

**October 2012**

**progress through  
participation**

# epoa news

**The Official Newsletter of the Eastern Property Owners' Association**

**Garden City, New York 11530**

**www.gcepoa.org**

***Representing Residents of the East since 1918***

**Public Meeting: Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 pm, Stewart School**



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## **President's Message**

**by Judy Courtney**

September brings the beginning of another year of POA activity. Reflecting on the past year, it is clear we continued progress in support of residents of the East. Throughout the year, we have made a concerted effort to involve residents and encourage those who have not been involved before to learn more about the POAs and the Village government. We elected new Trustees to both the School and Library Boards – both critical organizations to the Village. We conducted an election for the GC East Nominating Committee, and had a record turnout for that event. We held several public meetings on the issues most important to the East, including two public meetings on development in the East (including Roosevelt Field). I know we are well positioned for the 2012-2013 year to continue to stay true to the EPOA's message of "Progress through Participation."

What will be our focus this year? We have spent the past several months working on several initiatives, specifically aimed at improving our interaction and communication with all residents of the East. We have changed our meeting format and calendar to allow for additional public meetings and discussions, as we committed to last year. This will include public meetings in October, November, January, February, April and June. Our plan is for each meeting to focus on a variety of topics, and also allow for any comments and discussion from the public about the issues most important to them.

Over the summer, we also commissioned a By-Laws Committee, charged with revising and improving the By-Laws of the East. These changes will be presented at our October public meeting and are explained in greater detail in the Newsletter (page 4). While the changes aren't dramatic, it was an opportunity for the Committee to add some clarity and details to our by-laws. Once any changes are approved, we will publish them on our website, to allow all to review this information.

We will also be adding two new members to the Citizen's Budget Review Committee from the East. This is a vital team that provides oversight and perspective on the Village budget. By adding two new members this year, we will again be able to engage different residents from the East in the workings of the Village.

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## epoa officers and directors

2012—2013

President	Judy Courtney
Vice President	Christine Mullaney
Corporate Secretary	Debby Tennyson-Feinstein
Corresponding Secretary	Joseph Moody
Treasurer	Sal Norberto
Directors	Mathilde Bellmer Jaime Gans John Gentile John Lattuca Walter McKenna Tom Nappi Brian Noonan Neil O'Malley Robert Orosz Nicole Russo Robert Rymers Leo Stimmler Matthew Teri Edward Welch

## representatives

### from the east

Village Trustees

*Dennis Donnelly*  
*Nicholas Episcopia*

Acting Village Justice

*Brian T. Deveney*

School Board Trustee

*Robert Martin*

Library Board Trustee

*John D. Schultz*

Architectural Design Review

*Barbara M. Ruggiero*

Cultural & Recreational Affairs

*Kenneth R. Moody*

Environmental Advisory Board

*Leo Stimmler*  
*Elizabeth Bailey (at large)*  
*Robert Foxen (at large)*  
*Ryan Schnupp (at large)*

Planning Commission

*William A. Bellmer*  
*H. Bradford Gustavson*  
*Robert L. Schoelle, Jr.*  
*Neal J. Sweeney*

Zoning Board of Appeals

*Brian Paradine*

Newsletter Editor  
*Christine Mullaney*

## Trustees' Update



by **Nicholas Episcopia**  
and **Dennis Donnelly**

### Fire Department

In line with our goal to increase efficiency in all areas, we contracted ICMA, a respected consulting firm, to analyze our fire department and make recommendations for improvements. The consultants met with both the volunteer chiefs who are in charge of the department, as well as senior paid firefighters. They compiled a large number of statistics on the department and recommended 14 specific changes. This report is available for all to view on the Village website. To date we have approved only one of the recommendations, which involves answering fire calls. By implementing the new procedures to Fire Com, the response time to get a truck to a fire has been cut by about 4 minutes. Fire Com is the emergency system used by Nassau County. Not only has safety been improved, but we now have an additional paid firefighter available for actual fire fighting duty, not just answering phone calls. As has been stated before, our volunteer chiefs have done yeoman's work since taking control of the entire department. Not only have they implemented staffing changes that have cut overtime by over \$150,000, but have taken on numerous important administrative duties. We all owe the chiefs and all our volunteers a huge debt of gratitude. We continue to study the rest of the recommendations, and be assured we will only implement those that increase efficiency without sacrificing public safety.

### Labor Negotiations

As you know, last year we settled with the CSEA rank and file for a 1.5 percent per annum wage increase, at a time when the local inflation rate was less than 2 percent and is now over 3 percent. However, we are still at an impasse with our paid firefighters and mandatory arbitration is now proceeding. An arbitrator will certainly consider this higher inflation rate when calculating an award. For quite some time, we have also been engaged in serious contract negotiations with the CSEA Supervisors Union and are debating the merits of a compromise proposal. CSEA does not have mandatory arbitration and the final settlement will be determined by the legislative body, which in our case is the Garden City Board of Trustees.

### Public Works

Last year the BOT made a decision to improve efficiency by placing responsibility for the maintenance of all Village green space and shrubberies under the Recreation Department. The coordination between Recreation and Public Works has been going well and the transfer of personnel and tasks is now complete, and under Kevin Ocker. Two of our planned projects will begin in late September and early October. These consist of increased plantings on St. James South and on Meadow Street in back of the closed service station. These new bushes and shrubs will shield the homes from both the tracks of the central extension and the closed service station which is now used for parking. We continue to press for efficiency, and overtime in Public Works

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*continued from page 2**Trustees' Update*

for the last two months was substantially lower than for the same period last year.

### **Saint Paul's**

Last year we contracted Erwin Lobo & Belinski, a respected consulting firm, to analyze the Committee to Save St. Paul's (CSSP) proposal and to give examples of alternative plans. This study will include a critique of the CSSP plan as well as a cost analysis of several alternatives. The final report will be completed in the near future and there will most likely be a public presentation of their findings.

### **Police Department**

We were happy to appoint Inspector Kenneth Jackson to the position of Police Commissioner. The department has been and will continue to be vigilant in enforcing all traffic laws within the Village. In the first eight months of the year, the Garden City Police Department issued over 7600 traffic tickets, which is a 25 percent increase over the same period last year. The strict enforcement of speeding violations will continue to be a priority throughout the year. Around our schools, the department has been conducting speed enforcement to insure the safety of our children. Over 600 tickets have been issued on Rockaway Avenue in the vicinity of the high school in the first nine months of the year.

### **Village Construction Projects**

As fall approaches, the Village is finishing up a very successful pool season that saw record crowds and renewed interest in the new construction projects at Community Park. The construction of the new roller hockey rink will begin shortly and additions to the senior center are well along in the planning cycle.

### **Upcoming 2012 Board of Trustees Meetings, 8 pm at Village Hall**

October 4, 18

November 1, 15

December 6, 20

*continued from page 1**President's Message*

I share these improvements with you because over the past year, the EPOA received a great deal of feedback about how we operate. We were accused of being a "closed" organization, not open to new people or ideas. We made a strong effort last year, and will again for 2013, to engage as many of our residents as possible. There are more opportunities than ever before to become involved in the EPOA. But, "Progress through Participation" only works if everyone actually participates on all issues, not just one. I encourage each resident of the East to become involved, be vocal with your opinions and challenge us to be an even stronger POA. That is the kind of progress we need.

### **Upcoming 2012/2013 Public EPOA Meetings**

### **Check website for additional information.**

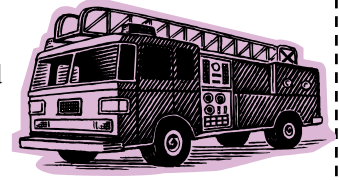
October 9	7:30 pm	Stewart School Auditorium
November 20	TBA	Senior Center, Golf Club Lane
January 15	7:30 pm	Stewart School Auditorium
February 19	TBA	Senior Center, Golf Club Lane
April 16	TBA	Senior Center, Golf Club Lane
June 3	7:30 pm	TBA

## By-Law Amendments

The Board of Directors of the EPOA hereby proposes the following amendments to the Association's By-Laws. Such amendments are proposed for the purposes of clarifying, updating and streamlining various provisions. Upon ratification, the By-Laws will be posted on the EPOA website, along with the separate Procedures for Nomination of Village and School District Officers.

<b>Article</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Change</b>
II	Definitions	12	New provision permitting the use of email for the transmission of notices if the recipient has provided his electronic mail address to the Association.
		13	New provision defining the annual meeting as June, regular meetings as October and January, special meetings as any called by the president, the board or by petition, and board meetings as a meeting of the EPOA officers and directors.
IV	Meetings	3	Names the president or, in his absence, the vice president as the recipient of any written petition calling for a special meeting, and requires that the president call such a meeting within 30 days. Establishes that voting members may sign only one such petition during any 90 day period.
		5	Clarifies when and how membership records may be viewed by any voting member.
		9	A refinement to this section allows the chair of a meeting to determine if further consideration of a question is required before a vote is taken.
V	Officers & Directors	4	Directs remaining members of the board to fill by a majority vote all vacancies that may occur among officers or directors until the next annual meeting.
		5	Expanded requirement that all officers shall each have served as a director for at least one year prior to election to such office.
		10	Directs the board to select a temporary chairman at any meeting from which both the president and vice president are absent.
VI	EPOA Nominating Committee		The name of this committee is changed to the Director & Officer Nominating Committee.
		1	Provides that an election will be held at the October regular meeting should there be more than four nominees to the Director & Officer Nominating Committee presented at the June annual meeting. Adjusts the timing of when the president announces the three additional appointees to this committee to the January regular meeting.
VII	Amendments	1	Amendments can be proposed before any annual, regular or special meeting of the Association.
		5, 6	Members of the Association will be notified of any proposed amendments to the by-laws before the next annual or regular meeting, at which meeting such amendment(s) will be submitted to a vote of the voting members.

## Interview with GC Fire Chief Charles Cavarra



The GCFD officially incorporated in 1920 and is one of only two departments on Long Island that employs both a volunteer and career force. The department today consists of more than 100 volunteers in four companies and 31 paid firefighters in one company. There are three fire stations, currently manned 24 hours a day. The department is run by Chief Charles Cavarra and three assistant chiefs, all volunteers. Chief Cavarra answered the EPOA's questions regarding the recent switch of dispatching duties to Fire Com and other possible changes under study by the department.

*Please explain how Fire Com works.*

Fire Com is the Nassau County Fire Communication center. It's located in a brand new state of the art facility in Westbury. The dispatching stations are manned 24/7 by a minimum of four dispatchers and a supervisor. All calls are answered by a person. While the dispatcher is on the phone with the caller (police, resident, or alarm company employee), the dispatcher enters the information into a computer. Streets and addresses are verified by the computer. With a click of a mouse, the dispatcher "tones" out the appropriate fire department and units will be on their way. Since we switched over August 6<sup>th</sup>, the department's average response time has dropped to less than three minutes. A three minute response time is fantastic by anyone's standards.

*The local press recently reported that Fire Com dispatched the GC fire trucks to a non-existent address. What happened in this case?*

There was one incident. The alarm company employee gave the dispatcher the wrong address. He mixed up the actual street with the cross street. In this particular case the house number 105 didn't exist on the cross street, but 107 did. The dispatcher followed the proper protocols and sent units. The problem was remedied quickly when the homeowner called up to cancel the alarm, as a result of steam from a shower. This was a mistake of human error, and fortunately it was not a real emergency.

*Does Garden City incur any costs using Fire Com? Will the switch to Fire Com affect Village insurance rates?*

There are no additional costs to the Village. Prior to August 6<sup>th</sup>, Fire Com provided back-up dispatch services, as well as dispatched the department when units were responding to alarms. With the new system, they dispatch for us 24/7. We will continue to maintain and upgrade our dispatch facility in the event of hurricane, large scale incident, or a catastrophic failure of Fire Com. The Chief's Office anticipates our insurance rating (ISO) to improve due to the switch to Fire Com as a number of points can be gained by having a dedicated dispatcher: faster dispatch time, chain of custody with our calls, and direct line to utilities and all other emergency service organizations.

*Currently, Garden City's three fire stations are manned 24 hours a day. Reportedly, one of the changes under study would close stations 2 and 3 overnight. How would such a change affect fire response in the overnight hours?*

The ICMA report is an opinion, and suggestions to be used as a guide. If the Village Board is planning to reduce to four career firefighters on duty, it would then be up to the Chief's Office to deploy the manpower. We believe the Village would be better served having two firefighters at station 2 and two firefighters at station 3, rather than four in Headquarters. This staffing along with the new dispatching policy will provide the same level of service and same number of career firefighters responding to the scene that residents are accustomed to. Using this scenario, none of our firefighters have to stop at HQ and take over dispatch duties from Fire Com.

*What other changes to the fire department are under study?*

The entire fire department was reviewed as part of the study. There are some recommendations that were specifically geared toward our department, while the vast majority can be applied to any department across the country. We are currently attempting to dissect each recommendation so it can be modified and applied to the Garden City Fire Department. Several of the recommendations currently under review include improving the ISO rating, evaluation of our current and future apparatus, and department staffing levels. All recommendations are being considered to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire department, using existing resources.

*Has the dispatching controversy and the various news stories affected the working relationship between the volunteer and paid firefighters?*

No one likes change in their daily routines, and change always comes with some growing pains. The vast majority of officers and firefighters want to see the department succeed as a whole, and be the role model for the rest of the county.

**Save the Date: Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 pm**

# **EPOA PUBLIC MEETING**

## **Stewart School Auditorium**

**Reports from Village Trustees Nick Episcopia and Dennis Donnelly  
and School Trustee Bob Martin**

**Updates on Current Issues from EPOA President Judy Courtney**

**Special Presentation by GCFD Chief Charles Cavarra**

**Questions & Answers to Follow All Speakers**

***Join Your Neighbors—Please Come and Participate!***

# **epoa news**

**Eastern Property Owners' Assoc., Inc.  
P. O. Box 7525  
Garden City, New York 11530**

**DATED MATERIAL**

**Or Current Resident**