

Minutes  
GHI Board of Directors  
August 19, 2010

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

Others in Attendance:

Eldon Ralph, Assistant General Manager  
Tom Sporney, Staff Engineer  
Chuck Hess, Audit Committee  
Patty Muldowney, Recording Secretary  
Cynthia Newcomer, Web Team

Joan Krob, Director of Member Services  
Dianne Wilkerson, Chair, Audit Committee  
Debbie Cooley, Audit Committee  
Joe Perry, Director of Finance  
Tom Jones, Web Team

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

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda item 7d, Recognition Agreement Revision, was removed. A new item, Coop Month Banners, was added in its place.

**MOTION: TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

Moved: James

Seconded: Novinski

Carried 8

2. Visitors and Members

There were no visitors or members in attendance.

3. Living Trust

This item was addressed under approval of membership applications, agenda item 4.

4. Approval of Membership Applications

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

- KEVIN E. FRANKE, SOLE OWNER
- JACQUELINE S. WAPOLE AND PETER H. WAPOLE, TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY
- KRISTEN E. SCOTT, SOLE OWNER
- DONNA M. PALLOTTA, SOLE OWNER

Moved: James

Seconded: Boswell

Carried 8

**FOR THE RECORD: BOARD POLL ACCEPTED THE FOLLOWING MUTUAL OWNERSHIP CONTRACT ON JUNE 28, 2010, AND MEMBERSHIP WAS AFFORDED HER AT THE TIME OF SETTLEMENT:**

- RANDI L. ANDERSON, SOLE OWNER

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

- **JAMES WILMER AND JUANITA WILMER TO JUANITA WILMER, TRUSTEE UNDER THE TRUST DATED MAY 5, 2010**
- **JULIE A. MARTIN TO JULIEANN MARY RAPP, SOLE OWNER**

Moved: James

Seconded: Wartell

Carried 8

5. Committee Reports

Each Director shared a brief update from the committee to which they are Liaison:

- a. Finance: The committee has asked staff to investigate the actual cost of unit turnover so that they might analyze the current membership and administration fees charged to new members. The findings will be shared at the September 9 Finance meeting; members of the Marketing Committee are encouraged to attend and give input. The committee has also been investigating other potential sources of income, including selling merchandise with GHI's logo.
- b. Communications: The committee is researching the social media policies of various institutions; a recommendation will be made to the Board. The committee is also looking into a way to communicate with members during an emergency situation involving both phone and power outages. The need for a chain of communication during an emergency is also being discussed, including who would speak to the media if the General Manager or President were unavailable. President Agans pointed out that GHI does have a disaster plan, but that it may need updating. The Board then discussed holding a workshop to practice role playing through certain disaster scenarios, coupling this training with first aid training for members, creating a disaster communications task force, and investigating the use of HAM radio. President Agans asked for a Board Liaison for a disaster communications task force; no volunteer was forthcoming, so this task force will be held for now. Finally, the committee will feature an article on the Peace Corps in the upcoming issue of the *Communicator*, and the November/December issue will feature court liaisons.
- c. Woodlands: The committee is working on a strategic plan. They will focus on assessment of tree damage, replacement of trees, and care of newly planted trees.
- d. Buildings: The Department of Energy accepted the grant proposal; the committee will be meeting with the Research Center to discuss their next steps and refine the scope of the project. Because the grant proposal was accepted, the \$50,000 set aside for monitoring equipment will no longer be necessary. There has been limited response from potential pilot homes; the committee may consider expanding the criteria for potential participants. A task force has been formed to look into solar energy opportunities; it will be led by Steve Skolnik.
- e. MAC: The committee is forging ahead on the booth and float for the Labor Day Festival. Director Wartell will be at the booth each night of the festival for closing up.
- f. Marketing: Director Lewis explained the difference between working capital and administration and membership fees to the Marketing Committee at their last meeting. The committee will meet with the Finance Committee in September to discuss the sale of GHI merchandise. There are many upcoming events for the Marketing Committee: a new member coffee social on August 30, the Takoma Park Festival on September 26, a table at the Farmers' Market, as well as pre-purchase orientations. Director Wartell attended a program at Eleanor Roosevelt High School for new teachers, distributing materials about GHI to the attendees. GHI brochures will also be shared at Fort Meade. Marketing Committee members would like to have a professional-looking portable information booth to bring to various events. Finally, the committee will be looking into the possibility of starting a "Refer a Friend" program, whereby members who refer a friend to become a new member receive a one-time \$50 discount on their coop fees.

6. Consent Agenda**MOTION: TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Moved: Boswell

Seconded: Novinski

Carried 8

7a. Approval of Minutes: June 10, 2010 & June 14, 2010 Special Meeting**MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENT AGENDA: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2010 AND JUNE 14, 2010 SPECIAL MEETING.**7b. Website Work Group Funding Request

Web Team members Cynthia Newcomer and Tom Jones arrived to share updates and their funding request with the Board. Ms. Newcomer shared the team's progress, as well as their next steps. The team is looking to gain a good deal of feedback in order to make sure that users find the site functional. The project is taking longer than originally anticipated; the projected end date is now April of 2011. Ms. Newcomer and Mr. Jones then answered questions from the Board. Ms. Newcomer explained the purpose and impact of content management systems, and then specifically explained the difference between the two content management systems that the web team is considering. Mr. Jones stated that a skeletal version of the site will be available for 3-4 weeks, during which time they will seek feedback. While the skeletal site is up, the team will be working to populate the content on the real site. The old site will remain available until the new website is equal to or better than the existing website. Mr. Jones stressed that the team does not want to hire a contractor to move content from the original site to the new site; this can be done by volunteers. The new site will be launched as soon as it is ready; the team cannot wait until it is "perfect" because they would be waiting forever. The Board then entered into lengthy conversation about specifics related to content management systems, transferring content from one site to another, and the length of time needed to transfer all content.

The Board then turned their focus to funding the Web Team's request. Assistant General Manager Ralph stated that there are still surplus funds. Mr. Ralph suggested wording for the motion, which was then made by Director Lewis. The Board is making the motion now, before the RFP has been created, because the Web Team wanted to be sure that the Board would be willing to support this level of expenditure.

**MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES OF THE ALLOCATION OF AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING \$20,000 FROM THE 2009 YEAR END EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FUND TO BE EXPENDED FOR THE CONSOLIDATION AND UPDATE OF GHI'S WEBSITES.**

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Wartell

Carried 8

7c. Parking Policy Enforcement

The Board discussed that while the rewritten version of the parking policy is better than the current version, it may still need revision to make it stricter. Director Lewis stated that allowing 72 hours for the owner to move the vehicle is too long and suggested changing it to 24 hours. Further, she suggested adding, "No notice needs to be given in the event of a second violation by the same member before towing at the owner's expense." Several Directors expressed support for both changes. There was a question about whether 24 hours would be enough time to allow for extenuating circumstances.

It was suggested that GHI engage a towing company that members would be able to call on their own at any hour if someone is parked in their space. A few Directors spoke out against this type of policy for fear that members would use it maliciously against neighbors with whom they do not get along. A question was raised about how the tow company would know that the member calling for the tow was authorized to use the space in question; Director Boswell stated that all members have a document detailing which parking space is theirs to use.

The Board then discussed changing the phrase “may be towed” to “will be towed”. It was decided that maybe the words “may be towed” ought to remain in case GHI is unable to tow the offending car in 24 hours.

Director Wartell suggested a policy that is currently in practice at the University Square apartments. When an unauthorized person parks in a reserved space, a large sticker reading “You have violated the parking policy” is applied to the windshield of that person’s car. It was suggested that members could play a role in sticker application of cars parked in their space, but the Board decided that allowing members to do so could turn into a much larger problem.

The Board then directed their attention to signs in the courts detailing the parking policy. Mr. Ralph reminded the Board that there are many courts without signs indicating that parking in a reserved spot will result in a tow; towing a non-member’s car in the absence of these signs could result in a legal issue for GHI. Although signs are not always read and followed, their presence would absolve GHI of legal responsibility. The Board asked about the severity of the parking problem under the current policy. On an average month, staff responds to 4-6 parking complaints; the offender is usually a member of the court.

Director Morse suggested adding a phrase giving the General Manager the authority to waive the notification period at her discretion. In this way, he explained, ongoing violators who park in a reserved space over the weekend would not necessarily be allowed a 24-hour grace period after receiving notification of the offense on Monday morning. It was pointed out that Director Lewis’s suggestion of waiving the need for notice in the event of a second violation would address an ongoing problem.

The Board acknowledged that more work needs to be done on the parking enforcement policy. A work session was scheduled for September 27 at 7:00. This session will be advertised to members.

**MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES OF THE REVISED ENFORCEMENT (§XIV.D) OF THE PARKING POLICY AND DIRECTS STAFF TO BEGIN FOLLOWING THIS PROCEDURE. THIS CHANGE IS TO BE ANNOUNCED IN THE COMMUNICATOR NEWSLETTER. THE POLICY SHOULD NOW READ:**

*“Court members are encouraged to monitor and resolve parking problems, thereby minimizing staff involvement and resultant expense.*

*GHI will not enforce reserved spaces unless the assignee of the space complains. Any abuse of parking privileges by a member or members should be brought to the attention of the General Manager, who has authority to have the vehicles of the offending members towed at their risk and expense. Parking violations are not considered an emergency and will be investigated during normal business hours. Illegally parked vehicles will be stickered with a warning notice, giving the owner 24 hours to move the vehicle, or it may be towed at the owner’s expense. **“No warning notice needs to be given in the event of a second violation by the same member before towing at the owner’s expense.”***

*Members registering a complaint should do so in writing. In instances where the offender continually abuses the parking policy, the matter may be referred to the Member Complaints Panel for recommendation to the Board of Directors for further action.”*

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Wartell

Carried 8

7d. Coop Month Banners

Director Lewis explained that over the past two years, the six cooperatives in Greenbelt contributed to the purchase of two banners for National Coop Month to be hung across the streets in town. The City has changed its policy on banners; three are now required in order for the City to hang the banners. However, the existing banners were being held by GHI after last year’s Coop Month and have been lost. The Greenbelt cooperatives were planning to collectively buy a third banner this year, but would need the other two in order for the City to hang them. Director Lewis suggested that GHI pay for the two lost banners, since they were in our care when they went missing; each banner cost \$800.

Staff has looked for the missing banners in all possible places, but will continue to search. In the meantime, Director Lewis urged that GHI has a responsibility to find or replace the missing banners.

**MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS AUTHORIZED TO REPLACE, FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$1600, THE TWO BANNERS THAT WE HAVE MISPLACED, UNLESS THEY ARE FOUND BEFORE THE TIME WHEN NEW BANNERS WOULD NEED TO BE ORDERED.**

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Agans

Carried 9

7e. GHI Action Plan – 2 Year Vision

The Board briefly discussed the number of members serving on committees. There are currently 79 individual members serving, and some of those members are on multiple committees. The number reported to the Board (74) does not reflect five members serving as Friends of the Buildings Committee.

Director Boswell pointed out a typo in the third bullet: 17% of new members are of a minority race, not 1.7%. He also suggested that directed marketing could increase that percentage further. It was pointed out that the options for “race” on the questionnaire were actually nationalities. Director Lewis stated that more thought needs to go into tracking this question. For example, how would a biracial couple be recorded on a single membership? The term “ethnicity” was suggested to replace “race”. The Marketing Committee will address some of the issues related to this item.

The Board then directed their attention to the fifth bullet regarding members who left for a bigger home. It was discussed that obtaining targeted data for this item would be difficult. Director Morse suggested changing “because they start a family” to “because of growth in family size”. The Board discussed the merits of changing “bigger home” to “growth in family size”. Points addressed included an inability to make the homes larger except by the construction of additions, as well as exploring how families are impacted by GHI. The end goal of this survey is to collect information; in order to retain a diverse population, it is important to understand factors in a member’s decision to move, including how size of the home may be a factor.

President Agans directed the Marketing Committee to revise the question asking why the seller decided to move. The following suggestions were made as additional choices for that question: the public school system, transportation, and divorce. Marketing will look at this, as well as the question regarding race/ethnicity, and will seek input from Board members. The final product is to be brought back to the Board.

7f. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial Statements

Director of Finance Perry highlighted some key points for the Board. The Fee for Service income on the first page represents the Fee for Service work associated with the homes that GHI is rehabbing to be sold. There is slightly more interest income than what was budgeted. The variance in the Professional Help portion of the Administration Summary is due to the timing of the billing of the geotechnical study. There is a typo in the Maintenance Summary; note A lists a favorable variance, but it is actually an unfavorable variance. Finally, the materials portion will be much closer to budget in the third quarter. Mr. Perry offered to provide the Board with an interim statement before creating the 2011 budget.

7g. Contract for Repairs: 8J Plateau Place

Mr. Sporney briefly described the bidding process for this work before Director Lewis made the motion.

**MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER, FOR FIRST READING, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH GOTT CUSTOM CONTRACTING, INC. FOR THE REPAIRS AT 8J PLATEAU PLACE AT ITS BID, \$23,386, PLUS 15% FOR CONTINGENCIES, FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$26,894.**

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Wartell

Carried 8

8. Items of Information

President Agans highlighted a few upcoming events. There will be a budget input session on August 26. The Board and Finance Committee will meet at 6:30, with the member input session at 8:00. A workshop on hoarding will be held on August 26 from 9-12; Board members are invited to attend. The Finance and Investment Committees will meet on September 9.

The second quarter contract processing activity shows that we are a bit ahead of last year.

President Agans asked about the Governor's Housing Conference; Mr. Ralph does not have any information about it, but he will find out more and let the Board know.

There will be an organizational skills workshop in the near future. Mrs. Krob has sent letters to nine members who have difficulty in keeping their homes organized; one has already signed up.

9. President

President Agans had nothing further to share.

10. Board Members

Director Morse shared appreciation for all the things that Greenbelt has to offer senior citizens, acknowledging that the "stats" collected do not always recognize these great things.

Director McFadden stated that she is looking forward to starting work on the diversity program. She has spoken with other interested members; they intend to start brainstorming at the end of August.

Director Lewis urged as many Directors as possible, as well as committee chairs, to attend the new members coffee social. Director Boswell suggested posting an announcement about the coffee social on the Greenbelters yahoo group.

Director James announced that Pleasant Touch in Roosevelt Center will be closing. In addition, he shared that PG Hens, a group promoting urban chicken farming, will have a table at this weekend's Farmers' Market. He is not promoting or against their cause, but merely suggesting that Board members go and hear what they have to say.

Director Wartell shared that there will be a Labor Day Festival meeting on the same night as the new members coffee social. He and Mrs. Krob have been working to make the float a success, but would appreciate more help. They plan to work on it more during the weekend before Labor Day. Wartell also expressed thanks to Mr. Ralph and Mr. Sporney for the refurbishment of his court's driveway and parking area. All of the members of the court are delighted with the results. Mr. Sporney stated that Mr. Peter Joseph handles all of the contracts (and takes the complaints), and therefore deserves "kudos".

Director Hickey will attend the coffee social.

Audit Committee member Wilkerson expressed thanks to Mr. Ralph and all of the staff who responded when a tree fell on her row of homes. Everyone involved did a wonderful job, and treated the members very well.

Mr. Ralph explained that GHI is still engaged in storm cleanup. Complaints from members may still be received about trees that have not yet been tended to; this is because GHI is still involved in the work. Mr. Ralph then shared that GHI's legal counsel contacted legal counsel representing WSSC. While they were unable to come to a resolution, both parties believe that it would be beneficial to have a face-to-face meeting. He is waiting to receive dates from WSSC and will work on scheduling the meeting.

#### 11. Manager

Mr. Ralph shared that Ms. Overdurff wrote a letter of thanks to the City Manager for the installation of curbs on Westway. He encouraged Board members to suggest that members send their own letters of personal thanks.

#### **MOTION: TO ADJOURN.**

Moved: Boswell

Seconded: Wartell

Carried 8

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Ed James  
Secretary