

# *Concerned Citizens for Open Space, Inc.*



## **CCOS SPRING 2011 NEWSLETTER**

Concerned Citizens for Open Space has been a White Plains Community advocate for more than 25 years. During that time we have worn many hats in order to protect the little open space that remains in White Plains. We could reiterate our many accomplishments here, but recent newsletters reported on what has been done. The purpose of this article is to outline what we hope to accomplish as we work with a new Mayor and a Common Council.

We will continue our vigilance with respect to development that will harm our environment and our drinking water. Included is bringing information to the Planning Board to reiterate the downstream effects of possible development in regions such as Orchard Street. The changes will not only adversely impact wildlife and a mature forest but the Reservoir and nearby drinking water wells.

We hope to continue working with the Parks Department and the DPW to protect and upgrade the Greenway. Included in this focus is the possibility of extending the Greenway into Scarsdale and at the other end up to Silver Lake that we helped to bring into the White Plains Park System. We will also focus on the upgrade that is required to make Silver Lake and the area nearby the useful and beautiful park that it was meant to be.

In addition, we are working to change the zoning on the remaining open spaces including the golf courses. The moratorium on new zoning, when and if passed, will provide the time to investigate the optimal use of these spaces to best serve the citizens of White Plains.

Part of our mission is to bring to the Public information on environmental issues and to present the views of our local representatives through Open Forums and Candidate debates.

We will continue to work with and support other local and national environmental groups to provide to the citizens of White Plains an ideal City in which to live.

Towards these ends, we ask that you generously support CCOS so that we may continue our work towards preserving Open Space in White Plains and protecting our environment.

### **JONATHON HALE – ARBORIST EXTRAORDINAIRE**

On Monday April 11 at 7:30 PM CCOS will host a presentation by Jonathan Hale of The Care of Trees. Mr. Hale is an ISA Certified Arborist.

His talk will include native (non-invasive) vs. non-native (invasive) species, planting considerations, maintenance of trees, and trees along the White Plains Greenway walking trail. A question and answer session will follow.

This event is free and open to the public and will be held at Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Avenue, White Plains.

The first twenty people to sign in that night will receive a complementary copy of The National Arbor Day Foundation's guide "What Tree Is That?"

Light refreshments will be served.

## **THE MORATORIUM**

For some time the Board of Directors of Concerned Citizens for Open Space has advocated rezoning the R1-30/golf courses to recreational use only. CCOS recently joined with other organizations and submitted a specific such plan to the Common Council and are looking to Council members to take the lead on this matter.

A six month Moratorium is now proposed to study how to bring the City's land use regulations into greater compliance with the visions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Over and over again the Comprehensive Plan makes references to maintaining the golf courses in their current uses. For instance, the Plan contains a Golf Course Vision Statement that says: "The Plan's goal for the golf courses is for their preservation as golf courses." Furthermore the Plan's "Golf Course" strategies states "Strive to preserve the three golf courses as open space resources and amenities in the city." "Key to the Plan's vision is the protection of natural features and the unique open space attributes of specific parts of the city."

A common transit connecting all the golf courses and other important natural features of the southern neighborhoods is Ridgeway. A Ridgeway is defined as "a road or path that follows a ridge, or the highest part of the landscape." As a geographic feature a ridge is a long, narrow raised land formation with sloping sides; a long, narrow piece of ground raised above the level of the ground on either side of it." This describes much about the hydrological nature of our Ridgeway and the surrounding land on either side.

Our Ridgeway begins at Havilands Lane, crosses North Street, intersects Hathaway Lane and its idyllic vistas, rolls past the former Ridgeway Golf Club (recently purchased by FASNY) and Westchester Hills Country Club, abuts the Ridgeway Nature Preserve, crosses little streams, intersects the infamous Railside Avenue, provides a major entrance to The Greenway Walking Trail, and terminates at the intersection of Old Mamaroneck and Soundview Avenues by the White Plains section of Fenway Golf Course.

The residents of Gedney Farms, Reynal Park, Rocky Dell and other adjacent neighborhoods chose to live in these regions of the City largely because of the peaceful, bucolic views and natural features that the Comprehensive Plan mandates City officials protect.

Any attempt to widen this narrow Ridgeway, and any additional parking lots or buildings on either side of either Ridgeway or Hathaway Lane, will not only impede views, but will result in significant impervious surfaces that will negatively impact the ability of the green open spaces to provide natural drainage for the wetlands and will impede drainage into the Sheldrake and Mamaroneck Rivers that flow under and through these properties. Not only to mitigate flooding on local properties, but also as responsible members of LISWIC we must be concerned with hydrological problems and watershed preservation.

If Councilpersons believe more time is needed to study how to best implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan, then CCOS supports the adaption of the proposed moratorium. We urge the Council to appoint itself as lead or principle agent in potential future dealings. CCOS and others look to the Council to take the lead to defend the environment and to ensure adherence to the mandate of the Comprehensive Plan to maintain the golf courses and preserve the natural characteristics of these neighborhoods.

## **EARTH WEEK 2011:**

### **Have fun with friends and neighbors and Sustain White Plains!**

White Plains Earth Week 2011 begins Monday April 25 at 4PM on the steps of City Hall. Music, historical perspectives and environmental themes will set the tone for the week of programs and activities capped by the dedication of new trees planted on Main Street.

If you want to have fun and win green prizes with free bingo cards, don't miss the Senior Bingo Luncheon at the Armory Place Senior Center Tuesday April 26 from noon to 2PM.

That evening from 4 to 9PM White Plains artist Michael Albert will have an Eco-Art Event for middle and high school students at City Hall, where students will take over the Council Chamber and make "Eco-Maps" of White Plains.

On Wednesday April 27 from 2-9PM learn everything you've ever wanted to know about Recycling, Waste, Water and Energy at the Recycling Exhibit in the City Hall Rotunda. From 6-9PM Public Works Commissioner Bud Nicoletti will lead what promises to be a fascinating Open Discussion of Waste, Water and Energy at City Hall. Eco-neighbors will make a presentation about their new Take it or Leave it Shed.

Other Earth Week activities will include "Safe Walks to School" at two White Plains elementary schools and the Youth Bureau's eco-friendly poster making at the After-School Programs. On Friday April 29 White Plains Beautification Foundation will have a Tree Planting Ceremony to celebrate Arbor Day at Church Street School.

Don't miss the all-day mega-celebration on Saturday April 30 with events for every age and interest in every corner of White Plains! After the 9AM to noon clean-ups of city parks, schools, neighborhoods, trails and garden preparation projects, The Sustain White Plains Celebration and Environmental Fair will be in downtown White Plains from noon to 5PM with free pizza and drinks for volunteers involved in the morning clean-ups. At 1PM hear live entertainment by the "Solar Punch Band" followed by the exciting "Bash the Trash" musicians and other White Plains students and adult entertainers.

Saturday morning's Greenway Tours will be led by "Father of the Greenway" Jack Harrington. Michael Jattan will help lead an expedition to discover how today's Greenway was born from the ashes of the Great Depression. They will also explore Eco-neighbors' recently opened Take it or Leave it Shed at the Gedney Way Recycling yard.

The Saturday afternoon "Green" exhibit will showcase ways to make your home, school or business more energy efficient and sustainable and will feature local organizations that enhance the environment of White Plains throughout the year. There will be a free green raffle with exciting, fun prizes and reenactments by the White Plains Historical Society, and special

children's activities including Eco-Art projects with Michael Albert and fun science projects, Seed Planting, Rainstick Making, and Terrariums for kids and adults.

CCOS will have a booth at the Saturday April 30 downtown event and we invite you to stop by and share ideas about preserving, enhancing and expanding open space and parkland in White Plains and Westchester County. We look forward to seeing you there!

For a complete listing of the many Earthweek events, visit [www.sustainwhiteplains.org](http://www.sustainwhiteplains.org).

## **GREENWAY UPDATE**

After a long winter, spring has arrived and many of us are looking forward to getting outdoors. The White Plains Greenway provides an inviting walking or jogging trail.

Entrances to the Greenway are on Gedney Way, Hartsdale Avenue, and Ridgeway. A sign at the Ridgeway entrance reads "The White Plains Greenway on the New York, Westchester and Boston Railway Right-of-way" and provides geographic information, a map, and historical background, including "The 1.7 mile, 35 acre Greenway was dedicated as parkland by the City of White Plains, February 5, 1996, for the recreational enjoyment of its residents and the preservation of open space."

The southernmost section extends from this Ridgeway entrance to the Scarsdale border. Many of the large trees once cut and left across the trail near the Scarsdale border have been moved aside, but there is still a point at which you must turn around and retrace your steps. This section of the trail has some spectacular views of adjacent parkland.

Several trees on the trail have been identified and labeled with information about their bark, leaves, and characteristics. Native trees on this section include Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Red Oak (*Quercus borealis*), Tulip (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Black Birch (*Betula lenta*), and Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). The description of the non-native Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) includes this warning: "once established into a forest it has the ability to shade out the native understory and out-compete the native tree species." A Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) is described as "a popular ornamental."

A well-marked crosswalk leads to the section from Ridgeway to Gedney Way. Walking quietly, one might spot several species of wildlife in the Greenway Park, and an abundance of birds including a resident red-tailed hawk.

Trees marked on this longer section of the trail include Red Oak, American Beech, Black Birch, Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*), Tulip, American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*), Black Locust, Sugar Maple (*Acer Saccharum*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*) "also called a "poplar tree", and the non-native Norway Spruce.

In November 2007 CCOS dedicated a Pin Oak in memory of our co-founder, H. Donald Wilson. This tree is planted just inside the Hartsdale Avenue entrance. In April 2008 CCOS held a fundraiser to enable the purchase of additional trees.

After visiting several area nurseries and consulting with the Recreation and Parks Commissioner, the CCOS Tree Committee selected three Black Birch Swatches (*Betula Nigra*),

two additional Pin Oak (Quercus), two individual Birch (Betula) and a "Woodsy Viburnum" which were planted in the fall of 2008 near the Hartsdale Avenue entrance.

CCOS encourages the city to complete the Greenway walking trail to Bryant Avenue, as was part of the original plan and also recommended by the SEEC Committee as a short term goal, and eventually to extend the trail all the way to the northern section of the city.

We also look forward to the completion of the new Hartsdale Avenue entrance garden.

## **WHITE PLAINS SENIOR AWARDS NIGHT**

On June 7, 2011, CCOS will present two scholarship awards to White Plains High School seniors in recognition of their care for the environment and their academic accomplishments. The Barbara Benjamin scholarship is in memory of one of the founders of CCOS, who was its president for several years; the Marc Pollitzer commemorates another member of the Board of Directors, a community activist.

This will be the eighth year in which CCOS has awarded scholarships. Previous scholarship winners are Jason Indelicato, Josh Daskin, Lauren Minisci, Emily Boshi, Sara Gassman, Max Chapnick, Emma Livne, and Nayib Valdivia.

Join us on Senior Awards Night at the high school on June 7, to applaud this year's winners of the CCOS Scholarship Awards.

## **MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup> WPCNA AND CCOS MAYORAL CANDIDATES FORUM**

CCOS co-hosted with WPCNA a Mayoral candidate's night at the Ridgeway Elementary School. The event was attended by more than 200 White Plains citizens. The three candidates addressed many issues related to the size of government, taxes and open space. All the candidates supported the importance of maintaining open space. With the troubled economy and the city running deficits it is imperative that we remind our new mayor and council the importance of vigilance in respect to open space issues. We encourage the new administration to work with CCOS to preserve, protect and expand open space in the City of White Plains.

## **SPECIAL THANK YOU**

This newsletter will serve as an additional, formal thank you in writing for the wonderful job the White Plains Department of Parks and Recreation and DPW did on the Greenway as part of the spring cleanup efforts. Not only do they personally do a masterful job of preparing the Greenway for the new season, they are courteous caring employees of the city. The Greenway is one of our most prized open space accomplishments and they help make a real difference which is very much appreciated.

## CCOS ANNUAL MEETING

The White Plains CCOS annual meeting for the election of board members will be held June 13, 2011. The meeting will be held at United Memorial Methodist Church 250 Bryant Ave at 7:45 PM. Members and the public are invited to attend.

### CCOS Board of Directors:

Frances Jones, President  
Lynn Edward Huber, Treasurer  
Nancy T. Hantman, Secretary  
Alan Gassman, Vice President  
Harriet Baker  
Lee Huber  
Donald Hughes  
Midge Sanchez  
Dan Seidel

### Contact Information:

Telephone: 914-686-0065  
E-mail: [l.huber@wpccos.org](mailto:l.huber@wpccos.org)

Fax: 914-422-1588  
[www.wpccos.org](http://www.wpccos.org)

Enclosure: 2011 Board of Directors Ballot or Proxy

\*\*\*\*\*  
-----  
\*\*\*\*\*

Please use this tear-off coupon to make sure we register your tax-deductible contribution. Your generous gift will help us continue to protect the quality of life in White Plains.

### Concerned Citizens for Open Space

Tax-Deductible Contribution:

\$35       \$50       \$75  
 \$100       \$150       \$250       \$Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please MAKE CHECKS OUT TO OSI/CCOS and mail your contribution to Lynn Edward Huber, CCOS Treasurer, P.O. Box 345, White Plains 10605. Thank you!