

Minutes
GHI Board of Directors
December 3, 2009

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

Others in Attendance:

Gretchen Overdurff, General Manager	Joan Krob, Director of Member Services
Joe Perry, Director of Finance	Tom Sporney, Staff Engineer
Eldon Ralph, Assistant General Manager	Brenda Lewis, Director of Human Resources
Dianne Wilkerson, Chair, Audit Committee	Henry Haslinger, Audit Committee
Dorothy Lauber, Audit Committee	Patty Bergemann, Recording Secretary
E. Bianchi	Dolores Petry
Hillary Howes	Molly Lester
Penny Koines	Andrea Waters
Terri Hruby, City of Greenbelt	Annie Shaw
Corita Waters	Drake Allen, Executor
Barbara Cook	Jennifer Patterson
Maureen Callahan	Bonnie L. Brant
Gail Phillips	Chris Shuman
Chuck Hess	Arnold Norden
Nicholas Condon	Jennifer Redden
Nucleo and April Vega	

President Agans called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

Moved: Mazursky

Seconded: Morse

Carried 8

2. Visitors and Members

Member Chris Shuman addressed the problem of abandoned cable boxes that is widespread throughout the community and whether the issue would be addressed in the next year. President Agans stated that she had received Mr. Shuman's letter, as well as one from another concerned member, and suggested that Mr. Shuman work with the author of the other letter to investigate the issue, because the Buildings Committee is already working on a number of issues. Mr. Shuman explained that the original agreement upon which the boxes were installed would need to be found. Director James noted that the same problem exists with Verizon wire boxes.

Member Chuck Hess presented a gigantic chocolate bar to President Agans and the Board of Directors to express his thanks to the Board and wish them a happy holiday.

Member Gail Phillips inquired about the tax issue as it relates to individual members' homes. Director Lewis explained that the state will assess homes; it is unknown as to how the transition will occur and answers may not be available until next year.

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:

- AMANDA L. SMITH, SOLE OWNER
- NANCY J. BOYD, SOLE OWNER
- LINDA BENNETT, SOLE OWNER
- KENJI HAMAGUCHI, SOLE OWNER
- SHIRLEY W. E. WHITE, SOLE OWNER
- SHIRL HAYES, SOLE OWNER (TRANSFER)

Moved: James

Seconded: Boswell

Carried 8

MOTION: THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE FOLLOWING MUTUAL OWNERSHIP CONTRACT CHANGE:

- ELIZABETH BARBER AND DENA SEIDEL, JOINT TENANTS, TO ELIZABETH BARBER, SOLE OWNER

Moved: James

Seconded: Boswell

Carried 8

4. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports to review.

5. Consent Agenda

There were no items on the consent agenda.

6a. Member Request for Exception: Neighbor Approval for Addition, 2C Northway

President Agans explained that the discussion surrounding this particular request might become heated and asked that all remain civil towards each other. Agans reaffirmed that exceptions are given only for good reason in exceptional circumstances. In this particular instance, legal opinion was sought as to the right of a member's legal representative to withhold consent for an addition; the opinion rendered upholds the representative's right to do so. General Manager Overdurff reminded everyone that that the issue to be addressed is neighbor permission for an addition.

Staff Engineer Sporney gave an overview of the history of the request for exception at 2C Northway made by Ms. Jennifer Patterson and Ms. Barbara Cook. Sporney explained that the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) reviewed the members' drawings for a proposed addition, and that there were five to six proposed elements that were contrary to GHI rules. Sporney stated that, depending on the decision by the Board, the members would then continue to work out the other issues that are contrary to the rules with ARC. Sporney explained that Mr. Drake Allen is not a member but is the executor of the estate at 2D Northway and that he does not wish to give consent for an addition at 2C Northway at this time.

Ms. Patterson and Ms. Cook presented their position: they wish to become foster parents and are required under the fostering program to have a separate bedroom for a foster child that is on the same floor as the parents. Since they have a three-year-old daughter, they need a third bedroom on the same level as their existing bedrooms. They stated that they have worked with ARC to change their designs in order to meet the rules, but that their neighbor did not accept the compromise suggested by ARC. Ms. Patterson and Ms. Cook expressed their desire to remain in GHI, but will move if they are unable to build the proposed addition.

Mr. Allen, estate executor, explained that an addition on the home next door would discourage potential buyers from purchasing 2C Northway. Mr. Allen recounted a comment by Director McFadden made at an earlier meeting about an “undue hardship” being placed on the members at 2C Northway. Mr. Allen expressed discontent with the comment, and shared his family’s history in Greenbelt. During the course of discussion, Director McFadden clarified that her comment was not directed at Mr. Allen, but rather in reference to all parties involved.

Continued discussion brought out the following observations: a) the value additions bring to the cooperative; b) the differing views members have living next to a home with an addition; c) the right for members to grant or withhold consent; d) options available to members in lieu of constructing an addition; e) the need to keep GHI homes viable.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DOES ALLOW CONSTRUCTION PLANS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR THE PROPOSED GARDENSIDE ADDITION AT 2C NORTHWAY WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE NEIGHBOR AT 2D NORTHWAY. THE REMAINING ISSUES IDENTIFIED AS CONTRARY TO GHI RULES WILL BE CONSIDERED AT A FUTURE MEETING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE.

Moved: Mazursky

Seconded: McFadden

Carried 6-2

Prior to vote being taken on the motion, several board members expressed their intent to either vote for or against the motion and their reasoning for doing so. Director Lewis clarified that regardless of the decision that is made, the other requests for exception will need to be addressed by the Board in the future. The members stated that they understood; they did not want to waste time or money on architectural designs if they did not need them.

MOTION: TO RECESS FOR TEN MINUTES.

Moved: James

Seconded: Lewis

Carried 8

The meeting recessed at 8:35 p.m. and was recalled by President Agans at 8:45 p.m.

6b. Right-of-Way Property Line Issue – Crescent Road

General Manager Overdurff summarized the rights-of way issue noting that that staff will need permission from the Board to spend the money to re-stake the affected property lines to include staking out the properties, platting, and paperwork necessary for the approval of property lines.

Terri Hruby of the City of Greenbelt stated that City Council needs feedback from GHI on the two options under discussion before making a decision. The options are:

- 1) A new property line would be drawn eight feet back, existing yards would be respected, and there would be no encroachment; or
- 2) A new property line would be drawn 13 to 14 feet back, one foot from utility poles, keeping them in the public right-of-way, which could be done internally.

Hruby stated that assuming GHI would absorb the cost the City will work to stake out both options in the field and schedule a work session for both the City Council and GHI. She pointed out that in order to vacate a right-of-way in Prince George's county, property lines must be redrawn, the land must be surveyed, and a petition must be filed with the county and all utility companies. Hruby stated that the process is in the preliminary stage and noted that it would cost between \$460 and \$600 to stake each yard area. Lengthy discussion ensued with many questions asked of Ms. Hruby associated with the building of additions upon easements, costs associated with relocating utility poles, the process of redrawing property lines and granting of easements. Hruby noted that an easement is probably the easiest solution and would not encumber the members' ability to use their yards; however, in option two the companies are seeking an easement on the guide wires as well. She confirmed that the first option left GHI with more land. Members living on Crescent Road affected by this issue offered their input which included: a) a resolution as soon as possible; b) confusion that their property line is not what they believed it to be; c) problem of salability because of a decreased yard area; d) concern for the safety of a holly tree; and e) how an existing fence relates to either option.

Ms. Hruby explained that the City owns the right-of-way, and that a particular utility company has a right to any easement granted to that company. She explained further that the easement document would specify the rights of that company, and that the City would lose some ability to regulate the actions of the utility company. Ms. Hruby reiterated that the purpose of the discussion tonight is not to decide which option but to give opportunity to the affected residents and Board members to see what the yards would look like under both options. A question was raised about potential sidewalk installation; Ms. Hruby responded that the City's practice is to retain as much of the right-of-way as possible; however, the City does not plan sidewalk installation anywhere in the vicinity.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DOES APPROVE OF AN EXPENDITURE OF \$3,500 TO ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF OYSTER, IMUS, PETZOLD & ASSOCIATES, LLC TO SURVEY AND STAKE A PROPOSED CHANGE IN PROPERTY LINES ALONG CRESCENT ROAD BETWEEN GARDENWAY AND EASTWAY.

Moved: Morse

Seconded: Lewis

Carried 8

Ms. Hruby explained her next step is to obtain more information from Pepco and coordinate with staff for staking the yards and scheduling the work session. General Manager Overdurff asked Ms. Hruby if the motion was correct if the City were to stake the new property lines. Ms. Hruby responded that the motion allowed for professional staking, which will need to occur. Members were assured that they would be notified of the staking and the work session.

6c. Strategic Plan Review

The Board discussed the items on the Strategic Plan. Key Results Area 1.1A had already been updated.

Director Lewis stated that the Communications Committee did not accomplish goal 1.2A, second bullet: develop an RFP; it was suggested that it could be reviewed at the retreat in January. The last two items under 1.2.A have been completed and should be removed.

The Board discussed item 1.2B, Member Relations Report. Director Lewis stated that valuable information could be collected before formal complaints are presented to the Board and such data could improve efficiency, save staff time and the cooperative money. Nothing has occurred on Item 1.2C, list serve and electronic means.

The Board moved to Key Results Area 2, Buildings and Grounds. Item 2.1A, type of siding used on frame and masonry homes, had been assigned to ARC and will be addressed at the December 17 Board meeting. Director Boswell stated that ARC may need to collaborate with the Buildings Committee at some point in time and that anything recommended by the Buildings Committee would need approval from the Board in different ways.

President Agans stated that item 2.1B needs a new due date, and asked about the report from Ardently Green. Director Boswell stated that the Buildings committee is behind schedule; President Agans stated that it could be rewritten at the upcoming retreat.

The Board discussed item 2.1C, the 185 structural additions not enrolled on the Addition Maintenance Program. Director Boswell pointed out that the Buildings Committee had asked for an extension from August 2009 to February or March 2010, but that the new timeline is not reasonable because of the Ardently Green report. Boswell explained that the committee needed to subdivide. Director James stated that this issue is a legal issue that the Buildings Committee and Finance Committee cannot address. Director Boswell explained that a recommendation from the Buildings Committee was requested. President Agans explained that this item addressed two things: additions and components covered by the Addition Maintenance Program. Assistant General Manager Ralph explained that the Board requested the Buildings Committee to determine division of responsibility for additions on the Addition Maintenance Program. Agans suggested putting the status of the 185 additions not enrolled in the program on a future agenda for the Board to handle. Ralph stated that major replacements in additions, like siding and windows, would not be needed until 2015 when those same replacements will be done on GHI homes.

The Board moved on to the first bullet under item 2.2, consideration of a policy for annual mandatory inspections. Director Boswell explained that the Buildings Committee has addressed this issue obliquely, but that it remains an issue for the Board to consider. The Board discussed the possibility of the Sustainable Design and Practices Committee, (SDP) to take on this task; SDP is on hiatus. President Agans suggested the possibility of an ad hoc committee for approximately a year. The Board asked about the second bullet under item 2.2. Director of Member Services Krob explained that any action on this item would depend on whether the Board would like to set a policy on this item. Director James suggested that Director Novinski would be a good person to work on this item. Director James stated that the third bullet does not fall under the Member and Community Relations Committee's responsibilities. As it is more of an ongoing nature, he explained, it would be better suited to the Communications Committee. Director Lewis stated that the Communications Committee was too busy to take on this item.

President Agans stated that the Board is doing well on some parts of Key Results Area 4. It was noted that some dates need to be removed and other parts rewritten. It was suggested that there was need for a more transparent title for item 4.1B as the phrase “civic capacity building” is ambiguous. Director James stated that item 4.2 seems to be ongoing and therefore does not need to have a date.

President Agans stated that she would meet with the retreat facilitator on December 14 to discuss the retreat and requested an updated listing of items that have been completed and items that need to be rewritten.

7. Items of Information

President Agans shared information about the GHI staff holiday party. Director Lewis will attend, and Director Boswell may be able to attend. Staff encouraged any available Board members to attend, regardless of whether they are able to RSVP.

President Agans asked the date of the Investment Committee meeting. Director Lewis explained that a survey of committee members went out today, and that the meeting may be postponed to January. The Finance Committee will not meet in December; they will meet on January 7 and from then on will meet monthly on the Thursday between Board meetings.

Director Boswell explained that since the subdivision of the Buildings Committee, small groups meet every Wednesday, with the large committee meeting date remaining the same.

Audit Committee Member Wilkerson stated that the Yard Line Committee would not meet on December 22 as scheduled.

8. President

President Agans expressed that the Court Liaison get-together was great, and that Director Boswell did an excellent job at getting all liaisons to speak and offer suggestions to each other.

Agans stated that she received an invitation to a Windsor Green Holiday Party being held on December 9, and that any interested Board members can go. She also shared a thank-you note from NASCO for the Board’s \$500 contribution to its low-income scholarship fund.

9. Board Members

Director Mazursky shared that he will not attend at the December 17 meeting. He apologized for missing the formal hearing held the previous Monday, but was glad to hear that it went well.

Director Boswell shared principles from the EPA related to smart growth, policies, and building. In response to a question from Director Morse, Boswell explained that there has not been much change to the EPA’s list. Director Boswell shared his experience from the Court Liaison program. He suggested that announcements made at Board meetings should be moved to the top of the meeting to maximize the number of members that hear them.

Director James shared information about an upcoming walkabout to be held by the Woodlands Committee.

Director Novinski stated that the ARC is busy, but that there is no crucial matter at hand this month.

Director Lewis shared that the Court Liaison reception was great. She explained that one thing discussed at the reception was duties of the liaisons. Lewis stated that Director Boswell had a good idea, that the liaisons do voter registration as part of the welcome packet distribution. Director Lewis restated that there will not be a Finance Committee meeting in December, and that the committee will meet on the Thursday between Board meetings starting in February. Lewis stated that an article in the *News Review* misreported her as the President; she suggested that a correction might need to be sent.

Director McFadden expressed regret that she had missed the Court Liaison reception. She stated that the Companion Animal Committee would meet on the last Wednesday of December. McFadden will contact President Agans to discuss the parameters of the committee.

Director Morse expressed his thanks to all Board members for the thoughtful discussion on the request for exception.

Audit Committee Member Wilkerson shared her thanks for the 2010 calendar.

Member Anne Shaw shared that she is a new member and this is her first meeting. She expressed interest in a few committees, and shared that she did not receive a welcome packet. Director of Member Services Krob explained that several packets are awaiting delivery.

Assistant General Manager Ralph stated that Verizon is making rapid progress in their installation of FIOS; 400 units have been completed. Mr. Ralph also shared a report from Kaboom, a national nonprofit organization involved in community-based associations working toward physical activities and children's play. Kaboom featured the City of Greenbelt, and by extension, GHI, in its report of best practices in terms of playground use and maintenance. General Manager Overdurff explained that Kaboom came to Greenbelt and gave advice and feedback; their visit sparked the article. She explained that GHI and the City put in new equipment, matting, and wood chips that met Kaboom's guidelines.

Mr. Ralph stated that WSSC is working feverishly to determine the best way to install new water pipes. WSSC may need to request easements for certain pipes; Mr. Ralph has explained that GHI will need written requests and drawings from WSSC for easements. Director of Finance Perry stated that the new fee letters for 2010 are ready; the goal is to have them out by tomorrow. Perry explained that staff is trying a new way of creating the letters; once the new system is established it will be smoother in future years.

10. Manager

General Manager Overdurff wished Audit Committee Member Haslinger a happy birthday. She stated that she will be having surgery and will be out on leave starting Monday and anticipates returning to work by mid-January.

President Agans made mention of some complaints received from members about addition letters. Overdurff stated that of the 149 letters that went out, three complaints were received. She explained that Staff Engineer Sporney updated those members' addendums, and the letters have been revised. The new letter should be easier to understand and will direct all concerns to Mr. Ralph.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN.

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Morse

Carried 8

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Ed James
Secretary