

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
February 14, 2011**

Officers

President:	Carol Schwasnick	Present
Vice President:	Stan Feldman	Not Present
Treasurer:	Pat Kassten	Present
Corresponding Secretary:	Brian Bast	Present
Recording Secretary:		
Directors:	Cathy Cohen	Present
	Ray Carta	Not Present

Minutes Recorded by Brian Bast and Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org
OakdaleCivicAssoc@gmail.com

Meeting called to order:

President Carol Schwasnick called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:36 pm. President Schwasnick presented the meeting minutes from the January meeting and asked the membership if they had any corrections to offer. Member Rita Kushner stated a correction to include a comment she made regarding the library director's presentation, regarding recognizing the Library's dedication to the community. A motion was made to accept the minutes as otherwise presented. A motion was made and seconded. President Schwasnick requested to suspend the order of the meeting for the benefit of the membership and guest speakers. A motion was made to accommodate the speakers.

Guest Speaker: Commissioner Richard Baker, Town of Islip Dept. of Public Works

Commissioner Baker brought with him many folks from his extended staff to address the OCA this evening. These included Pete Klecka, Bill Stanger and the engineering consultants on the Idle Hour drainage project. President Schwasnick noted that she had forwarded the list of discussion topics that had been compiled from previous meetings to the Commissioner ahead of the meeting. Commissioner Baker did address all items as requested.

Mr. Baker started the presentation with an update on paving in the Princess Gate area of Idle Hour, reporting that Princess Gate would be paved as well as Petticoat and Jade Streets, Oceanview and Tower Mews. This project will employ a "reclaim and repave in place" process, which uses and recycles paving material from the job site.

The membership received an update on the Connetquot Creek Stormwater project. Although the team has stopped construction for the winter, they made significant project through the fall reaching 60% completion of the drainage and asphalt construction work. Shore Drive is now 100% complete. They are hoping to ramp construction back up as soon as it is warm enough, definitely by sometime in March.

Over the summer, 22 storm drains were installed on Oakdale-Bohemia Road, and a repaving project was completed from Sunrise Hwy. south to Montauk Hwy. Mr. Baker stated that he realizes this work was a long time coming, President Schwasnick stated that the work was certainly appreciated by the community.

Mr. Baker stated that they have initiated a graffiti project and have procured a state-of-the-art truck as part of this program that has power washing, as well as paint mixing and spraying capabilities.

In the winter months, the Town of Islip DPW has taken on the practice of brining the roads before winter storms. Spraying key roads with a 23% salt solution will "eat" 2-3" of snow, dissipating more of it, faster. It also stops compacting to make plowing easier. Islip is the only Town in Suffolk County to use brine, other towns are now asking for advice. Brine is much more environmentally friendly and decreases reliance on sand, which can be a pollutant. Recently the DPW added (6) Ford F550 Dump Trucks to its plowing fleet. These trucks can get down smaller roads than the larger 6-10 wheel plow trucks. The Town is dedicated to refurbishing its fleet, and has several older vehicles including a Mack truck that is 25 years old.

The DPW contingent discussed stimulus funds that the Town recently received from the Dept. of Energy to update streetlights from 84w lamps to 40w newer technology lamps. The energy savings are 50-60%. The project began in Bayport and 650 units have been replaced to date. The Town of Islip passed a "dark skies" resolution which this change also addresses. The new lights are white in color, rather than yellow or pink as are in place today, and it has a flatter spread. This change will ultimately save the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The DPW then addressed some of the stop sign questions the membership raised. Recently DPW members rode through the area with member Brian Lowery and removed 14 signs from Idle Hour. The DPW has investigated and feels that the stop sign at the corner of Idle Hour Blvd. and Beverly is warranted. This has been confirmed by an outside consultant that the Town recently retained to do a study in the area.

Mr. Baker addressed the issue of closing Central Avenue, at the "5 Corners" intersection on Idle Hour Blvd. He confirmed that Dowling had approached the Town and asked for involvement by the Planning Dept. to help plan upgrades to the area, including the potential closure of Central Ave. The Town has responded to Dowling and asked them to provide proposals for upgrades to this area to share with the community that focus on improving safety. Dowling has yet to respond with plans. Such closure would require retiring of a dedicated road, which is not a regular occurrence. Ultimately if proposed, this would require Town Board Approval. Commissioner Baker suggested tying in Dave Genaway, the new Planning Commissioner for further discussion.

The bridge to Twin River Road was another item on the list of topics for this evening. Commissioner Baker stated that there had been some recent repair to the box-beam construction on the guiderail. The contractor was asked to make some adjustments based on Fire Department concerns with making the turn at the bridge, and the adjustment was determined to be sufficient. Generally the guide rail is in poor condition and it would require more significant construction to the bridge to address. A member asked if the Commissioner has seen the guiderail lately, because it appears to have been hit and is pulling apart.

A member further stated that garbage trucks are large enough to have trouble with the turn and bridge and frequently hit the guiderail. The bigger concern, she stated, is that fire trucks have issues getting onto the Twin River Road circle. There are two story residences and ladder trucks cannot access the area. The Commissioner and his staff stated that they would have someone come down and look at it as soon as possible. He stated that the DPW would continue to monitor the bridge and determine if additional work should be planned, and would also contact the Fire Department to coordinate.

Twin River Road residents also noted that they have water and flooding issues and asked when the drainage could be addressed. Director Cathy Cohen noted that the current storm water drainage project took ten years to launch via constant work with local officials to secure approvals and funding. A similar road would be necessary for the Twin River area, and residents should organize and write letters to local and state officials to gather some support to start moving forward.

She also cautioned that the Federal and State government will tend to turn down proposed projects if they are not impactful to enough people, and the DEC process can hold up getting work done. The current drainage project required 12 permits, and it can take 6 months to 1 year to obtain them once the work is approved to proceed. The Civic Association can assist with contacting local organizations, together with interested residents. As with the current drainage projects, tidal flaps to slow rising tidal water would also be useful in the Twin River area. Ms. Cohen suggested campaigning Senator Zeldin and Assemblyman Graf for funding for money for a design study. President Schwasnick will look to provide address information on our current officials.

Commissioner Baker stated that the DPW could work with residents on the planning – it’s a group effort. It would take a resolution from the Town Council to get a study done.

Commissioner Baker moved on to the issue of plowing and potholes. This winter has been especially bad, and he noted that we have had over 50” of snow. He stated that the Town has over 1,200 miles of roads to plow – about the same distance to Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Most roads are plowed by larger trucks with a 12’ plow blade, which is too wide for narrower streets. Navigating vehicles parked on the street is also difficult for the large plows, so it’s much better if people pull their cars off the street before it snows. Some members from Biltmore and Twin River Roads noted that they were not sufficiently plowed out this winter. Commissioner Baker stated that the Parks Dept. maintains the southern stretches of the Town from Bayport to Saxon Ave in Bay Shore. He also noted that the storms this winter were more challenging than usual for plowing.

Filling potholes is something the Town is catching up on now, Mr. Baker noted, since conditions are worse than usual from our harsh winter. They use what is known as a hot patch, which is very effective.

Mr. Baker noted there are four crews the Town utilizes to handle trash issues, and they are aware of trouble spots along Sunrise Hwy. intersections and on Appian Way.

Drainage on the east end of Stuyvesant has come up many times over the past several months; Commissioner Baker stated that plans are in place to address this issue in early May.

Commissioner Baker concluded the discussion with an explanation of the scope of the DPW’s responsibilities, which includes execution of capital improvements to Town properties that had been neglected for many years under previous Town administration. In addition to maintenance of 1,200 miles of roadway in the Town of Islip including snow removal and street sweeping, the DPW is responsible for maintaining 40,000 storm drains, and 20,000 street lights, for example. They also maintain the fleet of 600 Town vehicles. GPS was installed in Town vehicles a few years ago and has been very useful in the operation.

We would like to thank Commissioner Baker for coming in with his team and making information available to the membership.

Open Floor

A member brought up the issue of the recent Connetquot School District bond vote. Only 600 people actually cast votes on February 1. That date happened to be a bad winter weather day, as it happened, which likely kept many folks at home who would have otherwise come out. The member questioned whether this turnout is representative of district residents and suggested they might consider a re-vote. Also, households with children in the schools received a recorded reminder message from the school principals. However, district residents without children did not receive any message – which feels a bit exclusionary. President Schwasnick noted she would pass this feedback on to the Board of Ed.

Refreshments were provided tonight to celebrate Valentine's Day. Recently some feedback from the membership indicated that bringing back refreshments to meetings would be desirable. Typically this runs about \$30-\$35 per meeting. Members determined they would like to think about this and we will vote on it next month.

A member reported that he has heard that Mr. Dalton, who owns Lighthouse Commons, has purchased the adjacent shopping center to the west that includes the post office and theater. Apparently he has approached merchants in the front corner of the property to relocate to other available space in the complex so he can bring in a Walgreens. He has also approached the Town in regard to making that property code compliant.

A member noted that they are the VP of the board for the Birchwood development and they are very effective there at snow removal, and noted that other developments did not properly clear sidewalks, etc. to allow pedestrians to have a place to walk, to allow walkers to get to the train station and the kids to get to the middle school. Oak Creek Commons and the Temple should be reminded of this responsibility.

A member also brought up that the current drainage project has added curbs to Featherbed Lane and has narrowed it to the point where it does not allow for two-way traffic any longer. This will be brought to the attention of the DPW in a follow up.

A member raised the issue of the Oakdale train station, and the sorry state of the brickwork. They are in desperate need of repointing, since they have been power washed so many times the grout is pretty much gone across large areas, and we continue to have concerns about stability of the façade. Member Jamie Flynn noted that he has a contact connected to the LIRR he would reach out to.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Kassten

Income from dues this month was \$400. Disbursements were made for Raymond Carta, \$249 for a 2 year web site renewal, and to Chase Bank for \$102 to cover a new check set. We are not happy that we were charged for this, which was necessary since the original account was with Washington Mutual and all of the bank documents were still were WaMu. We should not have been charged for this change and will write a letter to address with the bank.

A motion was requested to adjourn the meeting at 9:40pm. A motion was made and seconded. The next meeting will be held on Monday March 14.