

**Minutes of the Garden City Estates Property Owners' Association  
Held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012 at Stratford School**

The monthly meeting of the Garden City Estates Property Owners' Association was held on Wednesday evening, November 14, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. in the Stratford School. Approximately forty people were in attendance at the meeting.

President William Slattery opened the meeting and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. He thanked everyone for their attendance, introduced the Officers and Directors of the Association and called for approval of the acceptance of the minutes from the October meeting, which approval was unanimously given by a voice vote of those present.

**Bylaws Amendments**

Manny Velez, Chairman of the Bylaws Revisions Committee, then discussed the proposed amendments to the Bylaws which had been sent out to all Estates residents for their consideration. Mr. Velez explained that the Bylaws had last been revised in 2007 and that this updating was principally for the purpose of moving certain administrative dates. Substantive changes involved the dates on which challenges to candidates selected by the Nominating Committee needed to be filed. These changes give the Property Owners' Association time to properly prepare in the event that there is a runoff election to be held for either the School Board Trustee or the Village Trustee position. The Bylaws were also amended to reflect the fact that those Directors and Officers who were subject to term limit restrictions could reapply for those positions after being off the Board of Directors for one year. This amendment reflects two purposes: (1) to encourage other residents of the Estates to become involved in the affairs of the Property Owners' Association; and (2) to not lose the expertise, wisdom and enthusiasm of those Estates residents who have been serving as Directors or Officers for a substantial period of time.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Bylaws were unanimously approved by all members present, with no opposition and one abstention.

**Committee Reports**

**1. Library**

President Slattery then introduced Randy Colahan, our Library Trustee. Randy reported that power had been turned back on in the Library on Tuesday night following the storm and that the Library was open every day thereafter in order to accommodate residents. The Library initially encountered some difficulty in finding staff to operate the Library at night but the Library did remain open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the time that

most of the residents in Garden City had lost electricity. There were additional limited expenses to the Library for evening staffing, costing about \$400.00 to \$500.00 per night. The Library was utilized by residents for their computers and to recharge their cell phones. There have been discussions to attempt to persuade the Village to assume responsibility for the repair of the Library building. There is a Trustee at Large position for the Library Board open this spring and anyone interested in that position should contact President Slattery.

### **Traffic Commission**

Representative Doug Singer had nothing new to report. One resident inquired as to when the County would get back to Garden City as to putting in a stop light or strip devices at the intersection of Merillon Avenue and Rockaway Avenue. Trustee Daughney said that the matter is before the County but we are operating on their time schedule and it is unknown as to when the County will get back to us.

### **School Board**

Colleen Foley, our School Board President, reported that there was no physical damage to any school building in the Village. The School was undertaking various projects with National Grid and LIPA, which projects have now been delayed due to other demands on National Grid and LIPA. With respect to school days, the Governor can reduce the mandated number of school days but schools must have taken all steps to eliminate a shortfall of educational days before the Governor will act. Ms. Foley said that elimination of the February vacation is under consideration at the present time.

### **Guest Speakers**

#### **1. Rev. Ted Bean**

The first guest speaker was Rev. Ted Bean, Jr., the Dean of Incarnation Cathedral in Garden City. Rev. Bean outlined the renovation efforts that have been undertaken in the Cathedral. Approximately 95% of the Church has now been repainted. However, due to ongoing repairs, some of the usual choral activities at Christmas time will not be conducted this year due to repair activities, in particular, a portion of the leaking roof of the Cathedral which required that parts of the organ be removed for repairs. Rev. Bean also outlined the relief efforts that have been made by the Cathedral and all residents are encouraged and welcome to drop off supplies which will be distributed to needy families. Rev. Bean also stressed the very strong music program at the Cathedral and that the Cathedral is always looking for young musical talent for the choir. Rev. Bean also discussed the lay Eucharistic minister program to visit shut-ins which has been in existence for many years, as well as a prayer shawl group which makes and deliver shawls to persons in need. The Cathedral is also working with the Mary Brennan Inn in Hempstead to deal with the issues of hunger on Long Island.

Rev. Bean then outlined the four phase renovation of the Cathedral grounds which have been in effect since 2005. The first phase, the repair of the spire, was completed in 2008. The second phase of the renovation which involves interior painting and replacement of the lower copper roofs, is about 80% complete and Rev. Bean hopes to have this phase finished in one year. The third phase and fourth phases, dealing with the installation of an elevator in the Cathedral and the replacement of restrooms, will be accomplished in the future.

Rev. Bean stated that the future of Cathedral House is somewhat uncertain. The building is in very poor physical condition and the roof constantly leaks. However, the Church is constrained in its use of the building as it cannot be revenue producing. On a positive note, Rev. Bean noted that there is no deficit in the Cathedral budget for this year. The Rev. welcomed everyone to visit the Cathedral and to view the work that has been done in refurbishing and repainting the inside of the Cathedral.

## **2. Vinny Muldoon**

The second guest speaker was Vinny Muldoon, a well-known contractor in Garden City. Vinny had a cautionary note about contractors and roofers engaging in price gouging after the storm.

### **A. Generators**

Mr. Muldoon first discussed generators. There are two issues here - zoning issues and noise issues. Based on the size of the lots in Garden City, it is very difficult for a homeowner to qualify for permission to get a permanent natural gas generator installed. Residents may pick up the specifications at the Village Hall. Natural gas generators are very safe and clearly the way to go if people expect severe adverse weather conditions in the future. However, the zoning restrictions are quite strict and Mr. Muldoon commented that, regardless of the restrictions, some people are going to put in generators anyway regardless of the position that the Village takes. Before you install a natural gas generator, you need to have a sound study done. Mr. Muldoon also cautioned that generator prices are quite high at the present time as are the charges for the plumbers and electricians to install them. He emphasized that the installation of natural gas generator requires a permit from the Village. He also said that the residents should be particularly cautious in using portable gas generators. They should not be run anywhere near a building and, obviously, never inside a building. Mr. Muldoon said that his office was always available to answer any questions from residents about generators or other questions concerning maintenance of their property.

## **B. Winterizing**

Mr. Muldoon then talked about winterizing your property. He emphasized that maintenance is extremely important. Since your house is a major investment, it pays to make minor investments in maintenance to ensure that your property retains its value for many years. One suggestion that Mr. Muldoon made was to spray clean wood windows every two years in order to take mildew off the wood.

When you go away on vacation, even for a week, the water should be turned off in your house. Alarm sensors are available inexpensively through commercial vendors which will automatically alert you if the temperature in your house goes too low. A plumber can easily install a shut off water valve so that your boiler maintains water, even though other water in the house is shut off. Mr. Muldoon also emphasized that you should put on frost proof hose connections, which will prevent pipes from freezing. He also recommended that hoses be disconnected and put away for the winter since, if ice in a hose melts, it can blow back into the house, causing water damage. Mr. Muldoon also cautioned about the use of salt which is very damaging to masonry. Salt eats away at mortar joints and also results in the dulling of the floors if you track the salt into the house. He suggested that there are other chemicals available to melt snow which do not have the adverse consequences of salt.

Mr. Muldoon urged that trees be trimmed and gutters kept clean. If gutters are clean, then the leaves that blow off the trees will not clog your gutters. Keeping your gutters clean is the best way to prevent any water damage to your house.

Trees should also be trimmed so that there is at least a foot of clearance between the house and trees. This will enable air to circulate freely around the house.

Finally, for those residents who have a slate roof, Mr. Muldoon suggested that these slates be checked every spring and that cracked or broken slates be replaced.

## **Trustees' Report**

Trustees Brian Daughney and John Demaro reported on storm damage to the Village and the steps that the Village is taking to remediate conditions.

With respect to generators, one possible option being considered is to limit the hours of day that generators can be operated since they can be very noisy. Leaf pickup has been started.

Five outside contractors have been hired to clear the trees of the Village which have fallen on streets and, in some cases, Village homes. 54 Village trees struck houses and 523 trees were lost during Sandy. The Fire Department answered some 500 calls during the period. Police Officers have been working 16 hours a day.

Garden City Police worked hard to secure all intersections and there was only one fatality in the Village which was the result of a motorcycle accident. The Garden City Police increased their patrols in blackout areas and there were four reported burglaries, including one armed confrontation with a resident, during the entire period of the storm and thereafter.

With respect to tree removal, the Village will take away tree stumps and replace sidewalks. This will be done by the contractors who have been hired by the Village. The Village is now being triaged and stump removal work will begin immediately, although a portion of the work may have to be deferred until spring, depending on the winter weather. Trees branches from private property are being hauled away off by Village employees if the branches are piled at the curb. Residents are obligated to remove any of their trees which fell on private property.

The issue of whether the fees for building permits will be waived due to storm related damage is being considered by the Village and no decision has been made.

FEMA will be asked to reimburse the Village for cleanup work. While the Village anticipates that a substantial amount of the expenses incurred by the Village as a result of the storm will be reimbursed, reimbursement takes a substantial period of time. Trustee Daughney pointed out that the Village had just received reimbursement from the damage due to Hurricane Irene last summer.

### **Residents' Questions**

Betsy Andromidas said that it was important for anyone with a life threatening condition or who is on an assistive device to get on lists of both LIPA and the Village of Garden City so that care can be rendered to them in the event of an emergency. If you or someone in your home is on an assistive device, it is important that you get on the LIPA and Village lists before the storm event occurs.

In response to a question from John Skramko, Trustee Daughney reported there are some temporary power poles located in the Village which will eventually be removed, although the poles may be there for an extended period of time.

One resident stressed that while he approved of the police activities during the storm, he thought there should have been more communication to alert residents to the crimes which had occurred in the Village.

Resident Matty Cody suggested that the Department of Public Works post on the Village website the blocks that are being worked on for tree and stump removal so that residents on those blocks can move their cars at appropriate times.

39 year Village residents John and Virginia Ormond expressed their thanks to the Village for the amenities offered by the Village, the educational system and the volunteer spirit of their neighbors. They have lived in the Village for 39 years, have raised their four children here and are making plans to relocate at some time in the future.

The meeting concluded at 9:45 p.m. with President Slattery thanking all those present for their attendance and for the civility and tone of the meeting, especially in view of the hardships incurred by many Village residents over the past several weeks.

The next meeting of the Garden City Estates Property Owners Association will be the Electors Meeting which will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Holland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "H" and "L".

Michael J. Holland  
Secretary