

The **Minutes** of the **Regular Board** meeting held on September 21st, 2009 by the Mayor and the Board of Trustees.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL Trustee Batista – Absent
 Trustee Bueno – Absent
 Trustee Dominguez – Present
 Trustee Watson – Present
 Mayor Kohut – Present

Mayor Kohut: Prior to opening of the public hearing, Trustee Dominguez would like to make a statement.

Trustee Dominguez: As many of you know, my father passed away about a 1 ½ weeks ago. I would like to thank the board and the village for all of their support during this time. Thank you.

Mayor Kohut: We are now going to dispense with the first public participation going to the public hearing for 74 Hudson Avenue, the Open Arms facility. Please speak loudly and show courtesy to all speakers.

Keith Cornell, Attorney for Open Arms- I just wanted to make a few brief remarks. Then, I will introduce Bob Savino, who is the Director of Open Arms.

The application before the Village Board is for an expansion of the existing Special Use Permit for the Open Arms Facility. There are currently twelve residents. The request is going to expand that Special Use to twenty residents. Mr. Hood and I have had conversations of the procedural aspects of the application. Under the existing village code, there is a provision that provides the maximum number of residents for a facility of this kind to twelve. Therefore, we were asking that the Village Board waive that requirement and modify it so that we can expand to the number of twenty. If the board, with advise of counsel, whether tonight or some other night, determines that they must, instead of waiving that requirement, actually make a code amendment, that is modify your own village code before you could grant our application, then the applicant would request that the board do just that. My expectation is that after the presentations tonight and after the public has an opportunity to be heard, that we probably would ask the board to leave the public hearing open for an opportunity to resolve any procedural questions and for an opportunity to potentially come back at a future meeting and conclude the hearing. Having said that, if you would permit me, I'll ask Mr. Savino to make a few remarks. I think he'll be introducing Mr. Degenshein, the Architect, who has had a lot of experience with facilities of this kind.

Bob Savino- Good evening, Mayor and Village Board. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. We have been operating at 74 Hudson Avenue since 1983. Open Arms has been managing the house. We've been supporting people in early recovery, watching them go to school, get jobs, and become productive citizens. Around the year 2000, we approached the County and the State to see about the possibility of purchasing the building, renovating it, and actually making it a safer place by having staff there 24/7, which we don't have there now. The negotiations went on. The state looked into it and they agreed. We have Debbie Shuback from Oasis here tonight. We have Marge Davitt from the County here also. We've worked with many of the county agencies in collaboration on this plan. It would be the first time in Rockland County having community residential women in early recovery. We hope to house ten women in the addition. This would be separate from the rest of the building where we would have ten men. We were able to purchase the building in April 2008, and we've been going through the procedures with the village in order to see how we can move ahead with this.

Jan Degenshein: Thank you Mr. Mayor, Trustees, Ladies and Gentlemen. The building that Open Arms is in right now is a beautiful example of old Victorian architecture. Unfortunately, it is in very poor condition. It is rotting. The idea behind the expansion from an architecture standpoint is to repair and remedy all of the existing failures in the building in the expansion and to have that building so that it will reflect the architecture of the old Victorian era so that it would improve what is happening on the streets as far as the architectural issues are concerned. The interior of the building will be all contemporary. It will have all the safety features of a new building. It will have all new electricity, new heat, and an entire sprinkler system for the building. There will be a separation between the women's area and the men's area. What is very important about this, unlike the existing facility, which is not supervised 24 hours a day. This one will be supervised 24 hours a day. It is not for those recovering substance abusers who are going through an intense program. It is for those who are beyond that point, those who are about ready to embark upon contribution in the community. If you have any questions about the architecture or about the structure of the program, as far as this design is concerned, I can answer them. The entire site is going to be designed so that there will be parking on site. Right now, there is no parking on site. There will be drainage, which is not in existence right now. Every aspect from the ground up, there will be a benefit architecturally and structurally.

Mayor Kohut: Do you need to go through the renderings or anything like that?

Jan Degenshein: I can show them. These are actually architectural plans that we developed along the way. The design is such that the entire front of the building from the street will look exactly what it looked like before. There is a one-story addition in the back which is going to be removed and replaced by a two-story addition. There are several parking spaces along the alley along the back. There is going to be a handicapped ramp from the driveway to the back entrance at the kitchen to the building. This way staff members, and those who are recovering, can also gain access to the building. There are two bedrooms and bathrooms that are handicapped accessible. The basement of the building will be used for recreation space. There will be an area for weight training, area of exercise and dance room.

A porch that had been enclosed will become a laundry room. The two handicapped accessible bedrooms are in the back should there be anybody who is disabled and there is a handicapped accessible bathroom for that. There are going to be two complete stairways. One of them is a fire-enclosed stairway, so that there will be additional protection. The kitchen will be enhanced and new. The upstairs has four bedrooms in the existing building. The beautiful fireplaces, which will no longer be active fireplaces, will have the architecture elements. The moldings and woodwork will all be in place. The beautiful stairway and its railing will be there. In the back, there are four additional bedrooms and still another two bathrooms on the second floor. There is sitting area that actually separates the women's area from the men's area. The people at Open Arms will staff this sitting area. The attic area, although it's large enough to be utilized for other spaces, will not be used for anything other than storage. These are plans for the size of the building, so that the architectural elements become seamless from one end to the other. The siding will be replaced. Windows will be replaced. They will be energy efficient.

Mayor Kohut: Before I open this up for public participation, Jay Hood, Village Attorney, wants to bring up a few points.

Village Attorney: First question I have so that the audience knows, is how many parking spaces will there be on the site?

Jan Degenshein: There will be four parking spaces. One of them is handicap accessible.

Village Attorney: Is there any plan for off-site parking?

Jan Degenshein: There are negotiations as far as I know and I will refer it to Bob Savino about that for parking both at the Sharp Street site and with another location that is within one block of the area.

Village Attorney: What is the potential staffing level going to be when what you are asking for would be at full service?

Jan Degenshein: We would probably be looking at hiring twelve residents of Rockland to staff 24/7. There should be a man and a woman staff person on duty around the clock. That leaves two there at all times.

Village Attorney: Those twelve would be just to attend to the residents that are there on a 24 hour basis?

Jan Degenshein: Right, there will be three different shifts. There will be a 12:00 am to 8:00 am. When they leave, they are replaced by 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and then 4:00 pm to 12:00 am.

Village Attorney: Will there be any additional services rendered at the location that are not being rendered now?

Jan Degenshein: Just residential services. There will be housing people who will be feeding them and giving them instructions.

Village Attorney: No other individuals coming into the premises to counsel or do anything like that?

Jan Degenshein: No, they will be going outside for counseling to Nyack Hospital, Lexington Center in Airmont, or Day Top.

Village Attorney: Mr. Degenshein, when you add on to the back of the building, how much additional building is there going to be as compared to what is there now? Is it going to go 100 feet back or 20 feet back? I think that is a dimension that we have to know.

Jan Degenshein: I will have to refer it to the existing plans. The existing addition goes back approximately 18 feet. The new addition will go back approximately 8 feet deeper into the back yard than the existing and one story higher. There will be a typical roofline.

Mayor Kohut asked if any of the trustees had any further questions.

Mayor Kohut: We are going to go down this list. I am going to ask the person whose name I call to come forward. We do need your address for the record.

Christopher Valvo, President of CV Plumbing
Steve Valvo, President of Valvo Electric 50 Fairmont Ave.- We are local businessmen. We support Open Arms. We've hired people from the ¾ house in the past and we've had no problems with them. We give them our support.

Claudio Gatti, Eakman Dr., Garnerville, NY- I am here because I served this community for over 32 years and retired as a Police Officer/Administrative Sgt. Now, I wear a second hat as clinical supervisor of Lexington Center in Airmont. I am a licensed social worker. First thing I'd like to comment on is in 32 years, you have been on prior boards (referring to Mayor Kohut), and Trustee Batista and Trustee Bueno have been on prior boards and many other boards before. Never once, did any of the boards ever ask the police department to pay extra attention to either the Sharp Street site or the Hudson Avenue site because there were problems at Open Arms. We were asked by the board to go to many other locations in the village, but not those two. Second thing, now I speak as a social worker. Open Arms provides a service to people who need the service for

recovery. Housing is a critical issue for anyone in early recovery or anyone in late recovery. Without proper housing, without adequate housing, without safe and sober housing, people revert back to the old habits. They need the support of facilities like this. Women are particularly at risk because they experience addiction in a very different way than men. The fact that it's going to serve women is even a greater reason to grant their request. Anytime people are in recovery the community is safer for all of those people. They do not put the community at risk. If you want to make Haverstraw a safe community, then approve this particular request. Thank you.

Eleanor Lisewsky- 25 Hudson Avenue: I would like to speak in favor of this. I have a letter of support from Rev. Thomas Madden of St. Peter's Church that he would like read into the record. Also, I want to support the Open Arms expansion. As everyone said, it's 8 feet. It will mean so much more that we can now treat women. I don't think there is anybody here whose family hasn't been touched by chemical dependency. I want to reassure people that the people who come to Open Arms aren't in active use. They have to be clean for at least 30 days. There was a flyer that went out during the weekend about the place being unlicensed. The place is operated under Oasis Guidelines, which is a NYS Agency.

Mayor Kohut: Just explain what Oasis is.

Eleanor Lisewsky: It's the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services. The guidelines are very strict. There is going to be no reduction in the tax base because currently Open Arms doesn't pay taxes. It's a non-for-profit. The construction and the employee salaries are taxable and they are going to bring this in to the Haverstraw community. If this isn't approved, Open Arms won't go away. We'll just loose the money. I am hoping that you will support this minor adjustment, which will make a difference in so many lives.

St. Peters Church, 115 Broadway, Haverstraw, NY- Village of Haverstraw Board of Trustees – "Dear Trustees of the Village of Haverstraw, I support the application of Open Arms, 74 Hudson Avenue, Haverstraw, NY to expand its house to accommodate 8 additional residents for their program. Open Arms has operated for 25 years to assist people to free themselves from substance abuse and return to living productive lives. Individual families and the community benefit from the work of Open Arms. The \$900,000 grant for Open Arms from NYS would provide a stimulus for our local economy with jobs generated for the building addition and in the hiring of more staff to work with the residents. This expansion will allow them to continue as a good neighbor. Sincerely, Thomas F. Madden."

Eleanor: One thing that I wanted to say on my own was that the people aren't hanging around doing absolutely nothing. They have to be either in treatment, in training or in employment when you are in a half way house. This is going to be supervised residential.

Ramona Santos, 131 Hudson Avenue- I have been the owner of 131 Hudson Avenue for 12 years. I had no problems until the owner of 129 Hudson sold the house.

Mayor Kohut: Are you here to speak for the public hearing on Open Arms? I'm sorry, but right now we are holding the public hearing concerning Open Arms. Once we conclude the public hearing, we'll go to our regular board meeting. We can address that issue at that point.

Sherri Kaplan: Can I possibly speak later?

Mayor Kohut: Okay.

Kristine Madore, 20 Roman Acres Dr., Garnerville, NY- I am here more on a personal level. I am a graduate of Open Arms. If it weren't for Open Arms, I would not be here. As a result of going into Open Arms and getting my life back on track and getting into recovering, services became a part of my life that it's contingent upon what I do today. I go to the Haverstraw Outreach. I am actually in the field of helping other addict's get their lives back together. The services that Open Arms provided were valuable to me. At first, I thought it's going to be a bunch of homeless people. That was my perception of what a half way house was. I had no idea. We needed something local, so we all came down to the Haverstraw Outreach. I owe a lot to Open Arms.

Mayor Kohut: I just have one quick question for you if I can. Were you in a residential program with them?

Kristine: Yes.

Jan Degenshein: Supportive living, which was different than a community residence.

Kristine: I paid for the nine months of Day Top treatment. There was no place in Rockland where we could go. I went to upstate New York. It was okay for me because I don't have children. When you have children and to be 2 ½ hours from your children, it's not really conducive to recovery when you are away from your family.

Kelly Kaplan, 20 Roman Acres Dr.- I am also a graduate of the Open Arms Program. I came out of a 28- day program. Open Arms awarded me that transitional period in order to encourage me back into being a productive member of society, where I am able to not rely on Social Services. I work now and also am a student in college. If it were not for Open Arms, I would absolutely not be able to do that. Open Arms saved my life.

Kristine Moetzing, 24 Harbor Pointe Dr.- I am a recovering alcoholic. I did not go to Open Arms or any program. I did AA on my own. It's the people who did go to Open Arms who saved my life. If you look around the room of AA and you see how many people have gone through Open Arms, it's amazing. To sit in a room and watch people come in who are going to Open Arms and to see the metamorphosis that has occurred and see how their lives are changing because of facilities like Open Arms. It's incredible. Before becoming a member of AA, I also thought that AA was a bum that lived on the side of the street and didn't realize that it was like people like me. The women really need a place in Rockland County. There is no place for them to go.

Bob Gelt, Valley Cottage- I am a board member of the Rockland Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies. I also am an alcoholic with 18 years of sobriety. I am also a social worker. We have a location in Nanuet. They educate people. We also have counselors there for referrals for anybody with a problem. We see people that need services. There are people of course that are associated with the Open Arms system. We see the good work that they do. Therefore, we would like to see this project happen. It can only do the community good. AA is an anonymous program. It's not the only program that is represented here. I only mention it here because most people in my job don't know that I am in recovery. It might hurt me if they did know because of the stigma. I came from a very good background. I don't know why I became an alcoholic, but I did. It came to a point where I was unemployable, not a good father, and could not sustain a business. There are many other things that I can go into, but you get the general idea. Through recovery they are able to keep productive citizens, taxpayers, involved in things and we are here tonight to give our face and voice to recovery and hope that you will see that this is for the betterment of your community. I also invite you all to come on Saturday from 11:00 to 4:00 pm. It's a day for families and anybody that wants to celebrate recovery.

Marge Davitt, from the Rockland County Dept. of Mental Health- I just wanted to say how blessed I think Haverstraw is that you have this opportunity. There have been people here and a lot of people who are not here, in the last 25-30 years that have gone through Open Arms that are now teachers, lawyers, and I see them at meetings I run. In Rockland County, every single day we have 771 people enrolled in Chemical Dependency Treatment. Of that, a significant number of those folks come from Haverstraw. The reality is we have a couple of choices here. We can choose not to have this happen, but it's not like that is going to make the problems go away. We can choose to be proactive and recognize that to create an environment where it will allow people to address their health, people will get better. It has taken us 20 years to advocate with the State of NY to get this money. We have gotten \$1.8 million in this fiscal climate for this renovation. That's how much we know that this is an investment in this community as well as those in recovery and a benefit for our overall community in Rockland County. I am here to support this in spirit. I know I don't live in the county, but I see every single day people that have changed their lives personally and their families and their communities based on their experience having gone through Open Arms.

Walter Emery, 155 E. Railroad Ave. West Haverstraw- I fully support this program. I owe a lot to Open Arms. They saved my life. They gave me an opportunity to start my life all over again. Basically, they gave me a job there. I have been there so long, and I see the help that they give the people.

David Samuels, 64 New Main St.- I sat there and I listened to everything that was said. I think the only thing that wasn't said is that there are two matters here tonight, those who are for Open Arms and those who are against Open Arms. Everybody who is sitting here tonight has one thing in common, and it's that we care about Haverstraw. New Main Street from 9W, all the way on to Emeline Park, Broadway all the way down to where Hershey is at, is blight in this village. If you want drugs, go to Spring Valley or go to Haverstraw at Broadway, New Main and Main. Wherever there are drugs, there are gangs. Recovery is about hope and change. I have worked for Open Arms. People who are sitting here today, and you, are here because you care about Haverstraw so it makes no sense to me why you wouldn't support recovery, because recovery is what's needed to remedy all the problems that you see in Haverstraw. It's up to us. I am not talking about Open Arms people. I am talking about those on the fringes who look at Open Arms as the entity that causes problems in the community. Women can come straight from a correctional facility, come to us, and take a shot at getting their life back on track. Learn what it is to be a productive woman in the community. I know people (women) who are doing time right now, who never had a chance to reach the benefits of something like this. Whether you are with Open Arms or not, if you really care about the community, you need to support the recovery. No matter where it comes from. No matter what the name is. Recovery means hope and change. It's up to us.

Melissa Saravia, 114 Hudson Ave.- She will hold off.

Sarah Rose Dillard, 72 Hudson Ave.- I live right next door to 74 Hudson Avenue. These stories are heartwarming. I am glad for everybody. I have met them. They are very nice guys that live next door. There is another side to this. There is a revolving door of criminality that lives next door. There are murderers and drug traffickers. There are people with severe mental illness that are masked by substance abuse. There are a lot of quality of life issues living next door to that. They are very nice people, but when something bad happens, it happens. I've walked my dog in the alley. I see a man looking for change walking towards me. And you know what he said to me? He said he would give me \$3 to F%#*. This is the kind of environment that you are subject to. I think this village should draw a line. This is the time to draw the line at all these group homes and all this recovery. I am not saying that there is not a need for this. There is a need, but somebody has to draw a line. You never know who is going to be on that porch

in the morning. Everybody is saying that there is 24-hour supervision. Nobody is supervising the perimeter when people are mainlining in the back who are pretending to recover. That is what happens.

Melissa Saravia, 114 Hudson Ave.- I just want to say that I feel for everyone in this room that has had an addiction. I am not against the help. I am not against there being facilities within Rockland County, but we are a village that already has seven within three blocks of each other on Hudson Avenue. We have to draw the line someplace. When is it enough? I have a question for the board? What is the Village Board's vision for the appropriate mix and uses of our residential neighborhood currently?

Mayor Kohut: The purpose of this is to hear from the public, their opinion upon the proposed application.

Melissa Saravia: Is it something that the board has been looking at in making the decision about this?

Mayor Kohut: We are hearing from the public now and we will consider everything when we make our decision.

Josephine Carella, - Called off the list but did not come up.

Larry Dillard, 72 Hudson Avenue- I think the board needs to separate the difference between how many people make decisions adopting to a situation that they are in. This is about big business. It doesn't seem to be a problem giving an approval for a group home or for a drug rehab facility. The question is why so much in Haverstraw. Let's not be mislead or distracted. People need help. People make errors. Why Haverstraw? Business is business. The more bodies, the more money.

Oscar Gonzalez, Sharp Street- I don't have a lot of fancy words. I had an opportunity to go back to school because of Open Arms. I wasn't a nice person to be around. This means a lot to me. I respect and understand everything that was said here. I am somebody that came from this quarter house, and I am still part of the umbrella of the Open Arms.

Sean O'Malley, 116 Hudson Avenue- I am a founder of Renew Haverstraw, the group of residents that are concerned about quality of life issues. We support the good work of these homes. People very close to me have received benefits from them. I have never heard a bad thing about Open Arms. I want to make that clear. It's definitely needed. My question to the Village Board is how many group homes do we have?

Mayor Kohut: Again, Sean, this is not a question and answer to the Village Board. This is to present your opinion.

Sean O'Malley: Well, I don't know the answer to the question either. I do know I was able to determine that we have seven homes within three blocks of 74 Hudson. They run the men's clinic on Sharp Street, very well run. We have two other very poorly managed group homes at 68 and 60 Hudson Avenue. We have the home down here on Fairmount Avenue. We have the other place that burned under Miller & Miller. Then we have the Garnerville Home on the way out. Again, the members of Renew Haverstraw are not against new homes. I have a question, Bob. You mentioned that there are no facilities for women?

Bob: Under certain conditions.

Sean O'Malley: Has any studies been done indicating that the Village of Haverstraw needs to increase this concentration of group homes? I don't know who to ask this question to? I'm just wondering why we wouldn't do an analysis to see if there is a better location for expansion purposes. Representatives of the

Village Board I guess you have heard some of the residents who have spoken here, they feel that our Village has already exceeded saturation standards, of it being a mile that they are considering. It's the highest levels of government in our state identifying if do need these reforms regarding concentrations of group homes need to occur, is there any reason why our village should be an exception? I'd like you to consider that. If you do feel somehow compelled to approve this expansion, will you at least agree to the residents of the Village of Haverstraw to remove eight beds from some of those poorly managed homes in the village? We need some help. We are trusting in you, our elected officials to make a decision that is best for the street of Hudson Avenue, the entire neighborhood and the village. Thank you very much.

Katherine Lubouno, 40 Hillside Ave.- I want to say thanks to Open Arms for the work that they did. You, the board, are our guidance. You need to clean up the village. You can't afford to make mistakes. This neighborhood is perhaps not the right neighborhood, as residential as it is, for a larger institution. Perhaps the rest of the county should shoulder the responsibility of this. Please do good work and help us and help you.

Patrick Lubouno, 40 Hillside Avenue- Thank you for the opportunity. Some of my best friends have gone through programs that we are talking about tonight. Again, it really comes down to the saturation issues and the quality of life issues for the people who actually live in the village. I do call and always am a good neighbor. I try to explain to them that this is our neighborhood. You have to observe more control over some of these people who are out of control. The board's ultimate responsibility is for the people who live here and the people who live on Hudson Avenue. Those are the people you should be listening to most. This is why you were elected. You were elected to represent the people in the village.

Chris Detura, 16 So. Highland Ave., Chestnut Ridge: I am here for a couple of reasons. I am a person who got help myself. I was a drug addict. Part of recovery and that process is about quality of life. Very few issues affect the quality of life in such a way. It improves the life of the people who receive the benefits, the lives of the families and the lives of the community of different drug courts in the county. In Rockland County, I do know that there are over 230 group homes spread throughout the county.

Steven Churchio, 21 Church St, Garnerville: I am happy to be here. I am a recovering alcoholic and addict. I have gone through Open Arms. I am currently a full time teacher at SUNY Rockland Community College. I am a taxpayer. I am member of the community. Haverstraw is absolutely a melting pot. It has its good and has its bad. We are talking about state funding of \$1.8 million that is going to create twelve more jobs in this community. We are talking about giving ten women a place to stay and a place to recover. They deserve a second chance. In America, you get a second chance.

Charles Apothekar, New City- I am a County Court Judge in Rockland County. I am here to support the plan to renovate the Open Arm facility on Hudson Avenue. It provides the same opportunity for women struggling with recovery as it has provided for men for all these years. I remember some of the public hearings about my neighbors and heard their concerns about what's going to happen with people wandering around the streets, committing crimes and so on. I think property value was a big issue as well. If you go back to those neighbors now, I think we have six or seven group homes in the Village of Pomona within a mile. If you ask those neighbors today, they wouldn't even know that those people live next door to them.

As we have seen recently, there has been a much greater percentage of women with addiction to alcohol and prescription medication. They need a place to go after they leave inpatient treatment. They need a place to be able to re-integrate

into the greater society. One thing that I have learned over the ten years about addiction is that it's equal opportunity.

Steven Morris, 143 Hudson Ave.- Spoke about how fortunate they have been since they moved here. However, does this board know what they're doing? Fight for us.

Luis Torres, 19 Clove Ave.- I am here to support my neighbors on Hudson Ave. What Larry said earlier about spreading it out really makes a lot of sense. Where is the equal opportunity in treating people in other places and why do we have to take on such a heavy burden. My concern is people at the village are just getting worn down by all the crap. I am very concerned about my neighbors. I want my daughter to live in a place that is going to be very nice and has enormous potential. We have lots of beauty here in Haverstraw. We have the Hudson River. I like the fact that there are so many people that are concerned about this. I think that it makes sense to draw the line and spreading it out makes sense. I encourage the board to take a hard look at this proposal.

Mayor Kohut: That complete the names that I have on the list.

Sherri Koplan, Mt. Ivy- I just want to say that if there are kids at the present location and if I had kids, I would want them to be in a safe environment.

Joyce Grace, Hudson Ave.- I didn't think I was going to speak tonight. I have lived in this community since 2000 with my husband. Honestly, that house is in disrepair. We also need to look at what Sean showed us in terms of the number of group homes that we have and how well run are they. Why is that home falling apart? Why are they allowing it to fall apart? This is a non-profit organization. There is a lot they could do. A facility that has men and women, I don't understand it. It doesn't make any sense to me as a recovering person. To talk about women finally having a place to go, well then why isn't it just a women facility? I don't think that Open Arms has treated that property with respect. The other statistic that we haven't heard tonight is that some people recover and some people don't. Everybody heard success stories tonight. There are some that aren't success stories and then that is when problems arrive.

Kevin Cunningham, Garnerville- I also lived at 57-59 Sharp Street. I also lived at 74 Hudson Avenue. I lived there for a year. I went to meetings. I went to school. I am a supervisor in a huge company. If I am not mistaken, Open Arms hasn't owned 74 Hudson Avenue. They just recently bought it. Open Arms does a lot of good things for the area.

Janice Fox- I am the Program Director-Clinical Supervisor of Open Arms. We are there to help them. I have worked there for 14 years and Open Arms has excellent ethical standards.

Robert Conlon, 26 Locust Dr. Thiells- I wasn't going to speak. I came in late. The reason I am here is because Open Arms is here tonight. I went through Open Arms. It saved my job. It saved my family. I am New York City police officer. I almost lost my job and my life because of alcohol. We went to meetings and went to work. This is what the ¾ house is all about. We did our chores. Right now, I am a success story and I owe it to Open Arms.

Bob Kessler, Stony Point- They are talking about eight beds. We are trying to help people get their lives back together. Three years ago, I wouldn't be standing here. While you were all in here, I would be out robbing your cars. If it wasn't because of Open Arms and Bob Savino and other people here who turned my life around. Now today, I am the happiest and luckiest man alive.

Ruth Boles, Executive Director of Rockland Council on Alcoholism, Nanuet- I am here to support Bob Savino and Open Arms. I am also here and need to correct some things that were said tonight. Addiction is not a social disease. Addiction

is a chronic disease just like cancer, heart disease, asthma, and diabetes. I am here to say that there are a lot of people here who support recovery because they know that they got their lives back on track. They have been able to become productive citizens of your community. I would like to say again that I support Bob Savino and Open Arms. I am here to educate the public on what addiction is all about. The people of recovery have been discriminated against for many years. It's time for discrimination to stop.

Ed Wilson, 74 Sharp St.- I just want to say that I am shocked. All you guys have heard about good things that happened at Open Arms. I just want to say that I came from nothing. I am the bad story. I came from prison. I had nothing. I was addicted to drugs. I thought I was going to die in prison. Someone put something in my head that there was a better way to live. What I did was to take that suggestion and went to Bob Savino on an interview. I went to this man and asked him for a chance. He said yes. He did take a chance and everything he asked me to do, I did. I can't believe that eight people coming in to have an opportunity like this, you guys would not believe in it. I am here today to support something that I believe in.

Giovani Saravia, 114 Hudson Ave.- My father is also an alcoholic. I was brought up in a family with issues also. Luckily, my father found God and that helped him tremendously. There is a trend here where a lot of these folks do not live in the village. The majority that has been speaking do not live in the village. I do. Therefore, I do have a common interest like many of residents here. I don't see anything wrong with what they are currently. It's what Sean and others said. If you are going to continue with this project in expanding it, then let's do something about the amount of boarding homes, the amount of homes that we have currently here that are used to rehabilitate these folks. Let's take care of the ones that are not doing their jobs. I understand there are grants and money that's being given from the state in order to do this. I don't know what the time frame is or how long they are going to give you to do this project or you will lose it. As a board, you guys, I believe, should say let's see how the new owners do. Let's stay currently with twelve folks that are currently there and see how well this goes. If it's something that you guys see that is a possibility to expand because it's doing well, then you take it from there. Also, take into consideration that for those who are not doing the right thing, those should go. I think that we are complaining here not because we don't want this home in our village. What we don't want is the overwhelming amount of homes that are being used for these reasons within our village.

Mayor Kohut: I just want to make one little clarification to something he said. It's that Open Arms, prior to last year, was not the owner of the facility. They were the tenants of the facility. Mr. Savino, I don't know if you have been there the whole time, but you have been there for a quite number of years operating that facility. I just wanted to make that clear.

Peter- I live in the back of 38 Westside Ave.- I tried to find out information on 74 Hudson Avenue. I couldn't find anything on the internet for 74 Hudson as far as any rehabilitation center. I am just curious to know how come no one can find information on the internet.

Jan Degenshein: We have not been granted a license to operate it. The facility has been operating as a ¾ house. We have a representative from NY State Oasis here tonight. We have a grant to purchase the property, renovate it, and run the license as a NYS Community Residence for Recovering People. All this is a process. We are still working on it.

Peter: Why would something that is unlicensed be allowed to operate?

Mayor Kohut: The facility has existed for 25 years. It's been in existence in the village for 25 years.

Golgav Gavrilo – I live next door. I am against this. Sometimes, people from there walk on my driveway. Hudson Avenue is history. There are beautiful houses. Their trees fall on my property and I'm afraid of the residents. Why do you have to make this bigger? Like the gentleman said, you can't even find this in the yellow pages.

John Glass, 66 Maple Ave.- I have been a resident of Haverstraw for over 30 years. People that have been in Haverstraw that know me, know that I have done drugs, crack, been arrested, and have numerous times been in this facility. I needed to learn how to transition myself. Open Arms enabled me to go to college and to get an associate's degree. If the halfway house was next to my house, I would tolerate it because the benefits are so great that they outnumber any other thing that I can complain about.

Sharon Wilson, 5 Herdman St., W. Haverstraw- I would like to speak on behalf of Open Arms. I completed Open Arms three years ago and it was the most memorable time in my life. I think out of the four roommates that I had, three of us are still around. One of the biggest problems that I saw from being a resident in Open Arms was the fact that there was no transition for women.

Janet Elliot, 57 Clove Ave.- I have been here most of my life. Like everyone has said, we have so many multiple unrelated resident housing situations here. There is so much stress on this village. There is too much density and what the village needs is balance. There's too much expansion.

Steve Moetzing, 24 Harbor Pointe Drive- I just wanted to make a few points tonight about all of the wonderful things that occurred on both sides of the issue. I am not a recovering alcoholic and a recovering drug addict. I really wanted to listen to the residents of the Village of Haverstraw. The board has a really hard decision to make. We have seen the benefit tonight of what recovery can do. We've talked about the building about being in the state of disrepair that it is. They are saying that they want to re-beautify the building.

Zahaira Rodriguez, 55 West Broad St- There are murderers and criminals living in that house! It's not safe and I have to be afraid for my daughters to go outside!

Peter Rugg, 64 Hudson Ave.- There are seven group homes. How much is enough? You have one down the hill. It produces a ghetto to have so many group homes in such a small area! There are other places to go! I also take offense that all these people have come from outside. They don't live here! No more, that's it!

For the Record, Mayor Kohut read the letters received over the course of the past few weeks in reference to Open Arms. They were from Thomas Zugibe, District Attorney, Edith Vasquez of 24 Clove Avenue, Francisco- 25 South St., Rojai Makon-133 Hudson Ave., William Schmidt-6 Jefferson St., 42 Broad St., Anita Schmidt, Ronnie Hernandez-133 Hudson, Amarylis Zayas Torres-18 Main St., Juan Hernandez-24 Clove Ave.

Another letter was received from James McGee and emailed to me. There is another letter from Bob Gelt, who spoke earlier, a letter from the Village of Haverstraw Collaborative, letter from Karen Damiani-Retired Director of Rockland County Dept. of Probation, Chris Murray-51 Hudson Ave., and last is a letter from Joe Abate- Director of Community Development.

(All wrote in support of the Open Arms expansion.)

These were all the letters that we received in the mail.

Eileen Lia, 110 Hudson Ave.- She just had concerns about not just this home, but all the other homes.

John Lia, 110 Hudson Ave.- Thinks there are a lot of misconceptions going on tonight. Definitely not against Open Arms. Their programs are great. The concern is density. You are talking about putting 20 people in one house. We don't want 20 people in one house. You will be setting a precedent if this is approved to put 20 people under one roof in the Village of Haverstraw. We are trying to bring a village back. Perhaps, they can take one of the homes that are not being run effectively and put eight beds in there, so that it's not all concentrated in the same place.

Gil Carlevaro, 42 Leonard St.- Listening to what everybody said, maybe we can keep it the way it is now, same number of beds. Just keep it for women. Upgrade it and make it nice. Maybe everyone will be happy.

Sean O'Malley: At the beginning of the meeting, it was said that there was an opened public hearing. Does that mean that there will be another hearing?

Mayor Kohut: It's up to the board to make a decision, but we may have to continue the public hearing to iron out some other legal issues before it proceeds to vote, yes.

Sean O'Malley: So, yes, there will be another public hearing?

Mayor Kohut: The public hearing will most likely be continued.

Jan Degenshein, 205 South Broadway, S. Nyack- Architect – He spoke about his experience of having a group home next to him for the mentally ill. Spoke about fear, stigmas etc. You all know that this program does work in this community and does work for the community. He asks everyone to let Open Arms continue to be what it has been and let it be an example for other homes in other communities for the way things need to be operated.

Robert Miller, 20 State St.: The law was written so that no public group homes would be overly built within one mile of each other.

Trustee Watson: Who currently owns 57 Sharp Street?

Jan Degenshein: Open Arms is the owner and there is a mortgage with NYS Oasis.

Trustee Watson: How long have they owned it?

Jan Degenshein: They purchased it I believe in January 2000.

Trustee Watson: How many men are there?

Jan Degenshein: Eighteen.

Mayor Kohut: Before we adjourn this, is there anything that the applicant wants to clarify or rectify at this point? If not, that is fine.

Trustee Dominguez made a motion to continue the public hearing.

Mayor Kohut: The adjourned date is Thursday, October 15th at 7:00 pm. Because there is court in this room, it will be upstairs.

Resolution # 219 – 2009

Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.

Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: That concludes this part. We still have a Village Board meeting to go on. Feel free to stay if you want. We are going to continue with our meeting.

Mayor Kohut: First will be public participation.

Ramona Santos, 131 Hudson Ave.- The people at 129 Hudson made the front as an illegal driveway. They called the police because I parked in front of the driveway and that is not a driveway. A landscaping truck parks on top of the sidewalk making the pedestrians go on the streets. I am getting tired of this.

Mayor Kohut: Give us a chance to look into it and see what we can do with it.

Pete Rugg, 64 Hudson Ave.- I have been in contact with the Building Inspector and he told me there were violations placed on 68 Hudson Avenue. It's getting worse. There are cops there two or three times a week.

Mayor Kohut: The one thing I could tell you is that they issued a bench warrant for the owner of the building.

Pete Rugg: Has this board requested that the Town Police, when they enter structures and find building code violations, call our Building Inspector? At that time, does he have a legal right to enter the premises because they invited the law in? Have you requested that from the town, so that the Building Inspector gets an opportunity to get inside the structures to site violations?

Mayor Kohut: The procedure is, as it's supposed to happen, they don't necessarily call him on the spot but they are supposed to send down a complaint form to the Building Inspector. Because the police have now made a complaint, that gives him access into the building.

Mayor Kohut: Anybody else under public participation at this point? We are now going to the regular agenda.

Reports of Village Officials:
Village Attorney- No report.

Village Treasurer- No report.

Mayor's Report- We have a couple of letters that I will read into the record. First is from Brandon Scanlon. His parents live at 70 Hudson Avenue. He wants somebody to look into a situation that is occurring at 68 Hudson Avenue. The home next door to them has some serious issues happening there, plenty of police activity and loud parties to all hours of the evening. This issue is not months old, but now going on for over a year. The owner of the home applies for special permit to operate some kind of halfway house or care-taking facility of some sort. "My parent's report that the owner no longer reside at this address. My parents have called the police numerous times."

Second letter from 40 Coolidge Street- I have a number of issues that I would like to bring to your attention. I purchased by townhome 18 years ago. My backyard has flooded a number of times throughout the years. Just recently, 7/19 – 7/21 my yard was flooded. The water, about an inch, was coming into my living room. I had to call the police to contact DPW. This constant flooding has caused a lot of damage to my small yard as well as my townhouse. I've had a number of infestations because of this problem. The village has done nothing to correct the problem. Thank you for your consideration.

Mayor Kohut: As to the first letter, since I received it, I spoke to Mr. Scanlon. I've been trying to find out who might regulate this house. The calls I have made to the county, to OMRDD and to another facility, say that they do not supervise this house. I am continuing to try to find out who is supposed to be supervising this house.

As to the second letter regarding the flooding, the letter writer is incorrect that the village has refused to supply funds. It has not become an issue until this point.

Our Superintendent of Public Works with his commissioner and I have talked and we have plans for next year of digging up this line. The problem is the roots have grown into the existing storm line. The supervisor has a plan for next year replacing the entire length of this pipe.

Mayor Kohut: We have a request from NY Electrical Inspections and Consulting, LLC. They are requesting our approval to become authorized to perform electrical inspections in the Village of Haverstraw. "I began my formal training in 1983. Beside myself, I have another inspector, Pierre Velorsh, who is experienced and have enclosed his resume as well. He is also seeking to be licensed as an electrical inspector in the Village of Haverstraw."
Can I have a motion to approve this request?

RESOLUTION # 220 – 2009

Motion by: Tom Watson, Jr.
Seconded by: Emily Dominguez
Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: We have a service contract from Reddi Alarm and Time Systems for a quarterly fire alarm inspection and service at the Haverstraw Community Center, 50 West Broad Street, at a cost of \$480.00 per annual. Motion to approve?

RESOLUTION # 221 – 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.
Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: At a previous meeting, there was an application from the owner at SoupStone Café requesting to replace professional space over the top of her restaurant with one apartment. We have forward the application to the Planning Board for their discussion and their recommendation. They have referred it back with a positive recommendation. We are asked to set up a public hearing for this matter because it is up to the Village Board to grant or deny this application. So, if we can set a public hearing date for October 5th at 8:05 pm.

RESOLUTION # 222 – 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.
Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: In our Warren Court Project, there was a proposal to install a fire hydrant that will not be necessary to help service the ballfield, but the houses behind the ballfield. It presently has a several hundred feet run from the nearest hydrant. In order to provide this hydrant on the property, we have to agree to pay United Water the annual service fees that are part of this. Could I have a motion authorizing this?

RESOLUTION # 223 – 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.
Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: We have a request from CSEA Employee Benefit Fund. "We are seeking your help in getting the enclosed memorandum of agreement signed for the Retiree Dental. CSEA Employee Benefit Fund is a trust fund, not an insurance company. The purpose of this MOA is to tie these retirees to group so that the fund may also offer retiree plan coverage prior to the expiration of their

Cobra eligibility.” Both management and CSEA labor specialist must sign the memorandum. This memorandum does not obligate the employer in any way as it relates to financial administrative duties. The benefit is provided to retirees at no cost to the employer.

As this will have no cost or impact upon the village or taxpayers, I’ll entertain a motion to authorize the signing of this memorandum.

RESOLUTION # 224 – 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
 Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.
 Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut: We have two brief notices. One is from Cablevision. If anyone has analogue boxes on their TV still, they will no longer be effective as of October 7, 2009. They can contact Cablevision for replacement.

The Rockland Family Shelter is notifying us that October is Domestic Violence Awareness nights. Landmarks such as Niagara Falls, mid Hudson Bridge etc. were illuminated purple for a day. They are asking everyone to also participate, whether with one light or many, by illuminating all or part of your structure inside or out with purple lighting Friday, October 2 through Friday, October 9.

We have a resignation letter from one of our Community Center employees, Danya Peralta. She has given her two-week notice. If I could have a motion to accept her letter of resignation?

RESOLUTION # 225 – 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
 Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.
 Motion carried: All

Mayor Kohut:
Reports of Standing Committee:

Fire and Ordinances, Trustee Bueno – Not present, but Trustee Watson will stand in for him.

Trustee Watson- I have an application for a new member to join Lady Warren Hose Co. His name is Joseph Roman. He resides at 21 Coolidge St. He has been a member of the General Warren Co. in 2002. He failed to make his quarter, so he was taken off of that role with that company. He has never been refused for membership. There is no sign of handicap. He has not been convicted of a crime. He is proposed by Mike Begbie, Co#5. I make a motion on behalf of Rafael Bueno that we accept him.

RESOLUTION # 226 – 2009

Motion by: Tom Watson, Jr.
 Seconded by: Emily Dominguez
 Motion carried: All

Public Works, Buildings and Grounds, Trustee Watson- No report.
 Youth and Family Services, Trustee Dominguez- No report.
 Buildings and Code Enforcement, Trustee Batista – Not present.

Old Business: None
 New Business: None
 Public participation: None

Mayor Kohut: If not, I will take a motion to adjourn.

RESOLUTION # 228 - 2009

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Tom Watson, Jr.

Motion carried: All

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Castro
Clerk/Typist