

Juniper Hill Civic Association  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 14, 2011

The meeting commenced at 7:45 pm.

The following officers were present:

**Sue Mirialakis**, President

**Alphonso Leonce**, Vice President

**Seth Segall**, Correspondence Secretary

**Millicent Stewart**, Recording Secretary

\*Although **Arthur Chisolm**, Treasurer, could not attend, he stopped by to drop off the Treasurer information, reflecting those who had previously paid dues and the current balance.

Approximately thirty Civic Association residents attended the meeting, including two residents from Chelsea Park.

**Meeting Minutes** for November 17, 2010 were distributed, along with an agenda. They were read, and Napoleon Mitchell motioned they be accepted as read; Mary Jackson seconded, and all were in favor of acceptance.

Sue, as always, welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for coming.

The **Treasury Report** was read by Seth Segall, reflecting a balance of \$648.45 (including \$.67 interest), and the report was accepted.

Part of the **Traffic Committee** met. Sue shared that the Report to be delivered to Chief of Police DeCarlo and Paul Feiner documents hazards such as potholes, traffic flow, etc. Sue asked others who may wish to share additional concerns to please see her after the meeting.

Sharon Maxwell introduced herself, and told us she has 1 child each in Highview, Bailey and Woodlands Middle School. She is very involved in the **Greenburgh Central 7 School District**, attends the PTA meetings, and most recently attended the Community Engagement Meeting at the Mansion. This is usually held the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month and is open to all residents. It's a forum to voice concerns and ask questions.

She told us the Board of Education preliminary budget has already been reviewed and gave us the upcoming Budget Meeting dates as follows:

March 16, 7:00pm - Athletics Budget, held at Woodlands High School

March 23, 7:00 pm – Lee F. Jackson School re: Special Education Budget

March 30, 7:00 pm – Highview -Staffing & Instruction Budget

The Board of Education is holding elections, and nominations should be sent to Ivy Kraus, District Clerk, by April 18. Sharon strongly encouraged all parents to come out to Board of Ed meetings. Sign up sheets were available for residents who are interested in getting more

involved in school meetings, etc. It was suggested that JHCA include school information on our site, and send meeting date follow-up emails.

The PTA Council will hold a Meet the Candidate Night on May 5<sup>th</sup> to meet the nominees.

Frank Ferraro, Asst. Superintendent for Business will be invited to our next meeting to speak on the Budget.

Sharon also told us that there are other Civic Associations in Greenburgh that would like to partner with us, and she will give the information to Sue.

### Old Business

#### **Russell Street Driveway**

Russell Street driveway was ruled illegal a year ago, however, the owners of the business appealed that decision to the county and although the Court upheld the decision, the owner appealed to the Appellate Court. The owner is trying to negotiate a date by which they must move to another location. The Town Court is pursuing ongoing violations of the ruling until they move.

#### **Non-Profit Status**

It was asked if JHCA has non-profit – 501c3 status, and suggested we applying for same. It could benefit the Association if we pursued fund-raising efforts, and a possible Civic Association Scholarship for resident college-bound high students was suggested. Discussion ensued. It was felt that it could “water down” the amount of money donated to the Woodlands High School Scholarship program. Sue asked those in attendance to think about it and email their thoughts and comments or other suggestions as to what the JHCA might do with Tax Exempt Status. This will be brought up at the next General Membership Meeting.

#### **Town News**

Paul Feiner shared some information on **Tax Assessments**, along with Edye McCarthy, Town Assessor. Paul explained that the tax base is eroding, and as a result, taxes continues to go up for all of us. When we get a reduction as a result of a personal assessment, town loses revenue. In addition, some families are paying less or more than their fair share, resulting in inconsistent taxation. The Town has not been reassessed since 1956, and the question is: Would we be better off if we reassess? Paul would like to have an Impact Study conducted. If taxes were increased, he would also like to go to Albany, and ask that a Hardship Provision be put in place for seniors and others in need. He also talked about making any increases gradual so taxes will not be a drastic increase.

Paul is hoping to get Albany to institute two separate tax classes one for Residential and one for Business. In addition Condominiums with the same home values only pay half of the tax we are required to pay, and in Greenburgh, there are about 5,500 individual condo units. Also, the majority of our taxes (65%) go to the schools, with only 15% going to the Town and the other 10% to the County.

The cost to reassess would be \$3 to \$4 million and will be paid by residents. When we lose assessment money through devaluation, the State devalues assessments on infrastructure such as telephone poles to bring these utility assets in line, and last year, we lost approximately \$246,000 because of *A certiorari* claims.

Edye encouraged that we check the town website to see if we are properly assessed, and also shared that we can file a grievance on our own vs. hiring those who are soliciting. We are currently assessed at 2.81%. This number changes based on the town budget. Three handouts were distributed (Reassessment Outreach Forum presentation, The Homestead Tax Option, and Reassessment – Frequently Asked Questions). We also had a question and answer session.

When asked about budget cuts, Paul felt that cuts will affect staff ad services and will try to manage. Unfortunately, they don't have control over the entire budget. The Police Dept. can go to an arbitration panel and override local government. The Library board also wants to increase salaries, so Paul would like to see the State change their mandates.

Someone mentioned a Property Tax Cap, however, it was said that tax caps would eventually force the Town to close non-essential services such as the Theodore Young Community Center.

**A & P** has filed bankruptcy, and **Pathmark** is planning to close. Paul wrote to supermarkets to try to get another tenant for the property. A Farmer's Market either at the A&P site or at the Union Baptist Church would help Manhattan Avenue residents once A&P closes. We understand that Morton Williams, near Pathmark, will start taking food stamps.

The Town now owns Frank's Nursery. It has been suggested as a site for a new Court and Police HQ, and although the Commissioner will be making a report on that property, Paul feels strongly that we need to know what the Town needs, not only now, but in years to come. The Town could use it to receive revenue, and he received proposals for use as a Sports Bubble. It was also mentioned that the grounds may be contaminated because of its use as a nursery. The property is valued at approx. \$1 million, but leasing is preferable for long-term income, at least until property values go back up.

Paul reiterated that the Town has a web site and it includes job opportunities so he encouraged us to visit the site regularly. He also suggested we sign up for Town emails so we can get up-to-date information as it's posted.

Sue asked for **Officer Nominations**, but all in attendance felt the current officers should remain in place.

Sue asked that a committee be put in place to update the **By Laws**. Seth and Illayne agreed to work together on that committee.

A **Barbeque** Committee was solicited for this year's barbeque, and Mary Jackson agreed to head it with John Malone helping her.

The **Juniper Hill Professional Registry** was brought up again for suggestions, etc. It was agreed that we would not endorse any of the businesses, even though we may want to include some we have favorable business relationships with. Neighbors helping neighbors was determined as the purpose. Sue asked that we all email suggestions and comments to her attention at [Junipercivic@gmail.com](mailto:Junipercivic@gmail.com)

We acknowledged the death of the recently retired Fire Chief, and John Malone announced that Anthony Loguidice, who was Acting Fire Chief, is now officially the Town's Fire Chief.

Another resident on Teramar Way said he is now getting water from 5 houses that were built on Juniper Hill. We agreed that we are all on a high water table, and asked had he communicated with the Town yet. More will be discussed re his problem after the meeting to see if JHCA can help.

Ilayne Parker motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Mary Jackson seconded, and we adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Millicent Stewart, Recording Secretary

**Sue Mirialakis, President**  
**Juniper Hill Civic Association**