

# **Minutes of the Green Trails Improvement Association, Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, November 09, 2021**

Peter Bakas called the meeting to order at 7:00pm at Trinity Grounds for Hope, including virtual access. Board members present: Greg Athas, Peter Bakas, Joe Broda, Jevon Knowles, Les Lavin, Gary Ledvora, Michael Olson, Pavel Snopok, Liz Sullivan and John Warrington. Board members participating via teleconference: Pat Coughlin-Schillo, Bob Klaeren and George O'Hare. Board member excused: Alden Snyder. Administrative assistant: Brenda Pung. Paula Gleason was Recording Secretary. A quorum was available.

**Open Forum** – A Green Trails resident listened in via teleconference.

## **Minutes of the Prior Meeting**

Minutes of the October meeting were presented for review.

**Board Motion:** Pavel Snopok motioned to approve the October meeting minutes, Liz Sullivan seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Joe Broda reviewed the October Balance Sheet and Income and Expense Statement

**Board Motion:** Bob Klaeren motioned to approve the check register expenditures of \$26,633.53 for November, Pat Coughlin-Schillo seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Joe presented the proposed 2022 budget of \$470,338 and recommended approval of same.

**Board Motion:** Joe Broda motioned to approve the proposed 2022 budget as presented, Greg Athas seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

## **Peter gave the President's Report on State of Green Trails 2021**

### **Section 1 - Financial**

The assessments collected for the year 2021 of \$393,018 represent a collection rate of 99% of the total assessments due of \$397,188, leaving an outstanding balance of uncollected assessments for the current year of \$4,170. However, in 2021 GTIA collected an additional \$21,060 in the way of past due assessments, admin fees, assessment letter income and other assorted fees, bringing total yearly revenue to about \$414,078. The cumulative uncollected balance in the past due account which includes administrative late fees, collection fees, interest and lien filing costs is approximately \$34,000. This balance is in line with the 2020 past due balance and reflects continuing efforts to collect by our finance function which in the later phases of the process are enhanced by the utilization of legal counsel in support of such efforts.

Once again, the 2021 annual assessment remained at \$180 and no increase is scheduled for 2022. The last annual assessment increase was in 2012 and this long history of no increases is attributable to the GTIA Board's emphasis on cost containment on both maintenance and administration while delivering the needed services.

2021 was an unusual year again for the Association as we went back to self-management starting September 1<sup>st</sup>; and as part of that process hired Brenda Pung as administrative assistant while the Board works on putting a new management company in place. GTIA was not a good fit for the prior management company and that agreement was allowed to lapse on August 31, 2021.

Another unusual item in this year was not having to do any trail replacement and overlay due to our paths lasting longer than anticipated; so, Board efforts in 2020 focused on path sealcoat and crack fill. Les will provide more detail on this during the Maintenance Committee year-end report. The rest of the 2021 expenditures were in line with previous years which include the seasonal trail maintenance program, general common area upkeep, continuation of upgrades to the five (5) entry sign locations and the provision of seasonal plantings in the eight (8) primary

accent areas.

## **Section 2 - Maintenance**

While tree removals continue to be a significant cost item, restoration of overgrown areas, elimination of invasive species and trimming are also impacting maintenance costs. This is to be expected due to the aging of our common area inventory and unfavorable environmental factors. To control costs, we have expanded our contractor network to provide quality work at competitive pricing levels. For e.g., on a significant project involving a retaining wall identified in early 2021, by working with several professional contractors we are on track to complete it at a significant cost savings by year-end.

One area which is requiring a higher level of Association effort involves encroachments into the Common Area which create maintenance and potential liability issues for the Association. The Association has begun a process of upgrading our policies, processes and means of communicating with homeowners to manage these issues more effectively.

In 2022 Maintenance will place special focus on the accent areas for which different approaches are being considered to expand the natural aesthetics while providing better means of economically safeguarding the investment from adverse climactic impacts.

Reverting to self-management earlier this year added significant maintenance challenges to the Association, but also provided an opportunity for the Board to take a closer look at how it does business and find means to improve overall operations.

## **Section 3 - Trail Paving**

Green Trails owns approximately 14.66 miles of asphalt trails and 1.43 miles of concrete sidewalks throughout the subdivision. Trail maintenance costs are the Association's single highest expense item. The annual program for trail maintenance includes the following services: crack filling, sealcoating, asphalt paving-overlay, trip hazard repair and trail restoration.

Approximately one-third of the trail system was seal coated and crack filled in 2021 with costs coming in for about \$18,600. Trail maintenance is scheduled and estimated using a 5-year Plan. Over the past several years we have found that the trails are lasting much longer than had been expected due to the improved specifications applied when the trails were last replaced, and this has resulted in significant savings.

## **Section 4 – Change in Management**

2021 similar to 2020 was a super challenging environment for the Board as it grappled with fit issues with the then acting management company. Again, as I said last year, enough cannot be said for the efforts, time, and extraordinary work done by Les on the maintenance issues, by Joe on our finances and others on the Board in getting the job done despite the fit issue headwinds. As we currently self-manage and then on to a path to new management, I am very encouraged that we are on a really good trajectory to finding the right person/entity to serve as manager. There is much reason for optimism that this self-management phase will be short lived and thereafter the Association can go back to its traditional role of providing overall direction and advice versus day-to-day engagement.

Another encouraging development as we close out 2021 is the technology improvements and suggestions coming from the Communications Committee. One example is the violations information being automatically modified on the Board Google Drive site when changes are made on the local PC violations file, which then allows approved Board members to have real-time access to key information. This capability depending on need could be expanded to include other databases in time. Other efforts worthy of mention are being made to investigate/implement alternative tech-based approaches as to how the Association does business and how it communicates with residents.

## **Section 5 – In Closing**

The 2022 Budget anticipates spending of \$470,000 in comparison to \$421,000 in the 2021 Budget. Overall, the 2022 Budget draws down on GTIA reserves by approximately \$40,000.

GTIA's reserves are sufficient to handle any unexpected expenditures and the Association is in excellent financial shape. The GTIA Board continues to devote great effort and time to keeping Green Trails a premier residential community. I said this last year and I am hoping that it is true in 2022 that I look forward (as do many others in this group) to spending a lot less time on Association business in 2022 than we have in 2021. I think it is important to note for the record the extra ordinary effort put in by many Board members over the last two years, some of it visible but most of it behind the scenes, to do the Association's business; all of it for our collective benefit of improving and beautifying such a unique and wonderful community.

### **Election Results**

Liz Sullivan reported the following election results:

Area F – Alden Snyder

Area M – no candidate

Area G – Karen Svarek

Area O – no candidate

Area I – Joe Broda

Area J – Jevon Knowles

Peter Bakas noted that the Nominating Committee will make recommendations to the Board at next month's Board meeting for appointees to fill Areas M and O.

### **Administrative Report**

Financial reports for October 31, 2021 were included. During the period of 10/9-11/5, there were 12 assessment letter requests and 4 refinance requests. An October list of 13 closings was included. There were 17 liens recorded and filed with the DuPage County Clerk on 10/19/21. On 10/20/21, a letter, current invoice and copy of the relevant lien was mailed to 17 past due accounts. The 2022 billing assessments will be mailed on Tuesday prior to Thanksgiving.

### **Phone/Email Report**

Daily call logs were provided to the Board.

### **Finance Committee**

Joe shared a copy of the revised proposed Collection Policy.

**Board Motion:** Gary Ledvora motioned to approve the Revised Collection Policy as of 10/21/21, Bob Klaeren seconded. Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote

For the month of October, eight payments in full and two partial payments were received for a total of \$4,892.30. One past due account was listed as uncollectable in the amount of \$1,832.42 due to bankruptcy. Collection fees, lien fees of \$2,847.50 and attorney fees of \$1,568.75 were added in which brings the delinquent account balance to \$34,007.01 representing 23 accounts.

### **Maintenance Committee**

A contract was awarded to G&G for 2022 Mowing/Fertilization/Weed Control.

A contract was awarded to G&G for replacement of a retaining wall. Work is expected to complete in November, weather permitting. Affected homeowners being notified.

The GTIA Board approved G. Allen Moore Landscaping's proposal for seasonal décor. Contract was awarded; installation is expected as close to the Thanksgiving holiday as possible, dependent on material received and weather conditions. Pt Coughlin volunteered to assist Brenda during work execution.

The November R&D proposal was accepted. Weather has delayed a portion of the work in their October proposal. R&D will advise whether to transplant trees from the nursery this season.

A refund of the adjusted balance of the water meter deposit was received from Village of Lisle.

Volt received light pole repair materials, but weather conditions have delayed initiation of work.

Balanced Environment submitted a revised proposal for 2022 Accent Area Maintenance. Maintenance recommends acceptance of the proposal.

**Board Motion:** Joe Broda motioned to approve the BE proposal for work as submitted, in the amount of \$10,264, Liz Sullivan seconded. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

BE will subsequently submit a proposal for 2022 accent area planting selections.

Maintenance has engaged in discussions with the VOL pertaining to GTIA mowing activities.

Volt completed repairs of the five lights reported out. GEXPRO was advised three defective fixtures; under warranty; need to be replaced. Field observations pertaining to driver failures have been addressed to the manufacturer and remedial actions requested.

Maintenance and Administrative drafted education letters to apply to ten different violations and a draft Violations Guidelines is under review.

**Communication Committee** - Liz Sullivan stated the Communications Committee continues to investigate alternative website engines.

Pavel Snopok related their discussions with Aurora University relative to using WIX or Wordpress. Positive feedback includes user ability to access the Pathfinder and establish email communications. The committee will schedule another meeting soon with Aurora University.

**Parks Committee** – Pat Coughlin-Schillo noted that she will provide a 2022 monthly sign-up sheet next month for Board members to volunteer attendance at Park District Board meetings. Gary Ledvora provided a synopsis of the October Park District Board meeting. Peter Bakas will attend the November Park District Board meeting.

**Board Member Area Reports** - None

**Executive Session** - None

### **Adjournment**

**Board Motion:** There being no further business, Michael Olson motioned to adjourn the meeting, Joe Broda seconded. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Paula Gleason, Recording Secretary, Signature on File