

Minutes  
GHI Board of Directors  
December 6, 2007

Present: Agans, Alpers, Hickey, Lauber, Lewis, McFadden, Morse, Robles

Excused Absence: Mazursky

Others in Attendance:

Eldon Ralph, Director of Physical Plant Operations Genevieve Courbois, Recording Secretary

Joan Krob, Director of Member Services David Shuman

Brenda Lewis, Acting General Manager Yoni Siegel

Tom Sporney, Staff Engineer Rick Metree

Matt Berres, Landscape Specialist Annamarie Matovich

Dianne Wilkerson, Chair, Audit Committee Lora Katz

Marat Moore, Audit Committee Mirjana Cockburn

Michael Iacangelo, Audit Committee Bob Snyder

President Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. She amended the agenda by adding *Holiday Hours* as Item 6a. and reordered agenda items.

1. Approval of Agenda

**CONSENSUS: TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND REVISED.**

2. Visitors and Members

David Shuman, announced that he received a personal notice from President Lewis indicating that hedges would be discussed at this meeting; however, other interested members did not. Lewis apologized for any oversight and said that members personally contacted included those whom GHI was aware had an interest in hedges. Yoni Siegel, took issue with the fact that interested members were not personally notified about the last Board meeting in which a motion was passed about hedge height; she said that the agenda indicated that the topic of hedge height was slated for “discussion/recommendations” and not “action.” Lewis emphasized that Board meetings are open to all members and the Board is not compelled to personally invite members. She said the agenda is publicized in the *Greenbelt News Review* and posted on bulletin boards at the office and co-op food store. Regarding the motion that passed at the last meeting, she said that members can still request exceptions.

Shuman argued that the Board did not follow proper notice procedures; President Lewis maintained otherwise. Siegel voiced concern that the Board had not responded to her November 27<sup>th</sup> letter; Lewis said that a response has been drafted which Siegel will receive before December 31, 2007, per Siegel’s request. Rick Metree, said that he will advocate that the Board’s motion relating to hedge height be reversed at the Annual Meeting.



6b. 2007 Community Beautification Program Final Report

Landscape Specialist Berres announced the winners of the 2007 beautification awards: 37H Ridge Road (best shady yard), 44K Ridge Road (best sunny yard), and 60 Crescent Road (best overall court.) The winners will receive Behnke's Nursery gift certificates. President Lewis suggested that a feature article about the winners be submitted to the *Greenbelt News Review*. Berres gave an overview of the program including challenges, deficiencies, and recommendations. He reported that GHI's overall appearance has improved over the past three years. He suggested that the 2008 program be addressed at a Board meeting in February 2008 in anticipation of a May 2008 start date. Director Morse recognized community beautification inspector Herb Jackson for his gracious and courteous demeanor in interacting with members.

6c. Hedges

Discussion centered on how a three-year phase-in of the 5' hedge height would be implemented by staff, the challenge of tracking hedge height over a three-year period and to whom a phase-in period would apply, as well as expected exception requests. Director of Physical Services Ralph noted that twelve members have not complied with the hedge height rule. President Lewis detailed the information needed from members wishing to apply for an exception. David Shuman, said that the content of the July 2007 letter signed by a number of members meets these requirements. President Lewis said that staff will follow up on exception requests and the Board will address them in a future Board meeting. Audit Committee member Iacangelo questioned if GHI is at the right level of inspection and security in terms of hedge height.

The Board discussed non-walkway hedges and how to define them, privacy screen height and City of Greenbelt code regarding hedge height.

**CONSENSUS: TO HOLD A WORK SESSION ON NON-WALKWAY HEDGES ON MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008 AT 7:00 P.M.**

President Lewis said that a notice about the work session would appear in the *Greenbelt News Review*.

6d. 2008 Board Meeting Schedule

**CONSENSUS: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL MEET ON THE SECOND AND FOURTH THURSDAYS FROM JANUARY THROUGH MAY 2008; THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008, AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER.**

6e. Member Letter to City Manager

The Board discussed member Chris Shuman's suggestions for Old Greenbelt signage. President Lewis noted that the City has a long-term plan for signage, but funding is not currently available. She suggested that Shuman fundraise for signage. She clarified that the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area funded the new National Park Service signs. Director Agans suggested that letters of support be written

to the City of Greenbelt and the National Park Service. In crafting these letters, Director Morse suggested that the City be contacted for input on signage parameters.

**CONSENSUS: DIRECTOR AGANS TO WRITE LETTERS TO THE CITY OF GREENBELT AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF SIGNAGE.**

6f. Business Owner's Insurance Policy – First Reading

Brenda Lewis, Acting General Manager, said that GHI has been presented with a quote from Travelers Property and Casualty Company for insurance coverage which is under the projected 5% increase; she reported that it is a solid business package. She explained that a rather large increase in premium cost for Worker's Compensation is the result of two large claims which have affected the modification rate. Lewis explained that it is difficult to predict if the cost of this part of the package will decrease in the future as external factors in the marketplace are taken into consideration. Director of Physical Plant Operations Ralph said that Polkes and Goldberg audit the policy annually to assess coverage and evaluate risks. He also provided insight into how GHI's replacement value of \$108 million is calculated.

**MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES FOR FIRST READING, THE EXPENDITURE OF \$396,722 FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE BUSINESS OWNERS INSURANCE PACKAGE FOR 2008.**

Moved: Robles

Seconded: Hickey

Carried 7-0

President Lewis suggested publicizing GHI's strong safety program.

7. Items of Information

No discussion.

8. President

President Lewis accepted the resignation of John Butler as court liaison. She reminded everyone about the Committees Workshop on December 8, recognized GHI staff for their leadership in the general manager's absence, and advised that reports are expected from the following committees at the December 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting: artifacts, finance and architectural review. She stated that she will represent GHI at the upcoming Windsor Green holiday party on December 13.

President Lewis said that she recently met with Board officers regarding Board meeting procedures and that in the future she will ensure that she keeps the Board members and Audit Committee informed about such meetings. She detailed future agenda items for January and February and suggested introducing a consent agenda at the next meeting, then provided an overview of a consent agenda.

## 9. Board Members

Director Robles will be away from December 12 to January 3.

Director Hickey will not be at the January 10 Board meeting.

Director Agans announced a Finance Committee meeting on January 16 at 7 p.m. She said that the committee determined that operating a bed and breakfast in GHI would jeopardize GHI's homestead tax credit. She said that the Committee is prioritizing the potential purchase of an apartment building by GDC, and this will be detailed in the Committee's report to be presented to the Board in January. She advocates the removal of the Board task list from the Board packets if it will not be discussed at each meeting. She also suggested meeting with the Nominations and Elections Committee in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

Director McFadden said that, in retrospect, she should have voted in opposition to the 5' hedge height rule passed at the last meeting and feels strongly that she would like to reverse her vote. President Lewis stated that her vote change can only be accomplished with a unanimous vote from the Board. If her vote were changed, the vote tally would change from 5-3-0 to 4-4-0, the passed motion would fail, and the previous rule in the Members' Handbook would be in effect. President Lewis took a vote of those Board members in favor of allowing Director McFadden to switch her vote. Three voted in favor: Directors Alpers, Robles, and Lauber. Because the vote was not unanimous, Director McFadden's original vote could not be changed. Audit committee member Wilkerson said that Director McFadden can attempt to rescind the motion at a future Board meeting. Board members indicated that rather than attempting to rescind the motion, Director McFadden could also introduce a new rule. President Lewis suggested waiting until after the January 14<sup>th</sup> work session to see if Director McFadden would like to introduce a motion to rescind.

Director Morse suggested e-mailing members information about upcoming Board meetings. He also questioned some language in the bylaws in Article 4, Section 4 about notice regarding meetings; President Lewis referred this to the Bylaws Committee.

Audit Committee member Moore brought up GHI being denied the right of first refusal to purchase a recent foreclosure by National Cooperative Bank; she suggested this as a future item for Board discussion.

Audit Committee member Iacangelo said that Enterprise Car Rental at Capital Cadillac is looking to forge business partnerships in the area; he suggested that a partnership with GHI could secure a percentage discount for GHI members.

## 10. General Manager

Acting General Manager Lewis reminded Board members to remit their RSVPs for the employees' holiday party at the American Legion on December 14.

Director of Physical Plant Operations said that Darlene Brengle, would like to recruit volunteers to help manually eradicate bamboo in the area behind her unit. A proposal outlining volunteer procedures and a liability release form has been prepared and Brengle has been invited to personally discuss this further. Ralph said that the EMO heating study will soon be presented to the Board for review.

Landscape Specialist Berres said that the forest conservation agreement with the Department of Natural Resources is up for renewal in February 2008 and will be brought to the Board in January.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN.**

Moved: McFadden

Seconded: Robles

Carried 7-0

The meeting recessed at 9:48 p.m.

Dorothy Lauber  
Secretary