

**Minutes of the Green Trails Improvement Association,  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, November 11, 2016**



Peter Bakas called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM at Kennedy Junior High School. Board Members present: Peter Bakas, Pat Coughlin-Schillo, Tony Dolinar, Bob Klaeren, Les Lavin, Betty Long, Chris Lotysz, Michael Monroe, Mark Munoz, Michael Olson, Susan Quasney, Alden Snyder, Bill Swiderski, Linda Gilbert. Board Members excused: Margaret Hough. A quorum was present.

**Open Forum**

A resident noted that he had called the Management Company with a noise complaint about a neighbor in the early morning hours. Management sent a letter to that neighbor noting the violation of the Deed Restrictions and also noted the issue in the Board packet. The resident stated that he has not had any further noise issues, but the Board suggested he contact the Village of Lisle Police Department should it occur again.

A resident inquired about the process for removing a honey locust tree near his property and replacing it with a different species. The resident provided Management with his location so that they can visit the site and try to determine whose property the tree is on as the resident is unsure. If it is on GTIA property, the Board informed the resident that he would need to complete an architectural review form and submit to the Board to review before a decision could be made.

A resident noted that the fence near his home that separates the north east corner of Green Trails from the Four Lakes community (Area A) has been cut. The fence has been cut numerous times in the past and each time fixed by the Board so the Board and Management are considering other solutions. The resident offered some potential ideas and the Board asked the resident to put those in writing for the Board to consider. Les Lavin stated that the fence was originally installed because of issues incurred before there was a dense natural barrier along that boundary and primarily as a deterrent for vehicular traffic on the paths, but now that the boundary is heavily wooded, the fence may not be necessary yet could continue to be a cost issue if repeated damage is sustained. The same resident also asked the Board to remove dead branches from a tree on GTIA common area behind his house and Management replied that some trees in the area were already flagged for pruning. The resident further asked if the Board could proactively prune other trees (non-dead) near the back of his property as they were growing toward his backyard and Management replied that we typically would not prune healthy trees in this manner as we cannot control the direction that they grow.

**Minutes of the Prior Meeting**

Minutes of the October meeting were reviewed.

**Board Motion:** Bob Klaeren motioned to approve the October minutes, Pat Coughlin-Schillo seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report**

Michael Olson reviewed the October Income and Expense Statement.

**Board Motion:** Bob Klaeren motioned to accept the check register expenditures of \$22,834.40 for November, Alden Snyder seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**Election Results**

Management informed the Board that the following individuals had been elected to represent their respective areas for three year terms: Area A – Bill Swiderski was re-elected, Area B – Chris Lotysz was elected, Area E – Les Lavin was re-

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elected, Area K – John Warrington was elected, Area L – Bob Klaeren was re-elected, Area N – Peter Bakas was re-elected, and Areas M and O did not have a candidate on the ballot.

**Management Report**

Balanced Environment is well into the fall 2016 tree removal and clean-up program. The list includes 41 trees of varying species. Stump grinding and seed blanket restoration will follow thereafter. Additionally, we have 7 trees and areas that will be pruned and cleaned up at the same time in conjunction with the signage/accent area fall restoration. We will keep flowers in the sign areas and accent areas a few more weeks as they still have much of their color and will change out to the fall program thereafter. The last mowing cycle will probably occur in the last week of November in an attempt to mulch the leaves as much as possible.

Betty Long inquired if the Village picks-up leaves that are placed along Abbeywood Drive as she noted many piles there. Technically the Village stated that they will pick up leaves in front of residents' homes, not behind. Management was unsure but would address with the Village.

Schwarz Nursery transplanted 9 Evergreens from the Pine Grove in selected locations along College Road and Green Trails Drive.

Les Lavin and Management met on-site with Marilyn Sucoe and resident on Brookline Court to review and discuss issues with flow of storm water runoff over the common area near the resident's property that had caused standing water issues. The Village is working with Balanced Environment to develop a solution such as installing a drainage pipe to the storm sewer comparable to the project recently completed behind Carriage Hill Road. Design and cost analysis by Lisle Public Works is ongoing.

Ten paid assessment letters and one refinance letter were completed in the month of October.

Nine New Owner Welcome Packages will be sent for sales completed in October.

Management released 3 liens.

Management provided a list of October newcomers. Board Directors are encouraged to call on newcomers in their respective areas.

**President's Report on State of Green Trails**

Peter Bakas presented his annual overview of the state of Green Trails. *The assessments collected for the year 2016 of \$390,788 represent a collection rate of 98% of the total assessments due of \$397,008. The outstanding balance of uncollected funds for the current year is \$6,220. Combining the uncollected balance from past years' delinquent accounts which includes administrative late fees, collection fees and lien filing costs, the total amount uncollected is \$35,977 which is down from last year by approximately \$1,500.*

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*For 2016, the annual assessment remained at \$180 and no increase is scheduled for 2017. The last annual assessment increase was in 2012 when the rate was adjusted \$10 from \$170 to the current rate of \$180. Several factors have been helpful with the GTIA Board of Directors concerted effort to maintain a stable assessment rate in conjunction with enhanced services: the bundling of services; favorable vendor contract terms due to last year's competitive bidding; and improved project management has provided a wider range of services with minimal impact to the overall operating budget.*

*As part of the annual billing assessment, Management, per the Board's direction, will once again offer an online payment option for residents who prefer to pay via a credit card or ACH. The service will be activated on December 1, 2016 through BluePay. A convenience charge of \$5.00 will be assessed at the time of payment which covers the cost of the transaction. A link can be found on the Green Trails website.*

*The primary expenditures for 2016 included the seasonal trail maintenance program, general common area upkeep and a continuation of the upgrades to the five (5) entry sign locations and eight (8) primary accent areas throughout the Green Trails Subdivision with seasonal plantings. Our contractor in concert with the GTIA Maintenance Committee did an exceptional job this year with beautiful displays of floral designs that are enjoyed by the Green Trails residents and surrounding neighborhoods (even to this late date).*

*The ongoing effects of the Emerald Ash Borer disease, Zimmerman Pine Moth, Diplodia and other natural pestilence will continue to impact the existing stock of maturing trees throughout Green Trails. Subsequently, the cost of tree removals, pruning, storm damage repair and tree replacement will inevitably add pressure to increase the maintenance budget. This year alone, approximately 81 trees will be removed from the common area in Green Trails. As in previous years, in order to maximize dollars spent, we staged the tree removal to the off-season and batched the trees by quadrants resulting in significant savings. Additional funding has been allocated to this budgetary item for the continued removal of ash trees and other maturing species as we move forward into 2017. In turn, seventeen trees were purchased at a discount through the Morton Arboretum and six of those trees were transplanted during the spring. In addition, another 9 evergreens from prior year stock in the Pine Grove were transplanted in the fall--all to designated common areas throughout the Green Trails subdivision. The Maintenance Committee will continue their efforts to maintain the Pine Grove nursery for future transplant allocations.*

*Green Trails owns approximately 77,411 ft. (or 14.66 miles) of asphalt trails and 7,596 ft. (or 1.43 miles) of concrete sidewalks. In 2016, we expended \$98,100 for the seasonal trail maintenance initiative which includes the following services: crack fill, sealcoating, overlay, trip hazard repair and trail restoration. Approximately one-third of the trail system was seal coated and crack filled as needed which greatly enhances the life of our trails. As an eco-friendly initiative, the Board authorized the use of a non-coal tar alternative for sealcoating in a limited area in order to evaluate the product and its overall effectiveness.*

*From an administrative standpoint, several new programs were introduced during the course of the year. At the beginning of the year, the Board approved a Communications Policy to cover communications between the Board and Management and 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors. Later in the April meeting, the GTIA Board of Directors amended the "Delinquent Account Collection Policy" which covers record keeping, notification, timing and charges to be assessed for overdue*

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*accounts as set forth in the Declarations of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions. The new policy was published in the May, 2016 issue of the Pathfinder newsletter and a copy can be found on the Green Trails website. The GTIA Board of Directors further authorized a study to evaluate the remaining life expectancy of the aging 200 GTIA light poles located along the trail system. Consideration will be given to alternative replacement products and strategies similarly aligned with cost effective and environmentally friendly technologies. During the course of the year, an adjunct committee had been delegated to design a workable GTIA database with GPS mapping capabilities in order to accurately delineate property boundaries. Finally, the Maintenance Committee along with the Board of Directors is considering a renovation to the existing Gazebo due to its age and current condition.*

*The 2017 Budget anticipates spending of \$436,951 in comparison to the \$421,298 reforecast of the 2016 Budget. The key differences between the years are the increased costs for tree maintenance, the Gazebo renovation program as previously discussed and the funds for improvements to the GTIA property database and mapping. Overall, the 2017 budget draws down on GTIA reserves by approximately \$34,000.*

*In closing, the Board and Management had another exemplary year of managing costs to below what was budgeted while delivering all planned services. The Association continues to be on solid financial footing and is well poised to continue with upgrades to GTIA property. The planned upgrades to the GTIA property database will allow for better delivery of services; the planned renovation of the Gazebo will enhance the aesthetics while lowering future maintenance costs; and, the planned evaluation of path lights in 2017 with an eye to starting a replacement program in 2018 will substantially improve the “look” of Green Trails. The Board continues to work well with inputs from all, and everyone’s volunteerism and good intentions are appreciated. Management and the vendors continue to up their game so 2016 was a good year and looking forward to a better 2017. And lastly, a thank you to outgoing Board member Betty Long for her numerous contributions.*

Betty Long said she would continue to contribute in other ways and especially wanted to mention the great relationship that the Board has developed with Henry Heier of Schwarz Nursery in Addison. Between 400-500 trees have been replanted from the GTIA nursery to common areas with help from Schwarz and having a professional assist with this process has dramatically improved the survival rate.

**Finance Committee**

Michael Olson presented the final 2017 budget to the Board for approval. Michael noted that assessments remained the same as prior years, and overall expenses are also inline with history. Special legal is budgeted to be down this year, offset by amounts budgeted for the gazebo replacement and GPS mapping software. Betty Long also noted that the budget for tree removal will be higher than normal again in 2017 but she expects it to drop in 2018 and beyond as many diseased trees will have been replaced and the Board can then focus on shifting money to planting new trees. Peter noted that we should consider increasing our holiday decorations around the signage this year to make it look more festive. The Board was in agreement and Management offered to review and present some options to the Board in a future meeting.

**Board Motion:** Michael Monroe motioned to approve the 2017 budget as presented, Linda Gilbert seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

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**Maintenance Committee**

Les Lavin noted that key highlights for the year from the Maintenance Committee had been addressed in Peter's remarks. He thanked Management for the good job they've done in developing and managing contractors and also noted that he was impressed with the expanded depth of knowledge now present on the Board. The character of the maintenance issues facing the Board is changing as the GTIA facilities age, new environmental challenges are incurred and an increasing number of expectations from residents need to be addressed. Primary objectives of Maintenance are to ensure that Management has clear objectives and appropriate support to address these issues. Les looks forward to continued improvements in 2017 including development of tools to assist with quick identification of common area boundaries and finding means to anticipate as well as respond to new challenges.

**Communication Committee** – None

**Parks Committee** - None

**Old Business/New Business** – None

**Board Member Area Reports**

Area H– Pat Coughlin-Schillo noted that the flowers and vegetation planted around the signs this year has thrived and in some cases is now blocking the signs. Management will note this with Balanced Environment so that they can plant further away from the signs next year in those areas. She also noted that she spoke with a Village representative about restrictions for signage on a resident's property. The Village informed her that there was no limit to the number of signs that a resident can put up, but there is a size limit.

**Adjournment**

**Board Motion:** There being no further business, Michael Olson motioned to adjourn the meeting, Michael Monroe seconded. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote; the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Swiderski, GTIA Secretary  
Paula Gleason, Recording Secretary