

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
Sept 13, 2010**

2010 Officers

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

Directors

Cathy Cohen – not present

Minutes Recorded by Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org

President Ray Carta called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:34pm.

President Carta presented the meeting minutes from the June meeting. Vice President Stan Feldman noted that a point of information from Robert's Rules is that minutes do not have to be voted on to be accepted. People can make a correction if they see a need. In this light we will ask the membership for corrections rather than acceptance. President Carta asked the membership if they had any corrections to offer, and there were none.

Treasurer's report: Pat Kassten

Financial highlights this month include income from dues of \$140, and a disbursement of \$780 to Wordpro for production of the annual newsletters.

President's Report: Ray Carta

Ray Carta reported on the planting event which took place at the end of May. This was a nice event, as it has been in years past, and was attended by Civic members and the Boy Scouts. It took about 2 hours for a large group of people to complete the planting of impatiens, salvia and marigolds, and we hung the banner and got some exposure.

President Carta noted that what was formerly the Rose Spa on Montauk Hwy has opened up as a barber shop called "My Way."

President Carta mentioned the new gas station to be built on the corner of Montauk Hwy and Oakdale Bohemia Rd., which will have a minimart in it. Town Councilman Steve Flotteron was in attendance and brought plans and elevations of the new structure, which has been modeled after the train station in look and feel. Traffic control has also been considered.

Mr. Flotteron also noted that there is an affordable housing project being built in downtown Bayshore that should be very high quality. The Town is accepting applications from residents who meet income requirements to obtain the right to purchase a unit. The location is downtown Bay Shore, right next to Tuoro College and the Fulton Arts Center. Since this housing is subsidized, the cost will be approximately \$130,000 for a unit with a \$300,000 value. To qualify, a person's income must be below the maximum which is \$58K. Workforce applicants can make as much as \$120K for a family of 4. So far applications have been low, so folks have an excellent chance of getting in. Applications were provided at the meeting, and are also available at Town Hall.

President Carta continued with a discussion of the recent drainage project on Oakdale Bohemia Road, where 6 or 7 drains were added over this past summer. Part of the problem is the school is pumping into the street, which they had to do for the school to be habitable. The drains should take a lot of the water that typically ran down from the north end of the road down towards the school and hopefully will alleviate the flooding issue that occurs during heavy rains.

On Bourne Avenue the Town has installed the sidewalk we discussed last year, to allow better access for walkers going to Bosti Elementary school. One of our Civic members – Mr. Ibrahim – was going to orchestrate the work, but the Town has taken responsibility and completed the project. This will be a huge help for the kids.

In other news, President Carta noted that there is an upcoming Senior Advocate seminar at the Connetquot Public Library. Please see the Library website for times and dates. Also Cub Scout pack 1001 is starting up for the year. Boys from first grade on up are eligible to join. Please contact President Carta if interested. Last, Sept. 25 is the kite festival at Long Island Maritime Museum. This was a fabulous event, and President Carta encouraged the membership to attend.

President Carta announced that at next month's meeting we will be asking members to volunteer to work on a nominating committee to put together a slate for next year's executive board. Please think about running for an office or being on the committee – we need folks for both. We will discuss further next month.

Guest Speaker: Suffolk County Police 5th Precinct Commanding Officer Aristides Mojica

This is Inspector Mojica's first appearance at the Oakdale Civic Association, and he has visited the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce recently. He began by letting the membership know that the 5th Precinct does monthly community meetings on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm at the Precinct offices located on Waverly Avenue. Oct 5 is the next scheduled meeting. It is common practice for the Police Dept. to have officers come out and speak and will match them with community groups based on experience and interest. Inspector Mojica brought two officers with him this evening that have responsibility for our area. One of these two gentlemen is a traffic enforcement specialist, as the precinct gets a lot of traffic complaints including those on speeding, stop signs, etc. The typical response is to assign resources to the problem areas or intersections for a time so that people understand the rules. People will change their behavior for a while and then eventually the problem will recur so it is a cycle. The Suffolk County Police Dept (SCPD) has a website with a link to send an email regarding any problems or issues in the community. The Precinct has a system to make sure emails are answered in a timely manner. If you are sending an email we are assuming there is not an emergency. You can write a letter also or contact the Precinct by phone - there are a variety of means to get in touch with the Precinct regarding any concerns you may have.

Inspector Mojica noted that the email system has been very effective, and has been used with the recent issues with massage parlors and local break-ins. It is President Carta noted that we already have a link to the 5th Precinct website from our web site, and will add the phone number. Inspector Mojica shared that all answers to email are public information, and you are free to share the response with interested parties. He stated that the email system "Is a great example of something that helps the police dept to help you."

A member stated that last week a member called 911 about a person who fell and could not get up. She did not need an ambulance, but waited a whole hour. She called again and a police officer came within 15 minutes. This was an elderly person who did not want an ambulance, but why was the delay so long?

Officer Mojica stated that the dept. workload is such that we need to go research this to answer. He agreed that a longer wait was theoretically possible for a non-emergency since they handle a high volume of calls. Once you say it is not a medical emergency, it gets prioritized. "We go to calls like

this a lot. We come and get them back in the bed or in the chair, helping some people on a regular basis," he stated.

A member mentioned recent vandalism at the bus stop in front of Best Yet. The glass was broken and Bill Lindsay's office arranged to have it fixed, but it has been vandalized again now. Inspector Mojica stated his dept would look into it.

Another member brought up the car show that occurs in the Best Yet parking lot. Inspector Mojica stated that the department had heard of this, but not in a bad light.

Inspector Mojica noted that the 5th precinct is staffed with 16 sector cars in 2 tours. He noted, "In the almost 29 years I have been around, this is nothing new and is a common policy. If there are issues we have to deal with we will restaff. The 503 car which patrols the Oakdale area shuts off and does not drive at night, but we do not ignore the sector until the morning. Cars from the north and east fill in to cover this sector. Under the best of circumstances we only have limited resources and use the chess pieces and try to get the biggest bang for the buck. We match resources to workload, can move pieces around. For bad weather issues, community events or festivals that require additional staffing, we extend the shifts." The policy is that the midnight operators are accountable for taking care of their sectors.

Councilman Flotteron asked if there is any new activity or successful breaks in cases recently. Inspector Mojica replied that, "Oakdale does not stick out in a particular category of crime. In 2010 we have had an increase in burglaries in the precinct, and the west half of the precinct has been more affected by the heroin epidemic than the east half." He acknowledged that Connetquot school district has been hard hit by this, and that he has been invited to a few symposiums on the topic. A member asked about the Police Beat column in Newsday and how accurate it is. Officer Mojica noted that they do not put everything in. He elaborated on some of the incidents that are common to read about including breaking a car window, or stealing a wallet. Stealing a computer over \$1000 is also a felony theft. He advised that the weekly papers will typically get into more of the detail, for those who are interested.

Inspector Mojica noted that the 5th Precinct goes all the way to the Carman's River/Wm Floyd Parkway at the east, and back to Oakdale at the western edge. The Precinct building is on Waverly Avenue. Whenever you use police services you can go to the web site and complete a survey on the level of services including how the investigator handled the situation, etc. We take the feedback seriously. Now and then somebody is not happy and we figure out if there was an issue etc.

A member noted that the intersection of Gale and Locust is very bad – nobody stops at the stop sign, and more police coverage should be provided. Inspector Mojica noted this as a location to have on precinct radar.

Member Brian Lowery stated that Dowling puts out a couple cars at night which is good, and the new director of security at Dowling is an ex command chief with the NYPD. Mr. Lowery asked Inspector Mojica if he thought they could liaison with them to exchange information. Inspector Mojica stated, "The Precinct will program radios purchased by some organizations to increase their ability to speak to the police. You want campuses to be able to talk to the precinct very quickly, so yes this is something we will be open to."

Member Question: Do you have a problem with people not having house numbers on their houses?
Answer: Yes. Upstate in some areas it's mandatory, so addresses can be located in an emergency.

Member Beverly Rugeiro asked, "Has there been any change at all in the availability of drugs in the last 3 years?" Inspector Mojica noted that there have been a greater amount of heroin arrests in the past few years, these drugs have become cheaper so more people are using them. He stated, "The policy is if you got it we are locking you up. The worst part is that heroin results in lots of deaths.

Heroin affects all age groups, even 50 year olds OD-ing after many years of use. Use is heavy now; it's cheaper and more potent than it has been in the past. Doctors will give Oxycontin for pain from sports instead of aspirin. That's where it starts. It happens often enough. Then the person moves on and up to other drugs.

Member Question: Where are the majority of arrests? Officer Mojica responded, "You can go anywhere and make a drug arrest. This area is a heroin area." President Carta asked if the Connetquot School District is worse than other districts? Officer Mojica answered, "It has the reputation as having the worst problem. Some of that perception may be because this district has been vociferous about fighting the problem, and has been higher profile in that fight. It's a big problem in the HS. The precinct has a very good working relationship with Connetquot. The administration does not have a problem with cops on school grounds." Inspector Mojica also wanted us to know that the Precinct is working hand in hand with the school district to deal with the former student who had been planning a Columbine type attack at the high school.

President Carta asked Inspector Mojica if he could comment on gang activity in our area. The inspector noted that gangs are more of an issue in the east half of the precinct. But there are affiliations throughout. Patchogue and North Bellport are to areas that have an issue. There are pockets in other neighborhoods – and some in the adjacent 3rd precinct are not that far away. The 3rd precinct has greater gang problems than in the 5th.

Member question: Do you help patrol the intersection of Sunrise Hwy and Oakdale Bohemia Rd – because this tends to be a dangerous intersection?
Inspector Mojica stated that Sunrise Hwy itself is now handled by the Sheriff's Dept, so for issues regarding that highway he suggests we contact them. The Police Dept covers the Sunrise Hwy service roads, however. The membership brought up the intersection of Pond Rd. and Sunrise Hwy as another trouble spot.

President Carta noted that on the North end of Locust Ave near the intersection with Sunrise there are some signs that have popped up that say, "Slow down we live here. " More recently, there is a small speed meter mounted to a pole. Inspector Mojica noted that the police dept's units are portable, so this is not in line with what they would provide. For this reason, the Inspector stated that it sounds like it was done privately. President Carta noted that the OCA would inquire with the Town to see if they have insight.

Inspector Mojica noted that just last week somebody had told him about Locust, so you will see us up there to monitor the situation.

Member Brian Lowery noted that on July 25th an event here at St. John's created a very serious traffic situation with cars backup up both east and west on Montauk Hwy waiting to turn into the campus. He identified that it was an event hosted by Nature's Bounty, who had erected a 1000 person tent. Vice President Feldman noted he would contact St. John's administration and inquire, and to suggest that they should work with the 5th Precinct when expecting a large turnout. Vice President Feldman suggested that the Precinct should take note of publicized events and look to have a presence

A member asked the Inspector if he had any advice for residents to stay safe. The Inspector stated, "One thing he would tell people is not to leave anything of value that is visible in your car and always lock your doors or windows. Do not leave valuables in plain sight - and your driveway is not a free zone. Many people can't believe someone would come into their property, but it happens. They put their wallets on the console and the car is unlocked in their driveway. The Precinct takes those reports every morning like clockwork. People leave garage door open many times, or a window. Residents should secure the house at ground floor at all times. Sliding glass doors and all windows should be locked. Also, if you see anything that strikes you as unusual in your neighborhood or on your property, alert the police. Burglaries are usually daytime events where

nobody is home. 2-3 people can do a bunch of burglaries. The more information you can give us the better. Citizenry does play a big part in this picture.”

Another member asked the Inspector to comment on break-ins where homes are occupied. The Inspector responded that it’s not common to see those in this area. He noted that last year in Bohemia there was a homicide during a break-in, but that was likely a targeted attack. President Carta asked if there are any Neighborhood Watch programs in this area. Inspector Mojica noted that these are run by the neighborhood itself, and are formed and organized by residents. The Precinct can provide consulting services to help communities set these up. They also offer a DVD on how to form one. These programs are effective to a large extent. Vice President Feldman noted that although we are talking about problems tonight or how to avoid them we should remember to be happy that we live in Oakdale. Based on the Community Roundtables he has attended we really do not have much to complain about compared to our neighbors.

Officer Mojica thanked the membership for hosting him and his officers this evening and noted that the Precinct does want to hear from residents on issues that are going on.

Open Floor

President Carta noted he had been emailing back and forth with Ron Beattie from the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce on hosting a meet-the-candidates night for the upcoming elections. Last year we had it in the OB Middle School Auditorium, President Carta stated he will be contacting the Bohemia Civic Association and look to do this as a joint effort. He will send out a communication if we move forward with it.

Linda Hart thanked Mike Vaccaro and his son for putting up the new flags along Montauk Hwy. She also noted that the Oakdale Improvement Society is having a garage sale on the 25th of Sept. and is happy to accept any donations.

A member noted that on Montauk Hwy there is a tree which is leaning and appears to be held up by power lines, this is located on St. John’s property right across from the liquor store. Vice President Feldman noted that Jay Conley is no longer at St. John’s, now there is new administration, and our new contact is his former assistant, Vice President Feldman will be reaching out to him on a few issues.

A member inquired about the new cell tower at the West Sayville Fire House, and if they are going to sell space on that pole? Vice President Feldman noted that the new tower is generating rent, but that the issue is really for the West Sayville Civic Association to address.

A member brought up the condition of Oakdale Bohemia Rd just north of the railroad tracks, which appears to get worse every single day. Vice President Feldman noted that Councilman Flotteron is looking into that, and to see if there is still a bond posted by the developer of the condo units that were recently completed, or what the options are to address the road surface and low curbing.

On a final note, Vice President Feldman noted that Chuck Triolo will send out billing notices to the OCA membership in November.

Motion to close meeting seconded at 9:14. Our next meeting will be held on Monday Oct 11.