

AGENDA
VILLAGE OF MAMARONECK COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
June 17, 2025, at 7:30 pm, Courtroom, 169 Pleasant Ave.

Open meeting & approve minutes of May 20, 2025, meeting (7:30 - 7:35)

Update on Ongoing Activities and Initiatives (7:35 -8:35 pm)

- **Community Garden** –Status of grants & path forward (Alli, Rene)
- **Other CFTE gardens**—Fenimore Bump-outs, Harbor Is., Flagpole, Dog Park (Jen, Lindsay, Kate)
- **Meighan Park** (Jen)
- **Greenway** – Help for maintenance over summer-Signup Genius, TNC grant, GRG-Dennis, Kathleen walk-DRI grants, Ogden Ave. actions, Nostrand bench (Kate)
- **Complete Streets** – DOT meeting (Christi, Lindsay)
- **Improving CFTE communications w residents/others** – re events and info: County networking; Tri-municipal (Alli); neighborhood groups (Matt); Healthy Yards info to website (Kate, Lindsay)
- **CSC Taskforce** – hiring status of summer intern (Debbie, Matt, David)

Upcoming Events & Initiatives (8:35– 9:05 pm)

- **Summer Garden Tour**, July 20, publicity, planning (Julie, team)
- **Monarch Festival** Sept 27 (Lindsay, Jen)
- **Ribbon Cutting Nostrand-Howard Riverside Park**, Fall TBA (Kate)
- **Repair Café**, Sunday October 26 (Debbie)
- **LULA training** – Date for presentation (Alli)
- **Stormwater regulations** – village to review (Ellen, Dan)

Other (9:05-9:30 pm)

Taylors Lane –update (Dan)

Save the Sound pollution report (Bob)

Westchester Coalition for Clean Water, nonprofit to fix sewers pipes (Kate)

Federated Conservationist of Westchester County (Kate)

Flood Mitigation Committee, 1st meeting 6/12/25 (Kate)

- **Village Sanitation** – garbage, food scraps, leaves, etc., existing study re rationalization (Ellen) Public

Comment: At the end of each meeting, 3-minute per person unless otherwise permitted.

Close Meeting

Draft Minutes of May 20, 2025

Members Present: Katherine Dehais (Chair), Matt Ahrens, Jen LeClair, Julie Rubin, Christi Young, David Freeman, Bob Heiss, Trustee Liaison Ellen Silver. **Absent:** Allison May, Lindsay Reitzes, Debbie Sullivan, Renee Crabtree

Guest: Chari Topol Allison - VOM Ethics Committee

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm in the village

courthouse. The minutes of the meeting on 4/22/25 were

unanimously approved. **Determination of Secretary:** Bob Heiss

agreed to be the Secretary.

Special Topics

Presentation on VOM Ethics Policies: Chari Topol Allison walked us through slides showing the purpose and actions of the Ethics Committee detailing how ethics violations are reported, investigated and resolved. Kate asked whether setting up a non-profit to raise money for the Greenway would be considered a conflict of interest. Chari thought not but said the Ethics Committee would be discussing this so we should follow up. Chari ended the presentation by outlining how complaints are filed, emphasized that asking questions in an up-front manner is the best policy.

Lids for Recycling Containers to Reduce Litter: Robert Bonvetti had written to CFTE documenting a considerable amount of litter created by uncovered recycling bins on windy days. The bins obtained through the VOM do not have covers. In a general discussion, it was noted that official VOM bins are not mandatory and not necessarily easily obtainable. Many households use their own (mostly uncovered) bins. It was noted by several Committee members that residents are generally good about cleaning the litter, concluding that it may not be that big of a problem. Ellen Silver noted that beautification committee that she has proposed will concern itself with litter issues.

Update on recent Activities & Ongoing Initiatives

Spring Clean & Green: Attendance was lower than the fall or than at other recent cleanups. Members felt that the rain date caused a loss of participants. Additionally, the loss of the Public Information Officer and newsletter he put out meant that publicity was more ad hoc. Suggestions were made to reach out to a broader range of community organizations (e.g., the Boy Scouts, school groups, etc.) to increase participation and support, and that Harbor Island may be a more appealing location to start from. Kate recommended that these matters be revisited and discussed in greater detail during the fall, in advance of planning for the next event.

Iona Citi Labs Presentation: The village manager had invited Kate to present the Greenway to the Iona College Citi Labs group earlier this spring. Kathleen has suggested that the stretch of the Mamaroneck River Greenway directly behind downtown could be tied to improvements there, eventually with a NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant to link the downtown to that Greenway section. Kate enthusiastically supports this large-scale approach would advance the Greenway and improve quality of life in the village. Given the short time involved for the students to work, their effort focused more on improving parking and signage on Mamaroneck Ave. They did suggest a landscaped median which if it were to happen, CFTE would want to make sure included native landscaping. In discussion the group foresaw problems with the median idea, mostly related to traffic flow. Citi Labs will present to the BOT on 5/27th.

Countywide Environmental Meetup: Kate, Ellen, Alli, and Debbie attended this gathering of conservation

advisory councils (CACs) from around Westchester to share ideas. A positive outcome is the potential for a central website or clearinghouse for the groups to share information and resources. As a 1st step, Philippine Hoagland of Bedford Healthy Yards promised to send informative flyers her group had prepared regarding tick and mosquito control, healthy yards practices, etc.

Improving CFTE Communications re Healthy Yard and events: CFTE's section of the village website badly needs to be updated to have a centralized, easily accessible source of information that could help residents understand best

environmental practices. Getting good material to link to (as described above) will help. Robert Heiss suggested creating an email campaign to distribute educational materials regularly, the group discussing the need for a dedicated person to distribute environmental tips and information, update the village website, help spread awareness about environmental initiatives, potentially send out quarterly or timely communications. Other ideas for improved communications include: welcome packages with environmental info for new homeowners; having handouts available at village offices; having the village do weekly email blasts; and communicating directly with neighborhood associations. Matt will do outreach to Shore Acres, Ellen to Orienta and Kate to Washingtonville, but many areas don't have them.

The Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the VOM appoint a Public Communications Officer or individual to assist with communications.

Spring Plant Swap & Givaway: at the Poetry Garden was a huge success with an estimated 150-170 people attending throughout the event which was cost-free to the village. The Tree Committee also had a table. Participants interacted with CFTE and knowledgeable neighbors to learn about plants and composting and to offer and take plants.

Community Garden: All approvals and a site plan is in place but funding is needed to build out the space this fall so that it is ready for spring '26. Allie had applied for 3 grants, a \$25,000 AARP grant that was not approved, and a T-Mobile grant for potentially \$50,000 and a DEC grant that are still pending. Regarding future grants, the village has a new consultant. We need more information about how future grant applications will be managed.

Mamaroneck Greenway/Harbor Island Salt Marsh: Kate reported that the village received a \$25,000, no-match Nature Conservancy Climate Resiliency Grant that she applied for with the help of Greenway project team member David Russo. This will be to acquire a sliver of land north of the Ward Ave. Bridge to make the Greenway trail continuous and to allow associated flood mitigation work to take place in the location. This funding from a prestigious organization will help to raise the Greenway profile for future funding opportunities. The VM will have to sign the legal agreement once it is received, and the BOT accepts the grant.

On April 30, Westchester County Soil and Water Conservation District Chief Planner Matt Castro and 3 board members had a very positive meeting with VM Gill, Asst. VM Delborgo, Trustees Kushnick and Silver, and Kate, followed by site visits to the Harbor Island Salt Marsh (joined there by Kyle Troy of Marine Education Center), and 2 Greenway locations. Those were on the Sheldrake River section that is currently being designed by Assemblage and included the future Salt Shed Park and Ogden Avenue Parks. Re H.I. Salt Marsh, SWCD felt the bones of that 2007 restoration were solid and will discuss future steps including supplying interns and other assistance to help with removing invasive knotweed and replanting natives where diminished. They subsequently provided their Site Plan/Planting Plan as a guide for future work. They were excited to view the Greenway sites and have possible construction funding for a "shovel ready" project once final designs and approvals are in place. Kate will again communicate with the VM regarding encroachments that are causing severe erosion near Ogden Ave. Castro said that unlike in 2007, DEC requires clear maintenance plans in place for restoration work and expressed satisfaction that they had a partner on the village side in CFTE. At CFTE's meeting, Kate shared the statement she had prepared for the TNC grant (with the VM's approval) regarding Mamaroneck's capacity to manage and maintain ecological restorations. She noted that demonstrating this capacity, as CFTE is doing at the Rockland Pocket and Nostrand-Howard Riverside Park, and in partnering with the county at the H.I. Salt March, are critical to future Greenway funding whether by the county, NY State Green Resiliency program, TNC or others.

On the topic of maintenance, Kate has prepared a Signup genius which she has emailed to contacts, and the village has blasted out. She, Jen, Lindsay, and a host of volunteers are working flat out to pull together CFTE's native plant parks and gardens but need knowledgeable Team Leaders for over the summer.

CSC Taskforce: received a grant for \$100,000 to put solar panels on a building. For future grants they need the help of an intern to organize information and have identified a promising candidate.

The committee unanimously voted to support the village hiring a part-time intern. Approximately \$2,200 left from a

previous grant could potentially defray the expense.

Meighan Park: Jen LeClair has prepared a design of native plantings which Jeff of Parks has approved and is acquiring. The committee views this as an important project to showcase native plant gardening and educate the community about environmental landscaping practices, especially as the location, close to the entrance to Harbor Island Park is central and highly visible.

Taylor's Lane: Trustee Kushnick is leading the effort to return the site to village control. Subsequently there will be a village-wide discussion as to the best future use of the site.

Native Garden Tour: Scheduled for July 20th (rain date July 27) from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM with music and refreshment at the Rockland Pocket beginning about 3:30 pm. Julie is evaluating various gardens for inclusion with input from Jen, Linday, Alli, and Kate. The committee sees this as an important educational event to promote native gardening and community engagement.

LULA Training: Alli, Trustee Lucas, and HCZMC commissioner Anita Beach are planning to organize a meeting to share what they learned at this training which focused on using municipal land use code to improve the environment.

Stormwater Regulations: the VM is planning to review stormwater regulations which CFTE strongly supports seeing a need for stronger regulations to retain more water on properties whether through dry wells, improved landscaping with better tree protection, less lawn and more native plants, and greater use of permeable pavement. Improved regulations should reduce water runoff into rivers and improve filtering of pollutants, measures that are also part of the Greenway's goals

Monarch Festival: Jen and Lindsay are working with Parks, Date is September 27th with rain date of the 28th.

Ribbon Cutting Nostrand-Howard Riverside Park: Kate is waiting to coordinate a ribbon cutting with installation of a bench honoring Dan Sarnoff, which the Board of Trustees commissioned. Once installed, a date will be set.

Repair Cafe: Fixers are needed for this sustainability event on October 26th

Old Business

Leaf Blower Law: An ad hoc committee was proposed by BOT to review the law. CFTE strongly supports keeping the current law and believes it should be given a chance to work, and that the village should work towards compliance rather than repealing the law.

Village Sanitation: CFTE discussed the idea of reducing current garbage collection from twice to once a week to save on fossil fuels and municipal costs. A 12-year-old study exists that could be the basis of future study. Since then, increased recycling, backyard composting, and the advent of the food scraps program would seem to have reduced the need for twice a week pickup. The committee sees this as a potential area for environmental and cost savings, but emphasizes that they would recommend actions rather than conduct the study themselves.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm

Respectfully submitted, Robert Heiss,

Secretary