

Minutes
GHI Board of Directors
January 28, 2010

Present: Hickey, James, Lewis, Morse, Agans, Novinski, McFadden, Boswell

Excused Absence: Mazursky

Others in Attendance:

Gretchen Overdurff, General Manager
Joan Krob, Director of Member Services
Tom Sporney, Staff Engineer
Dianne Wilkerson, Chair, Audit Committee
Dorothy Lauber, Audit Committee
Ruth Wilson
Angela Miotto
Emmett Jordan, City Council Member

Eldon Ralph, Assistant General Manager
Joe Perry, Director of Finance
Matt Berres, Landscape Specialist
Henry Haslinger, Audit Committee
Patty Muldowney, Recording Secretary
Kris White, Companion Animal Committee
Ron Jewel
Bonnie Shields

President Agans called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Board made a few changes to the agenda for this meeting. The title for item 6g was changed to “New and Old Committees and Groups”. Items 6i, “Property Tax Assessment”, and 6j, “Strategic Planning Next Steps” were added to the agenda. Committee reports from the Buildings and Woodlands Committees were added under item 4. President Agans explained that item 6e would be discussed even though the member request for a greenhouse had been withdrawn.

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

Moved: James

Seconded: Boswell

Carried 7

2. Visitors and Members

There were no issues brought up by the members in attendance.

3. Approval of Membership Applications

MOTION: THAT THE FOLLOWING PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS ARE ACCEPTED INTO THE COOPERATIVE AND MEMBERSHIP AFFORDED THEM AT THE TIME OF SETTLEMENT:

- AREF DAJANZ, SOLE OWNER
- COURTNEY HOLLENDER, SOLE OWNER

Moved: James

Seconded: Morse

Carried 7

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE GENERAL MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A SALES CONTRACT TO PURCHASE 71F RIDGE ROAD

Moved: James

Seconded: Boswell

Carried 7

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE FOLLOWING MUTUAL OWNERSHIP CONTRACT CHANGES:

- **SHELLY GILTNER, SOLE OWNER, TO GREENBELT HOMES, INC., NON-CORPORATE DESIGNEE**

Moved: James

Seconded: Morse

Carried 7

4. Committee Reports

- Buildings Committee: Director Boswell shared that the Buildings Committee has made a decision about what type of equipment to use in their pilot project; they would like to purchase the equipment as soon as possible to become familiar with it. The committee will be requesting \$3000 at the next meeting to purchase a substantial number of items.
- Companion Animal Committee: Committee Chair Kris White shared that CAC and the Woodlands Committee met jointly with member Benjamin Skolnik about roaming cats. The Companion Animal Committee plans to attend the next Woodlands meeting. White also shared an idea from the CAC Committee about doing a census of companion animals in the community around the same time as the US census.
- Finance Committee: Director Lewis shared that the Finance Committee recommends no change to the administrative fee charged to members who rent out their units, although they recommend changing the name from “rental administrative fee” to “rental fee”. The committee and Director of Finance Perry will further look into members renting their homes to a friend or family member for a low fee, resulting in a low rental fee paid to GHI. Director Lewis also shared recommendations from the Finance Committee on the land trust conservation easement option for GHI. At this time, the committee does not recommend placing undeveloped woodlands on a conservation easement.
- Marketing and Communications Committee: Director Morse shared updates with the Board about the website revamp, which ties in with the Communications Committee. The committees will set up a work group to look into hiring an outside contractor to work on the website.
- Member & Community Relations Committee: Director James shared updates about the events held by the committee, including the House and Garden Tour, community picnic, liaison gatherings, yard sale, and appreciation luncheon for volunteers. Director James stated that the committee is still short-handed and seeking additional members to serve on the committee.
- Architectural Review Committee: Director Novinski shared that the committee has continued to meet monthly to hear exception requests and consider rule changes. The committee has recently added a new member.
- Woodlands Committee: Director James shared updates from the Woodlands Committee, which is fully staffed. The committee will be out doing something in the woods the third Saturday of each month. Director James also shared updates from the collaboration with the City’s Forest Preserve Advisory Board; the two groups met once and are trying to identify common interests. In order to solve the issue of the roaming cats in GHI, the Woodlands Committee will try to send a representative to each Companion Animal Committee meeting. Member Ron Jewel asked Director James if there are still people living in the woods. The Board discussed the issue of people living in the woods, and suggested that Mr. Jewel attend a Woodlands Committee meeting.

Mr. Jewel then asked about the possibility of turning the woods behind Green Ridge House into an additional parking lot. He stated that in the past, a survey had been done for this project. Mr. Jewel voiced concern for the potential destruction of woodlands. City Council Member Emmett Jordan stated that the City has no formal plans for completing the project mentioned by Mr. Jewel.

5. Consent Agenda

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Morse

Carried 7

6a. Approval of Minutes: November 5, 2009

MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENT AGENDA: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2009.

6b. Tub Reglazing Contract, 2010-13 – 2nd Reading

MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENT AGENDA: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER, FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH PORCELAIN TUB RESTORATION FOR THE REGLAZING OF GHI TUBS AT ITS BID OF \$210/TUB, \$50/STRIPPING, \$40/TUB DRAIN REMOVAL, 3% & 5% ESCALATION FOR 2nd & 3rd CONTRACT YEAR, FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$13,000 IN 2010, AND BUDGETED AMOUNTS FOR FUTURE YEARS OF THE CONTRACT.

6c. Waste Disposal Contract, 2010, 13 – 2nd Reading

MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENT AGENDA: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER, FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ALLIED WASTE FOR WASTE REMOVAL FROM A 6 CU. YD CONTAINER AT GREENBELT HOMES AT ITS BID OF \$110.00 PER MONTH FOR GENERAL WASTE COLLECTION DURING 2010-2011, WITH 3% & 3% ESCALATION FOR THE 2nd & 3rd CONTRACT YEAR.

MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENT AGENDA: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER, FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ALTERNATIVES FOR WASTE REMOVAL FROM A 30 CU. YD CONTAINER AT GREENBELT HOMES, AT ITS BID OF \$371.00 PER 5 TON LOAD WITH AN EXTRA CHARGE OF \$60.00 PER TON FOR EVERY TON EXCEEDING 5 TONS, DURING 2010 -2011 WITH NO INCREASES FOR THE 2nd & 3rd CONTRACT YEAR.

6d. Yard Line Certification: 8 Court Plateau

Ms. Bonnie Shields expressed concerns regarding the wording of letters sent to members about yard lines. Ms. Shields stated that the letter called another member's feedback "negative"; Ms. Shields told the Board that a member's concerns about her home are not negative. She further

stated that she has concerns about the legality of redrawing yard lines after members have moved into their homes. She then stated that the redrawn plat for her yard at 8C Plateau is acceptable. Director Lewis explained that she understood the word “negative” to mean that the member did not affirm the Yard Line Committee’s recommendation. The Board of Directors then discussed that while it is natural for members to take concern in their yards, the owner of the land is GHI.

Ms. Angela Miatto asked if and when her fence would need to be moved. The Board explained that the fence would only need to be moved when it comes into disrepair and needs to be replaced. They further explained that any prospective member would be given a copy of the redrawn yard plat; rules about moving the fence would be explained to prospective members as well.

Yard Line Committee Chair Wilkerson shared points of the committee’s work in 8 Court Plateau Place. She stated that some of the yards extended far beyond what is allowable based on the rule in the Member Handbook. The maximum allowable gardenside yard is 75 feet; many yards exceeded that.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DOES APPROVE YARD PLATS FOR 8 COURT PLATEAU PLACE AS PRESENTED.

Moved: Morse

Seconded: Lewis

Carried 7

6e. Request from Member to Erect a Greenhouse in Common Area at 12E Ridge Road

While the member requesting a greenhouse at 12E Ridge Road has withdrawn the request, the Board decided to discuss the possibility of allowing the request. The Board discussed the possibility of fixing the upkeep responsibilities between members and GHI, with GHI owning the structure and charging members for its use. It was recommended that instead of requiring consent from all members living in neighboring courts, member consent be set at 75% of members in neighboring courts.

The Board entered into discussion about which committee is best suited to make a decision regarding permission to construct a greenhouse. The possibility of referring the issue to the Architectural Review Committee was considered, but it was pointed out that the members of the ARC may not have the specific knowledge or interest in construction of a greenhouse. The Board also discussed the possibility of forming an ad-hoc greenhouse committee. Director James suggested sending this issue to the Woodlands Committee for consideration, as members using the greenhouse in the future may wish to have trees shading the greenhouse cut down. President Agans suggested placing one member of ARC on any greenhouse committee. General Manager Overdurff suggested that the discussion be continued during the strategic plan.

6f. Proposed Rules Regarding Security Equipment on GHI Homes

Staff Engineer Sporney provided background on this issue for the Board. The Board of Directors had discussed the possibility of enacting a rule prohibiting security bars and cameras in 2000, but they never came to a decision on the matter.

The Board discussed whether the decision should be made now, or if it should be sent to the Architectural Review Committee. A member's right to protect himself was brought up, as well as each member's right to privacy. The Board expressed a desire for this issue to be referred to the ARC, although they were not sure that this would be the best committee to make a recommendation on this topic. During discussion, the Board wondered if a rule was needed regarding security equipment. Assistant General Manager Ralph shared complaints received from members about an existing security camera, which is what brought this issue back to staff's attention. The quality of security cameras, as well as ability (or inability) to enforce a rule was discussed.

Ms. Ruth Wilson is a member of ARC. She stated that there may be instances that warrant installation of a security camera and suggested the possibility of criteria for where to install cameras. Ms. Wilson expressed that in her opinion, this matter should be referred to ARC.

The Board discussed the benefit of a security camera versus installing a sensor light. Director Lewis stated that because staff had received complaints from members, this issue could be dealt with in the member complaints process on a case-by-case basis. The Board decided to refer this matter to ARC, which could bring in additional people as needed.

6g. New and Old Committees

The Board began by discussing an ad-hoc committee for the WSSC project. Assistant General Manager Ralph shared that WSSC intends to meet with residents during the project, and that the meetings would be in conjunction with GHI. Staff is hoping to identify two members to join the committee and meet with WSSC representatives and GHI staff, and provide information to the Board as the project goes on. It was suggested that staff send letters to members of both courts impacted by WSSC projects asking for interested members. Mr. Ralph is hoping to find members with experience in working with WSSC. The ad-hoc committee meetings with WSSC could be held at the Community Center in order to allow other GHI members and Board members to attend.

CONSENSUS: GO ON WITH THE AD HOC COMMITTEE WITH ROLES AS AMENDED.

President Agans shared information about a newly formed Web Team, a mix of six members from the Marketing and Communications Committees that will look at the GHI website and look for ways to improve it. Director Mazursky will be the Board liaison for the web team.

The Board then discussed that the Cooperative Legislative Group is forming. This group will be looking at the new tax law, whose implications for coops like GHI will need to be examined, specifically in the area of property taxes. The Coop Legislative Group will be working with legislative representatives. President Agans stated that the group would probably be active for one year.

President Agans then shared that the GHI Board of Directors held a retreat last weekend. It was determined that there is no further need for the Sustainable Design and Practices Committee.

CONSENSUS: TO END THE SDP COMMITTEE.

The Board then moved on to the Green Ribbon Task Force. After looking at the committee's charter, it was determined that the Buildings Committee has taken over most of their tasks. A final report from the committee will be needed before disbanding it.

6h. Report on 2009 Community Beautification Program

Manager of Maintenance Operations Matt Berres presented the 2009 Community Beautification Program report to the Board. Director Boswell stated that the report was excellent, and that it was nice to see that there were fewer deficiencies, and that many were concentrated in just a few "problem yards". Mr. Berres shared that member compliance during the 2009 program was excellent. Some of the "problem yards" belong to vacant units, and that Kathie Linkenhoker will be contacting all owners of vacant units this year to offer GHI yard maintenance. Further, yard inspector Herb Jackson reported fewer problems and more improvements to yards that had needed a great deal of work in past years.

The Board discussed making information made known to members at the time a citation is written. For example, the Board asked if members were informed that tools can be rented from GHI to rectify deficiencies in their yards. Mr. Berres stated that all information was available to members on the website. In addition, members are informed of local resources and tools for rent if the deficiency is not corrected after the second visit.

Ms. Ruth Wilson asked if unpermitted vinyl sheds could be added to the Community Beautification Program for 2010, as ARC is seeing an increased number of such sheds. She suggested adding it to the checklist not to inform members of the violation, but to keep a tally (an inventory of vinyl sheds) and forward the information to ARC for follow-up. The Board and staff discussed the challenge of time and resources of staff. Such an inventory could be completed, but the yard inspector(s) would need a specific definition of vinyl sheds (so as not to mistake trash enclosures for unpermitted sheds, etc.). In addition, additional staff might be needed to complete an inventory along with the regular beautification inspection. Mr. Berres stressed that the first round of inspections is completed in thirty days, which does not allow much time for additional items to be added to the checklist. Mr. Tom Sporney stated that he has been slowly catching unpermitted sheds as he and the Yard Line Committee go through each

court to verify yard lines. If sheds were inventoried during the beautification program, he stated, it would take Mr. Jackson more time to complete the inspections. In addition, staff time in the office would be required to look up each vinyl shed discovered to determine whether the shed was permitted or not. Assistant General Manager Ralph stated that the Board had a similar discussion six years ago. At that time, it was determined that the beautification inspector should not be looking for rule violations. Rather, he stated, the program should focus only on community beautification, which would make it more community-friendly in the eyes of the members.

The Board then discussed the number of vacant homes in the community. Mr. Berres shared that some homes are vacant because they are on the market, and the members had to move before they could sell their homes. Others are vacant due to the death of a member, and still others are vacant because members have a second home in another area. Mr. Berres shared that just because a home is vacant, that does not necessarily mean that its yard is ill-kept. General Manager Overdurff shared that she has a list of all vacant homes; she is communicating with members and monitoring the status of each unit.

Director James asked if the trend toward more violations for tall grass and fewer violations for bare spots was related to the rainy spring in 2009. Mr. Berres shared that because of the rain, it was difficult for some members to keep their lawns mowed. In addition, bare spots decreased in part due to education and outreach of staff in helping members manage difficult landscapes. Resources like straw, he shared, are also available for members in the warehouse.

The Board discussed the top five violations for 2009, and asked if the same five violations were most common during the second round of inspections as well. Mr. Berres shared that it is difficult to track that information due to the system they used last year. This year staff will be working on a new system and will do their best to get good, usable data from their input.

CONSENSUS: LEAVE THE COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM AS A COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM.

Mr. Berres shared plans for the 2010 Community Beautification Program with the Board. Staff's intention is to structure this year's program much the same as 2009 with no major revisions. Best sunny and shady yards will be selected again this year, with an attempt to select new yards that have not been recognized in the past. Mr. Jackson has suggested documenting winning yards and posting photographs on the website to give members ideas on how to landscape their yards. The inspection will take place in May. The Board discussed placing an item in the *Communicator* explaining the program and reporting on the best yards in the community. Mr. Berres stated that he plans to have a handout ready for the March-April *Communicator*, and an article for the May-June *Communicator*.

6i. Tax Assessment

After the previous discussion about new and old committees, the Board had nothing further to discuss on this item.

6j. Strategic Planning, Next Steps

President Agans stated that the Board had come up with a 20-year vision, a 2-year vision, and a 2-quarter plan during the retreat. The plans will need to be shared with the community, but first additional work and feedback is needed. Agans opened up the floor to the Board for thoughts and feedback.

Director Boswell shared that a member was very interested in hearing about the Board's strategic plan at a recent Buildings Committee meeting. Boswell stated that the plan is not able to be shared with the membership now, and that a great deal of work will be needed to clean it up and make it presentable. The Board will need to figure out how much information should be given to members, and how much of the strategic plan is for the Board alone. It was suggested that a narrative would be more appropriate for the membership, rather than the lists that currently comprise the plan. The Board discussed including something about the plan in the annual meeting packet as well as on the website.

President Agans asked for feedback on the 20-year vision as it is now. It was suggested that the Board wait to give feedback until after the first quarter. The Board then moved on to the 2-year vision. They discussed a need to work on community assets. Director Lewis stated that she has been working on a list of all clubs and special interest groups available for residents of Greenbelt. This list would be helpful in determining the community's assets. In addition, she stated, it would be a good addition to the welcome packets members receive when they move into GHI. City Councilman Jordan stated that the City Manager is currently working on a list of groups and clubs in Greenbelt, and that they will try to put the list on greenbelt.com when it is ready. President Agans gave an assignment for the next Board meeting: each Board member is to bring a list of five additional community assets to the next Board meeting.

General Manager Overdurff shared a summary of all assignments discussed at the strategic planning meeting, organized by individual and committee. This way, everyone will know what they agreed to do during the meeting. Ms. Overdurff stated that some items still need to be addressed, or the Board can decide not to move forward.

The Board discussed the need of the Bylaws Committee to review the Bylaws change. Ms. Overdurff shared that there is a Bylaws Committee, and that it would need to be activated. Discussion moved to the possible need to create a new Bylaws Committee. Possible members were suggested, and it was determined that at least one (and possibly two) Board member should be a member of this committee. Director Novinski and Audit Committee member Wilkerson volunteered to join the Bylaws Committee.

The Board set a date for a mini-retreat for further review of the strategic plan. The retreat was set for Monday, March 29 at 7:00 p.m.

7. Items of Information

President Agans shared that the Board will meet with members of the Greenbelt Police on February 4. The two primary purposes of the meeting are to increase the relationship between the police department and GHI members, and to address police actions toward African American people in the GHI community. Agans stated that the police have asked for specific instances to discuss during the meeting; Agans is prepared to give examples. Assistant General Manager Ralph shared the names and titles of the members of the police department who will attend the meeting. There was a question about the emergency call boxes on the Spellman Overpass. The Board discussed how the police monitor the overpass with surveillance cameras, and that the call boxes are there for pedestrians in case of emergency. Mr. Ron Jewel of 19L Ridge Road asked about the possibility of the surveillance cameras capturing audio; he expressed that if someone were in real danger, they may not be able to run to the emergency call box. City Councilman Jordan shared that he had discussed this matter with Police Chief Craze, and that it is illegal to capture audio with surveillance cameras.

8. President

President Agans shared that she would like each Board liaison to go to their committees and ask if there are any discrete short-term projects. If committees can provide a description of their short-term projects, an ad could be placed in the *News Review* stating what each committee is looking for. Agans then shared that GHI member Frank DeBernardo has been appointed chair of the WMATA Advisory Riders Board. Director Boswell stated that participants from Transit Riders United of Greenbelt, or TRU-G, were successful at the meeting with WMATA, and that many riders shared support at that meeting. Agans shared that Anne Lombardi has resigned from the Yard Line Committee.

President Agans stated that she attended the Beltsville Garden Club yesterday, where a speaker from the University of Maryland was talking about a wooded hill that they have been able to preserve from further development. Agans suggested inviting the University of Maryland speaker to a Woodlands Committee meeting to discuss urban forests.

9. Board Members

Director Hickey shared that he will be having surgery on his arm this week.

Director Lewis shared information from a census workshop she attended with Director of Member Services Joan Krob. GHI will be ordering materials from the census to inform the membership, and Director Lewis will look into placing a banner about the census on the GHI website to raise member awareness.

President Agans shared thank-you letters with the Board. The first was from the City of Greenbelt for donations to Greenbelt CARES. The second letter was sent from a member thanking the Board for helping to make sure that one of her neighbors could find a new home.

City Councilman Jordan thanked the Board for allowing him to visit. He stated that he hopes to visit and participate in GHI events and Board meetings often. He stated that if any member needs help with any City issues, he is available to help. Mr. Jordan shared information from a work session on the municipal budget. He stated that revenue and housing values are down, and that these assessments will be in place for three years; county property taxes will be based on these assessments. Mr. Jordan further shared that state revenues from highway user fees have been cut, and while the City has reserves, it will be a lean three years.

Mr. Ron Jewel shared concerns about WSSC projects. He stated that when his neighbor had a pipe replaced, WSSC made no effort to save the topsoil in the area where they were digging. Mr. Ralph stated that in other places, WSSC has replaced the lost topsoil. Mr. Berres shared that while WSSC has done a good job in replacing topsoil during small spot repairs, a different crew is used for large projects. Because of that, topsoil may be overlooked in these large projects.

Director of Finance Perry shared that 1098 tax forms for the Board were sent out, and that 1099 forms will be completed tomorrow.

10. Manager

There were no comments from the General Manager.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN.

Moved: Morse

Seconded: McFadden

Carried

7

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Ed James
Secretary