

## **October 28, 2025 – CHCA General Meeting:**

Location: Harborfields Public Library - Small Meeting Room

Attendees: Michael Regan, Jim Walker, Carol Zweilich, Anne Wesp, Betsy Cambria, Pat Coyle, George Pullis, Garrett Chelius (Guest Speaker), Lorne Brousseau (Guest Speaker), Doug Schmid (Guest Speaker). Absent - Judy White, Bob Berding

### **Association Business and Announcements**

- The treasury currently has a balance of \$13,470, and a call was made for new members to join.
- The next general meeting on November 24th will feature elections for a new slate of officers.
  - A notice will be sent out via email and Constant Contact.
  - Members must have paid their dues to be eligible to vote.
- There have been many notable student achievements at Harborfields High School, including nine merit scholars and numerous inductions into academic honor societies.
- The current system of collecting annual dues is problematic, as only about 60% of members pay in January, while 40% pay throughout the year. This makes it difficult to track who is eligible to vote.
  - A bylaw amendment will be proposed to implement a rolling dues system, where membership is valid for one year from the payment date.
  - To simplify voting, a member's voting rights would extend through December 31st of the year following their payment, even if they have not yet renewed.
- A member suggested permanently using the current meeting room as it is easier to hear and see others.
  - Concerns were raised about the room's maximum capacity of 40 people and past technical difficulties with the video and PowerPoint systems. The board will consider the suggestion.
- Members were reminded that early voting is available at the Greenlawn Fire Department on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with specific hours provided for each day.
- A committee, spearheaded by the Greenlawn Historical Society, is being formed to raise funds for the restoration of the log cabin, which has received historic landmark designation. The project is in its early stages and requires grants and private funding.
- The Vanderbilt Museum will host a holiday party for the association on December 3rd, featuring refreshments and free guided tours of a portion of the mansion.

### **Mill Pond Walk Project**

- An update was provided on the project, which is being led by Bob Berding.

- On October 8th, committee members met with Town of Huntington Deputy Supervisor John McCarron to review the project's scope.
- A walkabout was conducted on October 14th with town officials to discuss signage.
  - The group agreed that traditional post pedestals would be best for Heron and Grist Mill parks.
  - Custom signage affixed directly to the Mill Dam bridge guardrail was deemed most suitable for the bridge.
- On October 15th, Fossil Graphics confirmed they could produce the custom-sized graphic panels required for the bridge.
- The next update on the Mill Pond Walk will be provided at the first general membership meeting in 2026.

## Chalet Property Development

- The Chalet property has been sold to a developer, and it is rumored that it will be kept as a hotel.
- The association's position is to ensure any development adheres to existing town code, without variances for excessive height or changes to the footprint.
- The group is in contact with town officials and is conducting its own investigation to verify the identity of the new owners.
- As of the meeting, the developer has not submitted any requests to change zoning. A more detailed update is expected at the November 24th meeting.

## Centerport Traffic Safety

- A presentation was given on the dangerous and poorly designed intersection of 25A, Centerport Road, and Little Neck Road.
  - The CHCA has been contacting the New York State DOT about the issues since 2010, but the DOT has only made minor improvements and has not addressed the core problems.
  - The DOT's last assessment concluded that traffic moves at a safe 35 miles per hour, a claim the presenter disputes, especially during peak traffic times.
- Several specific hazards at the intersection were identified:
  - Little Neck Road to 25A East: Cars turning left block all traffic behind them. The left-turn green arrow activates after the main green light, which is confusing and can be invisible to drivers who have already pulled into the intersection.
  - 25A Westbound (toward Huntington): The shoulder ends abruptly, preventing cars from passing vehicles waiting to turn onto Greenlawn Road, even though there is physical space to create a shoulder. The fire department may be open to giving up some land for a right-turn lane.
  - Illegal and Unsafe Turns: Drivers frequently ignore the three "no left turn" signs when coming down from Greenlawn, creating a risk of head-on collisions. A "no left turn" sign is also missing for traffic on 25A East wanting to make a hairpin turn onto Little Neck Road.

- Obstructed Views: When turning left from Park Circle, drivers' views of oncoming traffic are often blocked by queued SUVs, creating a significant hazard. A request to install a convex safety mirror was denied.
- The proposed next step is to arrange a meeting with Assemblyman Keith Brown at the intersection during a high-traffic period.
- A solution is complicated by the fact that the intersecting roads are managed by three different government entities: state (25A), county (Centerport Road), and town (Little Neck Road).

## Environmental Initiatives

- Garrett Chellius, the Town of Huntington Harbor Master, presented on the Rotary Environmental Action Coalition of Huntington (REACH), a partnership between Rotary, the town, and Cornell Cooperative.
- The projects are funded through a combination of sources, including REACH, the Rotary organization, Rotary International Global Grants, and a grant from the Sierra Club.
- The initiative is a three-way collaboration:
  - The Town: Provides physical resources and staff, such as boats, lines, weights, and buoys.
  - Cornell: Offers scientific expertise and manages state permits.
  - REACH: Secures funding and organizes community volunteers.
- A permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is required to build a reef, a process that can take several months. Cornell manages the permitting and currently holds a general "blanket" permit that covers multiple project sites.
- Oysters are a keystone species that improve water quality by filtering out algae and pollutants. A single oyster can filter 50 gallons of water per day.
- The reefs create a physical habitat that provides safety and spawning grounds for fish and other aquatic life.
- By creating dense populations, the reefs function as "spawner sanctuaries," increasing the likelihood of successful fertilization.
- Oyster reefs can be a component of "living shorelines," which help prevent coastal erosion.
- The project starts with small oysters from the Cornell hatchery, which are raised in protected trays on nursery docks from June to September.
- Community volunteers help maintain the nurseries by cleaning and measuring the oysters every other week.
- Once the oysters are large enough, they are moved to a permanent reef location on the harbor floor using a "spat-on-shell" method, which makes them unattractive for commercial harvesting.
- The oyster nursery season (June-September) and the kelp growing season are separate operations.
- The kelp growing season begins when the water temperature drops below 55 degrees. It is deployed in the fall and harvested in early May.
- The kelp is grown on a 200-foot line suspended 18 inches below the surface between two mooring balls.

- The project partners with Lazy Point Farms and the Moore Foundation for kelp cultivation, with the Moore Foundation covering the cost of the kelp spools.
- The harvested kelp is turned into a natural fertilizer used on town properties to reduce reliance on petroleum-based products.
- Kelp provides a valuable habitat for marine life such as spider crabs and trumpet fish. It is harvested annually because it decomposes when the water gets warm.
- REACH partners with local restaurants to recycle oyster shells, collecting about 8,000 pounds this year.
- REACH is building rain gardens with native, deep-rooted plants to capture stormwater runoff, with an example located at Gold Star Beach.
- A greenhouse will be opened to the public in February for residents to start plants from seed.
- The team is actively trying to measure the success of their reefs through visual inspection by divers, a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), and a fixed underwater camera being installed at the Gold Star Reef.
- In collaboration with Cornell University, the project is conducting DNA analysis on new, wild-set oysters to determine if they originated from the project's reefs.
- Planting is prohibited in Northport Harbor due to significant water quality issues. Planting is permitted in Centerport and Huntington Harbors.
- Oysters are being encouraged to populate Northport Harbor by placing reefs just outside the designated harvest closure line, allowing larvae to be carried by tides.
- The idea for a Centerport project was inspired by a mini oyster reef project at Love of Learning Montessori and the spat-on-shell bags used by the Centerport Yacht Club.
- A nursery site requires a dock with access to electricity and a water source.
- A spit of land south of the Centerport Yacht Club was suggested as a possible location for a permanent reef, but its suitability is unknown.

## Open Issues & Risks

- The identity of the new owners of the Chalet property has not been publicly confirmed, and their development plans are unknown. There is a risk the developer may request zoning changes that the association would oppose.
- The hazardous traffic intersection in Centerport remains a major unresolved issue, with a solution complicated by the involvement of state, county, and town governments.
- The association's method for tracking membership dues and voting eligibility is considered a "nightmare" and is not resolved. A proposed bylaw change is pending a vote.
- The restoration of the historic log cabin is dependent on future fundraising efforts, which are not yet secured.
- Oyster drills pose a major threat to the oyster project's success, having already destroyed one reef. There is no known effective method for controlling them.
- The viability of the proposed Centerport reef location is unknown and requires an underwater assessment to determine if the bottom is hard enough to support a reef.
- The bottom of Starboard needs to be assessed to determine its suitability for a project.
- Poor water quality in Northport Harbor prevents oyster planting in that area.

- The results of DNA testing to confirm the source of natural oyster recruitment are still pending and the process is described as "variable."
- There is a perceived risk that people may illegally harvest oysters from restricted reefs, posing a health concern.