



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 10/28/2015 by Friends of Highbrook Highline [highbrookhighline@gmail.com](mailto:highbrookhighline@gmail.com)**

## Village of Pelham Designates a Portion of NYW&B Railway as Parkland

On October 20, 2015, the Village Board of Pelham passed a resolution designating a portion of the old New York Westchester and Boston (NYW&B) Railway site, which contains the Highbrook Avenue Bridge, as parkland (approx. 1.5 acres). For decades, groups of neighbors have mobilized to consider uses for the space. The most recent concept to pursue parkland designation arose from a board appointed committee 5 years ago, chaired by Trustee Joe Marty, to research options for the land. The Friends of Highbrook Highline (FHH) evolved from this effort and includes board members Ann Dumas-Swanson, Emily Freidberg, Susan Mutti and Sue Seither. Susan Mutti, as Deputy Mayor, introduced the successful resolution.

The FHH were assisted by rail fans Robert Bang, Otto Vondrak and Roger Wines. They provided historical photographs and research, which helped with public outreach as well as preparation for the application for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. One third of the NYW&B site was opened as a passive park in 2012 through a joint effort by the Village of Pelham, FHH, a grant by the Junior League of Pelham and support by Pelham Preservation & Garden Society acting as fiscal sponsor. With a landscape company and volunteers, the green space near Young Avenue was remediated of contaminated soil, and then planted with trees, shrubs and flowers. The newly designated parkland, extending over the bridge, has the potential to become a nature walk with gardens, a rails to trails concept. The entire NYW&B property represents 22% of Pelham Village's open space.

The concrete arch railroad bridge was designed by Alfred Fellheimer, a nationally well-known railroad architect who headed the design committee for Grand Central Terminal. It was erected with the approval of financier J.P. Morgan under the management of Leverett S. Miller, president of the NYW&B. The historic rail line, completed in 1912 as state of the art transport, was abandoned in 1937. Awaiting further repair work, the bridge stands as the largest work of public art in the village.

The designation of the area as parkland has been endorsed by Westchester Land Trust and the Lower Hudson Sierra Club. The property has been granted eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

