

Environmental club takes on climate change

Former VT governor talks about club's role in making a global impact

by Katy Pickens

On Thursday, Feb. 7, former Vermont governor Peter Shumlin spoke to Environmental Club about climate change, environmental policies, and the importance of immediate action to save the planet.

Students and teachers were able to ask questions about climate change and how individuals can make a difference. Shumlin emphasized the huge responsibility of coming generations to handle climate change but said that he thought young people are up to the task.

"Climate change is the most important issue we're facing," said Shumlin. "You're our only hope."

Shumlin saw the effects of climate change firsthand while dealing with the destruction of Hurricane Irene in Vermont in 2011.

Shumlin made protecting the environment a priority throughout his three terms as governor from 2011-2017.

Under his leadership, Vermont decreased power rates for four out of six years, increased the amount of wind power 22 times over and

increased solar power by over 100 percent.

Junior Will Kincaid, a co-head for Environmental Club, explained that Shumlin has been going to high schools around the country to talk about climate change and education, and many members of the club were excited that he was able to visit NT.

"Because we live in the Midwest, we don't see the big effects of climate change and a lot of people here don't think of it as a big problem. Recently we've had a 100 degree temperature change over the span of two days. It's becoming a bigger problem, and it's not something you can ignore."

Climate change is an enormous global issue that continues to be ignored despite its increasingly visible effects.

According to a 2018 UN report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, global warming will inflict irreversible damage to ecosystems, wildlife, and coastal cities unless emissions are radically reduced.

The Environmental Club has been working to fight climate change by advocating to make school more green.

The club's most well-known initiative was the Nalgene project in 2016, where all students received Trevian water bottles in an effort to reduce waste produced by plastic bottles sold in the cafeteria. Will Kincaid and senior Stella Cook have

lead the club since 2017.

The club continues to be active in making the school more eco-friendly, most recently advocating for composting, replacing plastic utensils in the cafeteria with a greener alternative, and encouraging thrift shopping. Environmental club may also partner with Go Green Wilmette to clean local beaches during the spring.

Co-heads and members of the club were excited that Shumlin was able to speak here to encourage action. Junior Kathryn Hemmer saw Shumlin speak with her biology class and appreciated that his message was aimed specifically towards students.

"Shumlin's emphasis on the importance of youth action was extremely impactful and relevant," said Hemmer. "It felt fitting that we went as a biology class, since we have discussed ways to be more environmentally friendly."

Shumlin has talked at high schools around the country to promote education on climate change and inspire action before it's too late. He talked about various travel and education programs for students focused around climate change through his family's business, Putney Student Travel.

Shumlin has created the Governor's Leadership Initiative which includes travel programs for teens that want to get involved in fighting climate change.



Shumlin spoke of the role students play in combatting climate change | Kass

While promoting these programs, Shumlin encouraged action in any capacity, locally or otherwise.

"You can do anything that comes into your head," said Shumlin. "Doing nothing is not an option, and we've been doing nothing for too long. You're our hope and you're our future, but you are the first generation born to this earth with this responsibility."

Students interested in fighting against climate change are welcome to go to Environmental Club on Mondays after school in room W355.

"People are always saying 'whatever I do isn't going to impact climate change overall. If everyone has that mentality nothing is going to get done' said Kincaid. "We need individual people working against climate change if we're going to save the planet."

Parking remains an expensive ordeal

Prime driveway spots sell for up to \$300 a month

by Emma Mansour

Despite efforts by the school to provide parking, along with the private market for spots in nearby residential driveways, parking at NT remains costly and hectic for students.

Each semester, the school rents out approximately 150 spots to some of the almost 1,000 eligible seniors, leaving many students scrambling to find parking.

Located at Elder Beach and the Green Bay Metra parking lot, students are charged \$630 each semester. Students are given priority depending on the proximity to their school; those living over a mile and a half away are given spots over those living closer.

During second semester, parking spots are rented out a second time, with seniors who didn't receive a spot first semester getting priority over those who did.

Though students can park through New Trier parking, there are approximately 3,000 students who need some way to get to school.

Even with carpooling, this leaves the other 2,800 students without a place to park if they're driving to school.

That's where driveways come in handy. Residents near the school rent out their driveway, selling them on a semester or yearly basis.

In fact, parking spots can cost upwards of \$3,000 for the year, with costs varying based on how close the house is to the school as well as the renter.

"I pay a couple grand for the entire year and I park in Kenilworth," said junior Zoe Ray.



There are 150 school-sanctioned senior parking spots, with one of the main locations at Elder Beach | Towers

Junior Janey Matejka said "My friend drives me and parks on Fuller. It's a ten minute walk, and it's not cheap."

The most popular spots are in the driveways of the houses surrounding the school.

One family, who prefers to remain anonymous, has been renting their driveway across from the school for nearly ten years. It is arguably one of the best spots to have, based on their proximity to school.

Prior to moving in, this resident had no idea about the NT parking situation and only found out from people asking.

"We would get notes in our mailbox, and then our neighbors' friend was actually the [first] one to approach us about parking," said the resident.

Being charged for parking, especially at this price, is not the norm for most schools. "Most schools have free parking for upperclassmen," said senior Sam Wert.

Over time, the prices and the

market have changed. Renters must adapt their prices to these changes.

"We've increased it one time in ten years just to keep it in line with what everybody else was doing," added the anonymous family.

In the ten years the anonymous resident has been renting out their driveway, they have changed the price from \$200 per month to \$300, totaling about \$2,700 per year, which is a price not unusual for the proximity of the spot to the school.

Paying thousands of dollars for a parking spot may seem ridiculous, but to students, it's the norm.

"I never get questioned on the price because I think [students] see the value in it and share it with their friends and teammates," said the renter.

Junior Avery Hirschfield said, "It may be a little overpriced considering we are students, but it's also inconvenient for the people that live there."

These prices often go unquestioned because of how

desperate people are to get a spot. This driveway in particular is in high demand, as the renter explained, "Normally people approach me too late. We're booked a year out. We literally have a list for the next two years."

Parents can go to extremes to get a spot. "There was one guy last year who offered to buy out the entire driveway for his daughter to park there," said the renter.

For context, there are 11 spots in the driveway, bringing the total price of the driveway to about \$30,000.

Students can be just as desperate as their parents.

"We get resumes in our mailbox— 'I'm a 4.0 student, my parents are divorced, I take early bird.' It's interesting, I give these kids a lot of credit," said the renter.

In terms of pricing, this renter feels that the high prices are generally justified: "It really comes down to demand and people are wanting to do whatever it takes to get parking. The parents and kids love it."

An update from Student



Student Alliance started off our first Advisory Constituent Board (ACB) meeting with sophomore advisory representatives in December to discuss issues regarding school safety, and just had our second ACB meeting Thursday, 1/14, to talk about food items students would like to see in the cafeteria.

SA officer election for president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer have officially started! There will be a "Meet the Candidate" event on Feb. 28th, and the presidential speech and voting is on Mar. 5th for girls and Mar. 7th for boys.

We've officially started our "Cleanup the Commons" campaign and put up signs in the cafeteria to encourage students to clean up after themselves. Students can scan the QR code on the signs to see our cool video!

We created a slideshow honoring activists who were inspired by MLK's legacy on the school monitors for MLK day. We also did PA announcements to bring more awareness to the significance of MLK day, especially in the times we live in now.