote a letter to Social Services and asked them not to put any more people in his establishment. He is concerned that if the room next door is rented to a family something could happen and it would be ruinous. At the Sayville Motor Lodge, the management was concerned with occupancy by sex offenders. Local residents held a demonstration in front of the establishment. A few of the offenders did not stay in their rooms, and went door to door in the adjacent neighborhood asking to clean windows, which was disturbing to residents. With some pressure, we got them out of there and passed two bills in the legislature to protect residents. The first is to do away with the voucher system and set up a supervised shelter that is not in a residential area. It also calls for shelters to not be concentrated in one location. This was vetoed, but the veto was overturned and the measure is now ready for implementation. The second bill had to do with motels. If you are a sex offender you have to notify the manager that you are and it has to get posted in the lobby. In addition, if a sex offender moves into your neighborhood you have to be notified by law. The motel owners have a right to refuse them. Offenders should be kept busy with job training etc. We have been subsidizing these people more than a single mom with children. If these individuals cannot get jobs, they will be placed in internships."

Mr. Lindsay gave an update on the Montauk Hwy improvement project. Last year, there was a shortfall in funding to finish the project. However, he has been successful in getting the remainder of the money in the capital budget for next year and can do the whole thing in one swoop rather than in pieces. The scope of work includes grinding down the road, upgrading drainage, replacing or adding sidewalks, paving and painting. The project has gotten from the east through West Sayville, and will now go from there to the bridge in Oakdale.

As part of this project, the County is looking very carefully at the Montauk Hwy/Oakdale-Bohemia Rd. intersection, and are studying whether it would be better to have traffic make a right on a signal rather than the merge that is in place now. Member Cathy Cohen stated that the reason it came up again for review is because of the cross-walk action. There is a lot of concern with students who walk to and from school and down Montauk. It is not easy to cross at that intersection. Mr. Lindsay stated that one idea is to eliminate the merge and make it a typical intersection. Some people have trouble merging. His job is to get funding; the engineers will work out the best solution in trying to make it safer for pedestrians. The entrance to the new gas station on the corner has to be lined up as well. Mr. Lindsay offered to bring plans down here and review with us once they are ready. There is also a movement to put a traffic light at the intersection of Bayview and Montauk Hwy. Currently a left turn from Bayview onto Montauk is dangerous, and it's impossible to make that left then turn right onto OB Road. The traffic flow into and out of the Dunkin Donuts is also under review.

Member Denise Conte noted that the sidewalk in front of shopping center is an ongoing issue, and the bus stop is flooded and under water when it rains. Mr. Lindsay says he thinks the developer for the center installed the bus stop, but DPW will ultimately fix it. Currently the glass on the enclosure is shattered and has been that way for a month. Member Brian Lowery asked about the Grand Canal dredging project and asked if the County had follow up meetings with the DEC. Mr. Lindsay stated he did not think so. He stated that this project is a tremendous amount of work with engineering, and the County must know what the State would approve before contracting for design work. So far the County has not been successful with getting DEC requirements that would be allowed.

Cathy Cohen brought up a couple of dredging projects. In East Islip, Champlain Creek will be dredged soon, funding is approved and Councilwoman Trish Bergin has been working on this. Ms Bergin is planning to reach out to Peter Scully at the DEC. The two agencies have been going back and forth for 15 years on the Grand Canal Issue. Brian Lowery asked if there is there a vehicle to move this issue forward. Mr. Lindsay stated that it is not possible without DEC approval. The

County DPW does not want to spend money on design work if there is no hope on getting the project through.

Member John Eder asked about the property near Rollstone Ave. where the lacrosse club was supposed to go, and wondered if there was an update. Mr. Lindsay responded the acquisition is not done yet, the County is in negotiation with Mr. Weiss, the owner. He is cleaning up the property, and this has not been completed yet. Until this is done there will not be a sale. Town will lease and oversee and Lacrosse league will contract with Town to build a field.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm. Our next meeting will be Monday, September 13 at 7:30pm. Have a great summer.