

**Oakdale Civic Association
General Monthly Meeting
November 8, 2010**

2010 Officers

President:	Ray Carta	560-4650 – present
Vice President:	Stan Feldman	523-8835 - present
Treasurer:	Pat Kassten	589-8222 – present
Recording Secretary:	Carol Schwasnick	589-7455 - present
Corresponding Secretary:	Marilyn Triolo	589-5981 – not present

Directors

Cathy Cohen – not present

Minutes Recorded by Carol Schwasnick

www.OakdaleCivicAssociation.org

President Carta called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance 7:35pm.

Immediately after the pledge, President Carta passed around a book that is currently on sale at Costco called "Images of America: Oakdale" that contains many historical images of our hamlet. Thanks to Leo Marinick for bringing the book to our attention.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Kassten

Income from dues this month \$1,120

Paid Members to date: 63.

Vice President Feldman asked about interest rates on the current CD's. Treasurer Kassten will provide information so we can look into better rates and possibly rolling the funds over.

President Carta asked to waive rules to bring in our guest speaker. A motion was made and seconded.

Guest Speaker: Bob Doucet, 2nd Assistant Chief, West Sayville Fire Department

This evening we were pleased to host Mr. Doucet, who will have completed 23 years of service in January. Mr. Doucet noted that he moved to the area in 7th grade, and that he and his wife both graduated from Connetquot High School and they still live in Oakdale.

Mr. Doucet gave some facts about the fire department, noting that West Sayville FD has 100 volunteer members. Their HQ station is in West Sayville, and they also have a station in Oakdale.

In West Sayville there are 2 pumpers, a heavy rescue and brush truck, and others. In Oakdale we have two pumpers, a ladder truck and a brush truck. The fire department's job is to respond 7 days a week, 24 hours, 365 days/year. Also of note, Mr. Doucet stated that Community Ambulance covers our area including Sayville and Bayport. The department handles about 550-600 calls per year. He stated that the main fire station just put on an addition last year – the trucks have gotten larger and could not fit in the old building any more.

Mr. Doucet discussed that many people confuse the fire district and the fire dept. He explained the differences, "The district owns the property and district commissioners are elected by the people, set the taxes and are in charge of maintaining the buildings. Volunteers are the dept and actually fight the fires. They are two separate things." He also stated that they are "always looking for members,

and it is hard with the economy the way it is. Some people have second jobs so it's hard for them to commit time to the department, but any time you can give is great. There is a lot involved in being a fireman but there is a lot in it for you."

Member question: "Do you always run your sirens when responding to auto accidents?"

Mr. Doucet: "Yes we do and we respond to a large number of auto accidents, especially on Sunrise Hwy."

Member question: "Can you speak about a quasi paid department or something along those lines?"

Mr. Doucet: "Ambulance companies are harder hit because those calls outweigh fire calls. They get 4,000 calls/year, but they have about the same number of volunteers as the fire dept. They may have one paid person on during the day when not many people can respond. Most of the volunteer force is working at their jobs. We hope it doesn't get to that, because we enjoy volunteering."

Mr. Doucet continued, "A few departments like Glen Cove have a paid dept. Long Beach has a combo; Garden City has a paid force. However this is more likely in the ambulance corp. We have kids in high school involved, at age 17; they are involved in the fires. Every year we have a mandatory physical and have to pass it. If you don't pass you must correct problem and cleared by the doctor. So there are limitations on some volunteers. If they have been with the department for a while there are other jobs they can do such as fire police, where they block off the streets so the trucks can get through."

Vice President Feldman stated that we recently had a budget vote, and asked Mr. Doucet to discuss. Mr. Doucet noted that's the district, not the department, but he can try to speak to it. He explained, "One Commissioner is up for election every year. The vote is the second Tuesday in December. All Fire Districts vote on the same date. Mr. McNamara from Oakdale is up for re-election and is running unopposed. There has been no tax increase for the last 2 years and taxes have gone down slightly."

Vice President Feldman asked if we get any state or federal money and if we apply for grants?

Mr. Doucet responded, "Yes, we do apply for grants, for initiatives such as solar power. Also the new cellular service antenna was paid for by a wireless company, but it does benefit the fire dept., any revenue goes back into the tax base and offsets the taxes. It is not working yet, there is still equipment to put on the roof. Our radio equipment will also go on the tower and it's a win-win for everybody."

President Carta asked if there are volunteer positions for people who can't carry the gear.

Mr. Doucet noted that a class A fireman has to come in with full gear. He stated, "You can go into fire police duties later in your tenure." VP Feldman noted that the Coast Guard Auxiliary has older people out there doing patrols in the boats, and admires that the FD has younger recruits. Mr. Doucet stated that the fire department takes new members from ages 17 to 51, and that many members log long years of service. One gentleman last year reached 75 years of service.

Mr. Doucet stated, "The fire station in Oakdale celebrated 50 years of service this year. Our fire commissioners take pride in our buildings. They make the buildings look nice to contribute to the community."

Member question: "Any special needs or assessments in the future?"

Mr. Doucet: "We always need members. It does take a lot of time to ramp up. You have to go to probie school, which is 18 lecture classes and 6 hands on classes at Suffolk County Fire Academy. Then you take a test and earn your certificate. There are 15 additional classes available at WSFD. Typically it's a 12m-18m probie period to finish all the training."

Member question: "Does the dept have difficulty locating addresses?"

Mr. Doucet: "Yes. You have to make your house number visible, they are hard to see, especially if

it's dark and rainy. It's important for the fire department and especially for ambulance people. It is also helpful for letter carriers. In certain areas in Idle Hour the numbering is very unusual. You should do what you can to make it easier for us to find you in your time of need."

Vice President Feldman noted that in Sarasota, FL there are a number of requirements for house numbers: size, color, and location are requirements and you are given a fine if you do not comply.

Mr. Doucet noted that in Great River the kids from the FD Junior Corps went out and painted the numbers on the curb. He added, "The Junior Corps is for kids ages 8-17, who meet once/month. That's where we get most of our members from."

A member asked the question about the proper number to dial for fire assistance. Treasurer Kassten noted, "If you need an ambulance or to call for fire you always dial 911 and they route the call to the proper place." Mr. Doucet noted that if called directly the FD will respond to calls for help if needed, if the call does not route through 911.

Member question: "Where are most of your calls on Sunrise Hwy and what area is the worst?" Mr. Doucet noted that the department boundaries are from the Oakdale Merge East to the fish market that's on Green's creek. Green's creek runs up to Sunrise. He stated that Sunrise and Locust along with Sunrise and Lakeland are the two biggest spots for accidents. He stated, "We're there 2-3 times a week at times, for some reason those two intersections are very bad." A member asked for stats on these intersections. Mr. Doucet stated they do not have them, they respond to probably 100 calls per year on Sunrise.

A member asked whether speed, or road design, or other factors are attributable to these accidents. He stated that some residents are thinking of starting a campaign to study the reasons and cars are not built to survive these things.

Mr. Doucet gave an additional stat: Fire department members must respond to 35% of calls per year to maintain their membership.

Mr. Doucet stated, "In Idle Hour we know there are streets we cannot get a truck down. Frog Lane, Princess Gate – it is difficult to get down, but can extend hose down there. We know where the closest hydrants are and how they'd stretch hose to cover. Another issue has been the bridge to Twin River Drive in Oakdale. Recently the fire department asked for the bridge to be fixed. The Town had put guard rails on the inside of the bridge which would not allow fire trucks to pass through. However, when conditions like this do arise, the fire department has great tools and can get into where they need to get into."

Regarding buildings under construction, Mr. Doucet stated that they check them out regularly so they know the layout etc. He also stated that if they respond to a call with an illegal rental they will report it; their duty is to protect life. Many illegal rentals have noncompliant partitioning of space, which could threaten residents' ability to escape or firefighters' ability to access affected parts of a dwelling.

Mr. Doucet stated that he is also a fire marshal for the Town. The fire marshal handles commercial properties only including apartment houses, but code enforcement handles residential structures.

Mr. Doucet explained, "It is typical for the WSFD to call the surrounding depts., Sayville, Bohemia, and East Islip. All the departments look to be as proactive as possible in their response times. From 6am-6pm if a report comes in of a structure fire they will automatically call the next dept over because staff is typically light at this time because volunteers are at work. Anything west of Locust gets West Sayville and Bohemia alerted, East of Locust gets West Sayville and Sayville. About 5-6 years ago we started this because people work and have jobs. It's hard to get volunteers. Everybody responds to the fire house. Depending on where you are coming from, sometimes

volunteers will respond to the closer house and put on somebody else's gear and be ready to go."

A member asked about the blue light on volunteers' cars. Mr. Doucet answered that responders are allowed to display one blue light in car when responding to the fire house. He stated "If you see it, please move over and let the car pass." He also stated that Community Ambulance responders use green lights. He continued, "The Chief's car is the first responder. Other officers – captains and lieutenants respond to the fire house and get the vehicles out. 95% of the time you get at least one chief there. There are three main chiefs and 3 asst chiefs."

A member asked about carbon monoxide detectors.

Mr. Doucet stated that it is the law that you have one. If appliances such as the furnace or a dryer that run on oil or gas are not running properly they produce carbon monoxide. He stated, "It makes you sleepy, lethargic, puts your senses out of whack. Put that detector near your bedrooms where you sleep. You want it to wake you up. The department responds to CO2 alarms with gas meters to make sure there is no level of CO2 in the house. If your battery is chirping and you change it and it still chirps, have us come and check. Sensors in the meter/alarm get dirty and are not effective. Put it near your bedroom – in your sleeping areas. Alarms can be plugged into a regular outlet. You do not want it in your house on any level." The department stocks meters in the chiefs' cars that they can give to residents."

Question: Do you have to have a CO2 detector in your garage?

Mr. Doucet: The garage is not a good place to put it; it will go off all the time every time you start your car. People disable them when they go off too often.

Many Yale Ave neighbors were in the audience tonight and personally thanked Bob Doucet for his service. WSFD.com is the fire department's website and is a great resource. A link is provided from the OCA website. Thank you to Bob Doucet for a very informative session.

President's report

President Carta reported that he was sent to a LIMBA business networking event for his job, Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan was the keynote speaker, and he talked about the airport really growing. There is currently a \$70M investment on west side of the airport – with construction of lots of new homes for business jets for Excel Air and other companies. Mr. Nolan identified this as an area to invest. Vice President Feldman noted that in getting to Islip airport at 12 noon for a 1:30 flight on a Thursday afternoon the airport was a ghost town. Its unsettling that nobody's there, it seems one reason may be that Southwest's rates are too high. Islip needs competition and had tried to get Jet Blue in there, but that deal fell apart when the fuel prices went up. Ryan air was going to come in, but that deal fell apart also.

At the last meeting it was mentioned that there was some drug activity in the alleyway behind the shopping center. The police are aware and are investigating. President Carta will let us know if he hears anything on this topic.

President Carta thanked Marilyn and Chuck Triolo for putting out the recent membership letter. President Carta also stated there is an upcoming Defensive Driver training course coming up, and information is available on the front table.

Mr. Carta mentioned that he took the cub scouts to the Connetquot River State Park for a hike this weekend, and reported that the hatchery is all fenced in. Ray inquired with the Friends of Connetquot and they reported that at the June DEC meeting the new design for the hatchery was approved. They are basically waiting for the fish there to die off to proceed with restocking.

President Carta has a CD in the front of the room with information on the Drug Awareness program that was held at the High School on Oct 25.

As a reminder, on November 19th the annual Taste of Oakdale event will be held at Dowling College. The Oakdale Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring this and there will be entertainment from CM Performing arts and Ovations Dance Studio.

On Dec 4 will be the Annual Tree Lighting at the Oakdale Train Station – with Santa pulling in for the kids.

On Nov 14 there is a Blood Drive at Knights of Columbus.

Oakdale Civic Survey – please hand in the survey that was distributed – we’d like to know what you’d like to see more of or less of.

President Carta stated that he and Carol Schwasnick had put together the following slate for 2011 OCA officers, which was presented to the membership for vote:

President – Carol Schwasnick
Vice President - Stan Feldman
Treasurer – Pat Kassten
Corresponding Secretary – Brian Bast
Recording Secretary – Vacant

The membership voted and a majority elected the new slate into office.

Vice President Feldman stated that since we don’t have a recording secretary we propose to buy a digital recorder, something that will pick up the table and the folks in the room. Secretary Schwasnick to look into this purchase.

We will appoint directors next meeting, and the new officers will take control for next meeting.

In other news the Town of Islip approved 550 homes behind Grumman in Great River. This will potentially send traffic through Oakdale up OB Road and Locust. The Town of Islip hired an independent contractor to do traffic study in Idle Hour, who will reach out to Idle Hour and Oakdale Civic. President Carta stated that he will put a letter out inviting Town of Islip DPW Commissioner Baker back for an update on this and other issues. There is also evidence that the Town is getting ready to pave North South Roads between Montauk Hwy and Sunrise Hwy– including Oakdale Bohemia Rd., which is long awaited.

The update on the gas station on the corner of OB Road and Montauk Hwy is getting a new building. The tank has been pulled out, and they are examining the soil for contamination. Stan is to call the architect to find out some information on the construction schedule.

The Oakdale Improvement society requested a donation of \$500 for Christmas Decorations. Decorating the train station will take place on the Saturday after Thanksgiving at 10am. Roping and wreaths will be placed along the handrails. Motion from floor to approve donation. Change motion to \$400. All in favor. Motion passed. Our next meeting will take place on December 13, at 7:30pm. Our guest speaker will be NY State Assemblyman elect Al Graf. On Jan 10th, the Connetquot Library Director will be here. We will also be trying to get Community Ambulance to come in.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9pm, motion seconded, meeting adjourned.