

DRAFT OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF BRONXVILLE HELD ON MAY 9, 2005 AT VILLAGE HALL, 200 PONDFIELD ROAD, BRONXVILLE, N.Y.

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PRESENT:	Mary C. Marvin	Mayor
	Frank V. Sica	
	Glenn D. Bellitto	
	Robert S. Underhill	
	Anne W. Poorman	Trustees
ALSO PRESENT:	Ned W. Branthover	Village Counsel
	Harold Porr III	Village Administrator
	Rocco Circosta	Superintendent of Public Works
	Brian M. Downey	Chief of Police
	Vincent Pici, P.E.	Superintendent of Buildings
	Robert J. Fels	Village Treasurer
	William J. Murphy	Parking Commissioner

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Mayor Marvin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The mayor asked for a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel and litigation issues. Motion was made by Trustee Poorman, seconded by Trustee Bellitto and approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(In attendance: Mayor and Trustees, Village Administrator, Village Counsel, Village Treasurer, and Bronxville School Board President John Priesing.) On motion of Trustee Underhill and second by Trustee Bellitto, the Board voted unanimously to leave executive session at 8:10 p.m.

Mayor Marvin opened the regular monthly meeting of the Village Board of Trustees at 8:15 p.m.

BEAUTIFY BRONXVILLE MONTH

Mayor Marvin opened the meeting by recognizing Beautify Bronxville month which is traditionally held every May. She thanked the Bronxville Beautification Council, the Working Gardeners, and the Boulder Ledge Garden Club, whose hard work year after year help maintain the beauty of the Village. She also thanked all the individual citizens and organizations who volunteer their time to contribute to the beauty of the Village.

BRONXVILLE BEAUTIFICATION COUNCIL PRESENTATION RE: Nature Preserve

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Paulette Castillo Griggs, president of the Bronxville Beautification Council, was joined by Robert Reiter of Peter Gisolfi Associates, Landscape Architects, in presenting plans on the development of a nature preserve sponsored by the Council. Ms. Griggs said the area, once a leaf dump site, is one of the few remaining open spaces in our community. It is approximately 2 acres in size and is located on the eastern edge of Bronxville at the end of Dusenberry Road, off Alder Lane.

Ms. Griggs said much of the preliminary work has been done to be able to produce the schematic design created by Peter Gisolfi Associates. This includes drainage studies and site surveys funded by local residents, as well as de-mapping of Alder Lane and television probing of existing water lines by the Town of Eastchester.

Ms. Griggs noted that the most obvious benefit of a concept such as this is educational, and that interviews with school officials and teachers strongly indicate a need and desire for such a site. Other advantages presented include the creation of an environmental treasure in an area that does not lend itself well to other uses, and the preservation of open space in an ever-more developed suburban area. Local residents of all ages would enjoy the salutary benefits of having access to this natural oasis. Finally, she said the proposal restores a site that has long been neglected, at no cost to the Bronxville and Eastchester taxpayer.

Ms. Griggs stated that the Bronxville Beautification Council requires the official approval of the Village Mayor and Board of Trustees before it can proceed with this privately-financed endeavor. Once the approval is given, the Council, a not-for-profit 501 (c)3 entity, will begin its fundraising effort for the initial \$50,000 sum necessary to implement the concept. A further campaign will seek to establish an endowment for site maintenance. The Bronxville Beautification Council will also continue working with the landscape architects to fine-tune the design. Elements of this include: a central grassy meadow, a bird sanctuary, a butterfly garden, a section of wild grasses, circular paths (both stone-dust and grass), and an extensive array of indigenous trees and shrubs.

Trustee Sica asked who would be responsible for the maintenance. Ms. Griggs said the idea would be to have an endowment set up to pay for maintenance.

Trustee Underhill asked who would be responsible for policing this property. Chief Downey said it falls under the jurisdiction of the Town of Eastchester Police Department. Ms. Griggs noted that Eastchester Police patrol there now.

Trustee Sica asked what the policy would be regarding dogs in this area. Ms. Griggs said they have not focused on dogs and she wasn't sure at this point what the dog situation will be.

Mayor Marvin asked where additional visitors would park. Ms. Griggs said that all along Crawford Street there was ample space for parking and also on the extension of Crawford.

Trustee Poorman asked if they envisioned children coming there. Ms. Griggs said she discussed that with Tuckahoe Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael V. Yazurlo and he is enthusiastic about having a natural learning environment in his district. He said that he would make

the Cottle School's restrooms and cafeteria available to students on field trips and allow other schools' buses to park in the Cottle lot.

Mayor Marvin thanked Ms. Griggs and Mr. Reiter for the presentation. She applauded their efforts to develop a nature preserve. She said we will have an open period for comments and will discuss the proposal in a formal way at the June meeting.

The regular meeting was recessed at 8:35p.m. to go to a public hearing, and reopened at 8:50 p.m.

RESOLUTION – 2005/2006 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

On motion of Trustee Sica, seconded by Trustee Underhill, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Trustees approves the 2005-2006 capital improvement plan as drafted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Trustee Bellitto, seconded by Trustee Sica, the Board approved the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 11, 2005, and the Public Hearing of April 11, 2005, as drafted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Department reports were presented by Chief of Police Downey, Superintendent of Buildings Pici, Superintendent of Public Works Circosta, Village Treasurer Fels, Parking Commissioner Murphy and Village Administrator Porr.

RESOLUTION – Year End Budget Transfers

In conjunction with the Village's fiscal year-end (May 31, 2005), Village Treasurer Fels requested that the following resolution be adopted, so that he may revise the various budget lines where needed.

On motion of Trustee Sica, seconded by Trustee Bellitto, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Trustees authorizes the Village Treasurer to make necessary year-end budget transfers at the close of the Village's 2004/2005 fiscal year.

RESOLUTION – Authorization for New Depository – North Fork Bank

Village Treasurer Fels said that he had been requested by North Fork Bank to consider establishing a banking relationship with the Village. He said it has been the policy of the Village of Bronxville to strive to do business with those banks that have opened branches within the Village.

After speaking with finance officers from other municipalities that have started banking relationships with North Fork Bank and speaking to their government banking division to make sure they adhere to the Village's guidelines, Village Treasurer Fels said he felt comfortable recommending that the Board pass a resolution authorizing him to establish an account with North Fork Bank.

On motion of Trustee Poorman, seconded by Trustee Bellitto, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees authorizes the Village Treasurer to establish an account with North Fork Bank, and to authorize North Fork Bank to become a depository of Village funds.

RESOLUTION – Community Development Block Grant Cooperation Agreement

On motion of Trustee Bellitto, seconded by Trustee Sica, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Trustees authorizes the Mayor to sign an Agreement with the County of Westchester for the purpose of undertaking a Community Development Program (copy attached).

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Marvin reported on a meeting she and Chief Downey attended with some of the neighbors in the Garden Avenue area to discuss some of their concerns.

Mayor Marvin extended thanks to John Priesing, President of the School Board. She said he has been very gracious in keeping the Village and School in sync. The mayor said she also met with Eastchester Supervisor Tony Colavito.

Mayor Marvin said she has been spending most of her time on the assessment issue. A brochure on assessments was mailed to homeowners. The Village also held an Informational Hearing on Assessment Issues on May 4th at the Bronxville Library. Panelists included J. Todd Wiley, President of the New York State Assessors' Association; Arthur L. Scinta, the former Mayor of the Village of Pelham; Paul N. Ritzcovan, President of Appraisal Services Group, Inc. of Katonah, NY; David C. Wilkes, partner in Huff Wilkes, LLP, and Robert W. Balog, Village Assessor. Mayor Marvin said she appreciated all the people who attended the hearing. She said that Dr. Joseph Eckert, Director of Property Tax Policy and Administration at BearingPoint Consulting, is reviewing all our assessment data. We are also looking at the entire tax assessment process. She said the Board is committed to getting this issue resolved in a positive and expeditious way.

TRUSTEE REPORTS

Trustee Sica said he met with the PBA last week and had a very productive meeting as a setting to enter into the next round of contract negotiations. He said the Village wants to have a very

positive outcome and we are working hard to address their issues. He said the police do a good job and we want to let them know that they are appreciated and to have a sense that they are welcome here.

As liaison to the Chamber of Commerce, Trustee Poorman reported that they are looking forward to the June 11th sidewalk sale.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Mcfayden, 9 Avon Road, asked when the tax assessment evaluation would be released.

Mayor Marvin said she didn't have a date yet. At this juncture we are waiting for Dr. Eckert to compile the data and as soon as he gets the information to the Board we will share it with the community.

Megan McKinley, 6 Crampton Road, said that she learned that New York State does not use the Village assessment rolls. She said about ten years ago the state moved away from using Village rolls and just uses town rolls. Ms. McKinley asked about the procedure for reviewing assessments and how the assessor awards reductions for senior citizens and veterans.

Mayor Marvin said our new Board configuration of one month does not have any formalized procedures in place but she realizes that we have to look at that.

Ms. McKinley said she thought if we were to eliminate the maintenance of our tax roll and just use the Eastchester roll it would save our taxpayers money. She said she just wanted to make sure that is tossed into the mix. Mayor Marvin responded that everything is on the table.

Steve Howard, 23 Homesdale Road, thanked the Mayor for holding the Informational Hearing on Assessment Issues. He said, as we all learned, every time we hold one of these hearings more questions arise. He said that he had spoken with officials from the Village of Pelham and a lot of the information he got from them is not consistent with what was presented by the former mayor of Pelham at the informational hearing last Wednesday. He said those differences include such facts as there has been no change in the velocity of turnover of homes since revaluation, they have been averaging about 150 sales since the mid 90's, senior citizens didn't move from Pelham, and that there was no impact on the number of children enrolled in school as a result of the revaluation. Mr. Howard said that commercial certioraris also decreased by well over 50%. Mr. Howard asked that a meeting be scheduled as soon as possible after the release of the preliminary report with the experts retained by the Village and concerned residents.

Mayor Marvin said she received phone calls from other Pelham officials who were in agreement with the comments made by the former mayor of Pelham concerning revaluation.

Trustee Sica said we are different than Pelham. He does not feel that it's appropriate to proceed with a process that could result with Bronxville residents paying more to Eastchester. He said we have to be very careful how we proceed to ensure that doesn't happen. We want to make sure we don't end up imposing additional taxes on the Village of Bronxville because of this process.

Mr. Howard said he fails to understand the relationship between the Village tax roll and the Town tax roll.

Betsy Harding, 39 Homesdale Road, said she wanted to make sure that Mr. Eckert's report is made available to the public. She asked the mayor to clarify Mr. Wilkes' role in this process, and asked if he was representing the public, the Village or the Trustees as a group.

Mayor Marvin said Mr. Wilkes was hired by the Village and is representing the Board of Trustees and the Village in giving us very valuable legal advice. He represents the Village in assisting the Trustees on all the legal aspects of tax assessment.

Ms. Harding asked if there was a chance the Board would release the full text of Mr. Balog's report.

Mayor Marvin responded that the majority of the Board has not seen that document and has not relied on it to make a decision.

Connie Devereaux, 11 Greenfield Avenue, said that as reported in the newspaper, the assessments are so distorted because hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on renovations and most of those homes haven't been reassessed. If the Board doesn't commit to revaluation, she said the number of certioraris are going to spike.

Mayor Marvin said that the public comments this evening point out the need for expert assistance and the need for understanding the complexity of the issue. She said it would be irresponsible for the Board to make a decision tonight – we have to wait for the evaluation by the experts.

Mayor Marvin called for a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel and litigation issues at 9:55 p.m. A motion was made by Trustee Bellitto, seconded by Trustee Sica, and approved unanimously to go into executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(In attendance were Mayor and Trustees, Village Administrator and Village Counsel.)

By motion of Trustee Poorman, seconded by Trustee Underhill and approved unanimously, the Board came out from executive session at 10:52 p.m.

Mayor Marvin announced the appointment of Richard Carey as an Alternate Member of the Planning Board to complete the three year term expiring in April 2007.

Trustee Bellitto offered a motion, seconded by Trustee Sica, and unanimously carried, approving the action of the Mayor with regard to the appointment of Richard Carey as an Alternate Member of the Planning Board.

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Mayor Marvin announced the appointment of Maryann Bugas as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals to complete the two year term expiring in April 2006.

Trustee Poorman offered a motion, seconded by Trustee Underhill, and unanimously carried, approving the action of the Mayor with regard to the appointment of Maryann Bugas as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

By motion of Trustee Bellitto, seconded by Trustee Underhill, approved unanimously, the Board adjourned the meeting at 10:54 p.m.

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