

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TOWN BOARD  
MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 12, 2011 AT 7:00 PM  
AT TOWN HALL, ONE OVEROCKER ROAD  
POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK**

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Myers  
Councilman Lecker  
Councilman Eagleton  
Councilman Conte  
Councilman Cifone  
Councilman Krakower  
Councilman Tancredi  
Town Attorney Nelson  
Town Clerk Miller

- **NOTE: Attachments pertaining to a particular Town Board Meeting will be found after the final minutes of that meeting, which are kept in the official minute books, held in Town Clerk's Office.**

**Public comments made during a Board Meeting may be heard on the audiotape of that particular meeting, which is kept in the Town Clerk's Office.**

{ } designates corrections or amendments to

**7:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**SALUTE THE FLAG**

10:12-COW 1 PRESENTATION

Study of Invasive Plants/Orchard Renewal Project At Peach Hill By Eddie Merenda, Schriman Balasubramanian and Rachel Erlebacher, Arlington High School Students ( The "Invasive Annihilators")

Schriman Balasubramanian: Tonight we are going to talk about some of the invasive species at Peach Hill Park. Peach Hill Orchard was purchased originally by Charles Beck in 1948 and at that time it produced peaches, pears, and apple trees. In 1967, when William Paladino bought the orchard, he converted it to apple trees only. Possibly because of a peach virus in the soil. In 1998, Bill Paladino, Jr. started to pull back on the apple production and at that time there were about 10,000 trees. But, soon because of the high demand for housing, farm and open land were both being replaced by developments. At this time Mr. Paladino was about to sell the Orchard. Luckily, the "Friends of Peach Hill" was created to save Peach Hill Park.

Rachel Erlebacher: What Peach Hill has to offer? They have organic apples, which is very unique because previously when the orchard was owned in the 90's, they used

pesticides and herbicides to control the apple trees. It had a complex (inaudible) system with many species, different birds, insects and mammals. Their hiking trails had some wheelchair capabilities. (She showed a picture of one of the trails where a wheel chair was able to navigate on.) There are many hiking trails and all trails meet at the summit, which is the purple dot in the upper right hand corner. The summit, where the trails meet, is the highest point in Poughkeepsie, with great views.

Eddie Merenda: Unfortunately, I'm the bearer of bad news. Peach Hill Park has unfortunately been taken over by invasive species. Invasive species are basically species that are not naturally from the area. If left unchecked, because these species have no predators, they can harm and even destroy existing eco systems. One prominent invasive species in Peach Hill is the "Tree of Heaven" introduced in 1748 by a Pennsylvania gardener. It's a rabbit's ear that grows vigorously and establishes the dense strands that displace native plants. The big tree is an example of the "Tree of Heaven". It is basically a weed tree (Ailanthus Altissima Weed) that can basically take over an entire area. Another invasive species in Peach Hill is the "Oriental Bittersweet". It was introduced in the US in 1840's as an oriental plant. You may recognize it as the little berries on all the Christmas trees. It's an aggressive evader that drains all vegetation. It can completely cover and uproot the native plants. The green vine that has completely uprooted the apple tree is the "Oriental Bittersweet" and just from this picture you can see the devastating affect it has on the trees. The Emerald Ash Borer is another invasive species, however, it is not exactly in Peach Hill Park just yet, except it is found in many areas surrounding Peach Hill Park. It came in 2002 from Asia in cargo ships. The eradication of the Emerald Ash Borer is extremely hard and very costly and pre-empted action would be the best course to prevent any destruction that the Emerald Ash Borer can cause. The Emerald Ash Borer actually burrows into the ash tree and causes the tree to starve and die and fall over, causing much damage to the property that it falls on.

Rachel Erlebacher: So, if we don't stop the invasions, an apple tree can look like that (showed picture). You really can't see the tree any more because it is covered by all these vines. So, our plan is to try and eradicate the invasive species from Peach Hill and then prevent the spread of existing invasives and the spread of invasive and to prevent new invasive species from entering Peach Hill. Our group, with the help of volunteers, will weed a specific area of the park that is highly concentrated with apple trees. We will take down the vines on the trees, cut the grass underneath and then we will learn how to prune the trees so that it can produce more organic apples. The section within the blue and to the right of the blue is what we will be working on. Thank you for listening to us.

**PRESENTATION PICTURES AND SCRIPT ATTACHED  
TO FINAL BOOK COPY**

Supervisor Myers: When do you expect to start this. What time frame are you looking at for your project?

Rachel Erlebacher: (Not up to mike)

Supervisor Myers: That's a very ambitious undertaking I believe.

Eddie Merenda: The best time to prune is in the winter, so we are going to prune the trees in the coming spring.

Supervisor Myers: I know that that's great.

Councilman Krakower: How big is that area you guys are going to be working on?

Councilman Cifone: It's pretty big.

Eddie Merenda: (Not up to mike)

Councilman Krakower: I'm really impressed with this and I think it is a very nice thing that you guys are doing it. I thank you for your efforts and I think the Town will be willing to help you, I think Mr. Meyering is helping you.

Councilman Conte: My full time job is I work for Adams Equipment, we have a nursery and we have some other departments that would probably help you guys if you need assistance. (He gave his phone number for them to ask for some help that may be provided by Adams) I think it is a great thing that you are doing.

10:12-COW 2 PRESENTATION

Pesticide Phyforemediation Project  
at Peach Hill By Robin Embick,  
Vassar College Student

Robin Embick, Sr. Environmental Studies Major at Vassar College: For my senior project I am planning a Phytoremedia Phyore mediation using the soils based at Peach Hill Park. Phytoremediation is the use of plants to neutralize or remove contaminates from soil and water and it emerged as a promising remediation strategy because it is more economical and less environmentally disruptive than any other remediation techniques such as soil excavation and soil sterilization. The reason why I am interested in doing a Phytoremediation is because from the 1800's to the 1960's arsenic based fungicides were commonly used in apple orchards to control coddling moths and because Peach Hill was formerly a peach and then an apple orchard, use of arsenic based fungicides were used at the site in addition to other pesticides such as DDT. Although trace levels of arsenic occur widely in soils than in geological sources, the US Environmental Protection Agency classifies inorganic arsenic as a carcinogenic agent in humans. Elevated levels can be toxic to humans, plants and animals. Because metals such as arsenic do not degrade over time, arsenic can continue to be a source of contamination when it has not been used for decades. Given Peach Hill's pesticide history, in 2001 Ecosystems Strategies, an environmental consulting company, was commissioned by the Town of Poughkeepsie to perform a soil pesticide investigation at Peach Hill in areas that were likely exposed to long term pesticide application. They did two rounds of soil sampling.

They were looking specifically for pesticides such as DDT and arsenic residues. There was also the 2001 study done at several locations which had arsenic levels slightly exceeding the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation action levels. The DEC action levels are at 7.5 parts per million and the levels of arsenic found at these sights were just slightly above that at about 15 parts per million and one was 20 parts per million. So, Peach Hill is an excellent site for phytoremediation because although the arsenic levels are slightly exceeding the DEC action levels, they are not that high compared to former industrial sites that used arsenic, such as lumber treatment plants which could have up to 800 parts per million of arsenic in the soil. Furthermore, the arsenic contamination at Peach Hill is relatively shallow in the soil profile and therefore is easily accessible for the roots of phytoremediation plants to access and remove. Furthermore, arsenic at extremely high levels can cause phytotoxicity and plant death and in those circumstances phytoremediation would not be feasible. This is not the case at Peach Hill. What I want to stress is that the arsenic levels in the 2001 report were not high enough to require immediate remedial action because the park is used passively as a recreational space. So, that is why for my senior project I'm interested in doing a phytoremediation project using the soils at Peach Hill. My plan is to retest the arsenic levels to confirm the concentrations that were found in the 2001 study. Then remove approximately 5" of topsoil from selective locations that are not visible from the trail and take that soil back to Vassar and do a greenhouse study where I grow two different plant species in the soil. The two species I'm interested in are a sunflower cultivar, which is an annual dwarf called "Teddy Bear", and the other is called "Marsh Fern" which is native to New York and grows wild. These two species, in addition to their phytoremedial qualities, and their ability to accumulate arsenic, they also are easy to grow and aesthetically pleasing and ideal for a public park. I will compare the accumulation potentials between the two plants and in addition I will compare accumulation between planting strategy so I will plant the seeds directly into contaminated soil vs growing seeds in healthy soil and then transplanting them into contaminated soil. With my results, I'm hoping to find a way to share them with the public and then submit a final copy to the Town of Poughkeepsie Recreation Department. Thank you for your time.

Councilman Krakower: When you plant these plants into the soil they absorb the arsenic? (Yes) Do they affectively process it and when the plant dies, the arsenic is no longer or do you have to harvest the plants to get the arsenic out of there?

Robin Embick: For some species they convert the arsenic from inorganic arsenic, which is the most common form of arsenic in pesticides, to an organic form, which is less toxic and store them. In that case, it wouldn't be as important to harvest the plant and then landfill it. That is what is believed to happen with sunflowers but is not well understood. With ferns, however, they do not convert inorganic arsenic into organic arsenic. They actually absorb the arsenic as a defense mechanism. In those cases, you would have to harvest the fern and landfill them. I believe, it is still more economical to harvest the plant rather than to excavate soil and then sterilize it and replace it.

Councilman Tancredi: So, are you going to study these plants at Vassar and then are you going to plant any of them at Peach Hill?

Robin Embick: I guess that depends on what my results will be. I'm not sure what the legacy would be of this project since I'm a senior and will be graduating at the end of this year. But, I am interested in exploring it at Peach Hill and possibly getting it on the way to have someone carry it through.

Supervisor Myers: Then we would know which would be the best option to go forward with, also.

Councilman Conte: Are you from this area?

Robin Embick: I'm from outside of Philadelphia.

Councilman Conte: So, then I think that I could say, "On behalf of all the Town of Poughkeepsie residents, we appreciate you bringing help to our community to be a better place and thank you very much."

Motion made to suspend the rules for public speaking: Supervisor Myers/M. Cifone

Tom Meyering, Town Parks Director: I would just like to make a quick comment on the presentation and give a brief comment on the pesticides at Peach Hill. When we laid the park out, we took pains to use the studies we had to avoid the areas with the greatest pesticide contamination and also, in some places where we had picnic tables and things, we removed the layers of pesticide and replaced it with clean soil. So, we are confident right now that the park is in reasonable shape, but we want to move forward with this study to definitely help with planning in the future.

Councilman Krakower thanked Tom Meyering for working with the colleges and high schools and Boy Scouts. "To get a lot of the young people involved with things in the Town of Poughkeepsie and it is a good thing and makes a positive impression on the Youth of our community as well as helping the Town." Thank you.

Rob Rubin: I would also like to thank Tom Meyering for working with different neighborhoods in the community and resolving issues with them. The fact that the frustration exists where the community people are complaining that the lack of information about proceedings and information from their Councilmen and lack of information from school boards and fire districts. I think it would be a great thing to get out to the community, not just on TV. I think this lack of information is deplorable. I would like to suggest a possible way to remedy this would be for the Board to be leaders in this in getting out information and consider ways to get information about what this Board does and what fire and school district do out to the community.

Doreen Tignanelli: Invites people to annual dinner and Budget Hearing at Arlington Fire District and also municipal employees. She also thanked the students for their informative presentations. She is also glad to see the young people of the community involved in community issues and their willingness to get involved.

CARRIED: 7-0

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE Councilman Krakower: We met this afternoon and we have another meeting with Department Heads tomorrow to review the Budget and it is a work in process.
2. FIRE ADVISORY Councilman Conte: No Report
3. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS Councilman Eagleton: My compliments for that safety letter that went out to all the employees. I think it was a great idea.
4. LAND USE & PLANNING Councilman Krakower: No Report
5. PERSONNEL Councilman Cifone: No Report
6. RECREATION Councilman Tancredi: This past Saturday members of the Third and Fourth Ward and some people from outside the Third and Fourth Ward, put a couple of benches in at Crestwood Park and cleaned up the whole park. They repaired all the wooden cabinets for the garbage containers and put new dirt down and improved the grass near the memorial. I thank Tom Meyering and all the volunteers.
7. SENIOR CITIZENS Councilman Tancredi: We are finally and hopefully wrapping up the designs for the Senior Center and we can get it out to bid to see what kind of prices come in. Hopefully this will happen within the very near future.
8. TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT Councilman Egelton: We weren't able to secure any type of funding for hearing impaired at the meeting, so the only option left is with Councilman Lecker putting in closed optioning. Supervisor Myers: I told you last week that we were having a little trouble moving Time Warner along, well, we did get a copy of the completed agreement, finally.
9. WATER, SEWER, HIGHWAY Councilman Eagleton: Councilman Krakower: The Budget that has been proposed to cut money for highway repairs down to \$100,000, and our entire Town got flooded out over the past few months, failed money we will get back from FEMA, but it still doesn't solve the flooding problem, so, one of the things I think we need to do in this process is to try to find some money to put back in there because we can't have residents come to our meetings and call us constantly and say "My house is being flooded or my basement flooded, because telling Town's people, "We realize you have a problem, but we don't have any money to fix it", when their houses are getting washed away is a terrible thing to do. So, we have to make some kind of a commitment to find that money.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of Poughkeepsie does hereby adjourn to Executive Session to consider the following matters, to wit:

1. Contract Negotiations
2. Personnel Matters, to wit: To discuss the employment history of particular individuals who need not be identified at this time.
3. Confidential communication between attorney and his client/Town Board based on attorney/client privileges.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that there will be no action appropriating money.

SO MOVED: Supervisor Myers/S. Eagleton

CARRIED: 7-0

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:40 PM

MR. RICHARD CANTOR, ESQ. WAS INVITED INTO  
EXECUTIVE SESSION

BOARD ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:45 PM

BOARD RETURNED FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:15 PM

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN

Motion made to close the meeting: Supervisor Myers/M. Cifone

CARRIED: 7-0

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:15 PM

SJM:lkm