



**Villages of Garrison Creek Board Meeting
August 27, 2023, Sonbridge Community Center**

Board Members Present – Linda Olson, Marie Evans, Barbara Larson, Kurt Carlson, Mike Serra

Absent – John Cress

Guests Present – 17

Quorum – Met

Welcome and Introductions – President Linda Olson welcomed visitors.

Member Comments:

Dave Elliot commented that some yards have not done anything to maintain landscaping and look terrible. Can anything be done? This is the responsibility of the ARC committee.

Brian Miller – passed out a handout of emails between him and various board members. Brian indicated that he was not opposed to the storage annex, but the process in approving the money for the annex. Brian requested documentation of the legal opinions which said the annex could be added to the Reserve Fund. He wants to know why they are not shared. He disagrees that legal opinions cannot be shared with the membership.

Brian Miller also asked why the nomination criteria is going to be submitted to the membership for a vote. Linda Olson indicated that previously nomination criteria were enacted because the governing documents say very little about the process. The goal of changing the process was to create one that was more inclusive and allowed members to nominate other members. The board wanted to make it more evident what the criteria for nomination to the board should be. The current criteria have been posted on the web for months. The goal is to bring the nomination criteria to the membership before the annual meeting. Brian Miller insisted that State law says the board of directors does not have the authority to set qualifications. Kurt Carlson was not on the board last year, but he remembers that the nominating committees were able to make nominations under 64.38 which was acceptable. The criteria that were drafted were given to Brian Miller at the time and these were documented criteria from HOA resources. A nominating committee formed

the criteria in the past. Now the board has created criteria to be put to the membership. Looking at what was done in the past, was done legally but not in the best manner. Brian Miller stated that Don Coleman could not be present as he is caring for his wife, but that Don shared an email to Brian Miller from Marie Evans that 50% of the storage annex was paid in the amount of \$15,000.00 but that the total cost will be over \$42,000 and they questioned the discrepancy. This will be addressed during the Landscaping report.

Brian again brought up the issue of transparency.

Rebecca Demoss brought up a concern about hazardous road conditions in the Villages and drivers going faster than the posted 15mph speed limit. She suggested speed bumps or boulders. (At a previous meeting this was brought up and there was discussion about speed bumps being added during the repaving and asphalt. Ry Goff indicated the speed bumps would be contracted separately. This is also an issue from Creekside to Larch.

Minutes - there was a request to make a correction to the July meeting minutes. Marie Evans moved to approve the July minutes as corrected. Kurt Carlson seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Report – Marie presented the financial report. We are where we are supposed to be this time of year. We did go over for the Reserve Study. This was expected. The new company will charge us the same for all three years whereas the other company charged us different amounts each year based on whether there was a site visit or not. Marie Evans indicated that we do not have any kind of structure insurance. Marie proposes that a task force be formed to work on every structure that needs to be insured. Exact measurements will be needed. There was also a recommendation to change the landscape budget only through December so they will be aligned with the fiscal year instead of going through February. There was a question about an expense for the annex of \$1500.00. It was explained that is part of the clock storage annex payment for the professional engineer. This is the first expense since last April. Marie moved to accept the report Kurt seconded Motion approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

ARC

House painting season has begun, and ARC has assisted homeowners with these projects.

Fence repairs, replacements, and construction are occurring. Construction of fences is always a concern, and complex projects as property lines vary and are almost never as they appear.

Courtesy notices were placed on vehicles in the overflow parking lot notifying owners that the lot had been sold, and construction could occur at any time. The number of vehicles using that lot has significantly declined, without apparent street parking issues.

It has been suggested that the daytime parking only signs located in the extra parking spots be removed. This can be completed with the Board approval.

Home observations have been completed in six Villages. The most common maintenance issues are moss on roofs, and porch pillars that are beginning to disintegrate. We are pleased that many homeowners have been receptive to receiving these observations.

Social

Two home sales have occurred in Village 1 – welcome bags to be delivered.

Our very active and enthusiastic committee members have been busy planning upcoming events.

Yesterday was a new event spear headed by Dick Cook, a Blackberry golf course. 35-40 people including children and teenagers participated in Saturday's event. There was food, drinks, and prizes. It is across bridge 1 in the meadow. Talk with Dick Cook if you have questions.

The next event will be September 10 at the gazebo. Hugos' dance troop will perform 3:30-5pm.

Safety

A report of a pedestrian who fell while walking on Quail Run. At the intersection of Quail Run and Creekside is a water access lid. This is sunken, creating a dip in the asphalt. We are recommending a painted circle be put around the spot, which will highlight the possible hazard to those walking.

The committee members can provide this if approved. Ray Goff indicated this could be raised which would be a better option than painting.

This committee has asked maintenance to check the railings on the SOC (South of Creek) bridges. Bridge 3, east side railing is no longer secure. David Siviter will be assessing these and making a recommendation. Thank you. (David inspected the bridge and found the structural beams to be in reasonable shape. The conclusion is that the most cost-effective way would be to build new railings like the ones used in the new pond bridge. They would be bolted through the current wooden beams. David is awaiting a price to come from the contractor. All labor would be volunteer When the bridge structure needs to be replaced,

the new railings could be attached to the new structure. It was noted that the railings were reinforced about six years ago.

There appears to have been vandalism on the railings of bridge 2. Three of the copper top caps have been pried off and are missing.

Landscape / Reserve Study

Common Area Committee

Replace V2/5/6 Alley Asphalt...Western 65%

In March of this year, the VGC Board approved this project to be done in 2023 at a cost of \$25,153 to be funded by Reserve subaccount 1111.

“Pavement Replace V5 Alley”.

2 days ago, Humbert Asphalt alerted us that they are moving equipment to Walla Walla and scheduling our V2/5/6 Alley asphalt removal and base compacting on Wednesday August 30 and laying new asphalt on Thursday August 31.

We alerted the Board, ARC the V2/5/6 Village Leads and ARC on Friday. The Board also alerted the affected Homeowners whose garages back up to that part of the Alley to park their cars in designated areas on VGC streets the evening of Tuesday August 29 and all day/night on Wed Aug 30 and Thurs Aug 31.

Thus, the Western 65% of the Alley will be blocked off the evening of Tuesday Aug 29 through the morning of Friday September 1. The eastern 35% of the alley will remain open.

We will be back to the Board in Spring 2024 to request sealcoating of the new asphalt.

Sealcoat V1 SE Parkside Dr

Recall in V1 in May 2023, Central Washington Asphalt ground out a 2-ft. perimeter around SE Parkside Dr 7 laid down a 3” asphalt overlay.

Our research indicates it’s better to allow new asphalt to harden for 6-9 months before sealcoating. Therefore, we’ll ask for Board approval to do this work in Spring 2024.

Asphalt Crack Sealingall Villages & GVW

We are awaiting Klicker’ Asphalt bid to do our annual asphalt street crack sealing in the Sept/Oct time frame.

Since there’s no Board Meeting in September, we are requesting standby Board approval to engage Klicker’s Asphalt to crack seal 6,000 to 12,000

lineal feet of crack sealing at a cost of \$1.03 / lineal foot, or in a cost range of \$6,180 to \$12,360 plus tax once we have completed the crack seal survey.

For information, we recommend funding the project via Reserve subaccount 1109 "Pavement Crack sealing and Repair", which includes projected spending of \$18,000 for 2023 in the 2023 Reserve Plan. Barb moved to accept the proposal Kurt seconded unanimously approved.

Clock Tower Repairs and Painting

While having a bid prepared to re-paint the Clock Tower, the painter discovered significant wood rot in some of the exterior support beams for the decorative "shelf" near the top of the Tower just beneath the Clock.

The most cost-efficient solution is to eliminate the decorative "shelf" and replace it with a single white trim board on all four sides of the clock tower to visually separate the clock from the remainder of the tower below it.

We recommend Board approval of a \$7,075 Oltman Brothers Construction bid to eliminate the "shelf;" to install the decorative single white trim board on four sides of the tower; to repair; caulk weather-damaged window frames; to replace the four weather-damaged vertical corner trim boards with more weather-resistant materials, and; to replace missing exterior wall tiles and add new tiles in the area of the "shelf" to be eliminated.

We also request Board approval of a maximum \$2,500 contingency to rent a manlift for this repair work (and a separate project to re-paint the clock tower, as described below); for electrical work not included in the Oltman Brothers bid and unknowns once Oltman begins doing the listed repairs. We are also requesting Board approval of a Benjamin's Painting bid not-to-exceed \$2,500 to re-paint the Clock Tower after repairs are completed.

We recommend charging these repairs and the re-painting to subaccount 1008 "Clock Tower Paint/Repair Contingency". For information, we have been collecting Homeowner assessments for some time for this type of Clock tower Refurbishment

The 2023 Reserve plan also includes projected expenditures of \$1,204 in 2023; \$1,335 in 2026; \$1,400 in 2029; \$1,641 in 2032 and in future 3-year intervals inflating at 3% for the life of the Reserve Study.

Ray requested approval for the above expenditures. Moved by Marie to approve the expenditures, Linda seconded the motion Approved unanimously.

New Clock Tower Storage Annex

Foreword: in 30 years working for a Fortune 50 company and 23 years

since retirement, I have personally managed projects with costs ranging from \$10 to \$75,000,000. This Clock Tower Storage Annex project has now clearly earned the distinct title of the “worst-project-from-hell” that I’ve ever been involved in. It has now been 16 months since we negotiated the original contract with our contractor.

Having said that, completion of the storage annex is very close. We have needed this increased storage and working area for years. My personal thanks to all Homeowners who ratified the funding of the storage annex in the 2022 Reserve Study during the January 2022 Annual Homeowners Meeting.

The current estimated cost for the Clock Tower Storage Annex is \$42,974 as approved by poll of the VGC Board of Directors at the time of signing our initial 4/21/23 contract with our contractor. The contract with Lozano’s was \$31,00.00 so the \$15,000. was approximately 50%. The original plan was to put up a simple storage shed but the city said no and requested we have a contractor.

☑ Next steps: 1) Linda Olson has approved the Benjamin’s Painting bid of \$1,848 including tax to caulk and paint the Storage Annex. Work will begin in early September; 2) We are re-working the electrical service portion of the project because the bid is unacceptably too high due to the requirement that we upgrade the current Clock Tower electric service before we tie in the Storage Annex electric service. We are investigating the fallback strategy of simply wiring the shed to plug into a generator or a solar generator to provide 120-volt service when we need it.

David is looking at alternative supplies for electrical to the annex. An option is to make it solar, which would not require any electrical connection. The thought was to use a generator to supply electricity to the tools that need to be recharged.

Reserve Committee

We are still digesting the 2nd draft of the new 2024 Reserve Study by our new reserve consultant, Accurate Reserve Professionals, Inc (ARPI). We will discuss the new Reserve Study with the Finance Committee at working meetings on September 20 and Sept 27, prior to submitting the Study to the Board for approval and ratification by Homeowners at our December 2023 Annual Homeowners Meeting.

Xeriscaping of Villages property-

Below is an excerpt from an email exchange that I have had with John and Yvonne. I think it perfectly states our thoughts currently regarding xeriscaping. There is no intention of

removing huge areas of grass, but to begin the process of working towards lower water consumption through using the opportunity of relandscaping to evaluate the feasibility of xeriscaping as a replacement. Our expectation would be to maintain the look of the Villages, maintain the standard of yard care, and beginning to educate residents on this. We had an opportunity to visit with Mark and Kris who live in V10 and have xeriscaped their front yard. They have provided us with information regarding the plantings, care, and the process they used to make their front yard virtually water and carefree. The visit was exceptionally educational.

“Interesting (but maybe not surprising) that there are codes for just about everything. Although an HOA can’t prevent the use of xeriscaping or fire-resistant plants, there is some control that can be exercised.

However, the governing documents may include reasonable rules regarding the placement and aesthetic appearance of drought resistant landscaping or wildfire ignition resistant landscaping

Our initial thoughts on the topic:

1. The goal is reduced water consumption...not; changing the look of the Villages
2. The current appearance and relative uniformity of the Villages that people find attractive should be maintained.

To achieve both of the above and stay within RCW guidelines, we can encourage residents to eliminate the relatively large areas of irrigated lawn between homes while requiring that the areas in front of their entryways be retained. There are examples of this throughout The Villages where rock is used between homes in lieu of lawn. Residents also have the freedom to xeriscape their backyards.”

A question was asked if xeriscaping would include Astro turf or fake grass. John Jaso indicated his was not directly addressed but it could be investigated. To maintain continuity, it would be both the front and side yard on a corner lot. It would be to cut down on grass between homes in order to save on water costs.

No update on water issues until the irrigation system is turned off for the year.

Individual Village News Sections on the website - It was asked if each Village could have its own website. Rick indicated it would be possible. Discussion ensued. Content would be sent to webmaster. Village 9 could be the prototype. Marie will contact Janet Siviter and Rick Bartlow to work out details.

Planning for the Future

Proposal for The Villages of Garrison Creek to Consider Professional Management Services Replacing Self-Management

The Proposal

This is to request that VGC's Board of Directors examine and potentially adopt a professional HOA management structure for The Villages of Garrison Creek. This request honors the essential VGC Board's role going forward. Under any circumstance, Board members and residents will ensure the seamless operation and management of the Association. The Board of Directors will continue the responsibility for making decisions related to association policies, budgets, and long-term planning and enforcing the community's rules and regulations. See the Exhibit at the end of this document for an example of a manager's role.

Why This Change?

More important than anything else, every person who lives in VGC wants to enjoy being here. Frankly, for too many former and current homeowners VGC's self-management has engendered a near-toxic "political" environment in the Villages of Garrison Creek.

Too many former and some current board members have become disillusioned, some even embittered, with their experiences on the VGC Board or within their village. Fearing conflict encounters, and lawsuits, too many homeowners are unwilling to serve as board members, committee or individual village leaders. Our current management structure of asking volunteer

leaders, e.g., VGC Board committees, and individual village leads to serve in both a board and/or committee lead capacity and then perform all the management functions is not sustainable. This unfortunate development has not been caused by either current and past board members or volunteers. Board members and volunteers, current and past, have contributed in their own ways to the common good with noble intentions. If blame is to be assigned, it is with the self-management structure that was inherited.

VGC is a Serious Enterprise Running our community association is like running a business — it takes a great deal of work, competency, and continuity. It can be daunting to find community members who can meet these demands. Additionally, asking neighbors to be enforcing rules on neighbors is a recipe for discord and factions. Instead of the board being a source of camaraderie and vision, the board is too often seen by too many of its own members as a controlling, even punitive organization.

The eight villages were developed in phases beginning 25 years ago with Village 1 up to the most recently completed Village 9. VGC was developed in phases with a desire to give each Village some autonomy as a neighborhood for their mutual benefit and interests.

The developers envisioned each Village electing their own volunteer leaders to conduct their

business which included preparing annual budgets, collecting dues, paying for expenses such as landscape services for front yards, intervening for delinquent dues, recruiting volunteers and other responsibilities. Today most villages perform few of these tasks, if any.

Several factors influence the levels of volunteerism throughout the Villages. Many volunteers are aging and their capabilities have diminished. We also have the challenge of going back to the same small core group of volunteers for needed work. Practically speaking many neighbors are aged; some are infirmed; some people are time-constrained due to work and family priorities; some homeowners are simply not inclined to do volunteer work.

Has Self-Management Run Its Course?

It is time to question the “self-management” model. Many people of all ages have purchased their homes with the understanding that property maintenance burdens would be minimal. It is safe to say few owners wish to be active on committees and boards. Other than the annual VGC HOA meeting few owners choose to attend business meetings including those in their Villages. Some Villages depend on VGC’s MPMA Board for preparing their budgets and contracting for landscaping service. This has shifted more responsibilities to the volunteer VGC Board and its volunteer committees. If more of their services are passed to that board going forward, what are the realistic outcomes?

Many HOA boards bring in an HOA manager or management company to assist with day-to-day operations. While the role of a management entity is to carry out the work, the board always provides direction and vision, retains financial oversight, and policy and decision-making functions. A management entity’s duties can include administering the necessary work of the HOA, executing board decisions, enforcing rules (consistent with governing documents), and communicating with residents. Bringing aboard management capability for VGC will most likely require increasing HOA dues, which is a significant consideration. Homeowners will be asked to entertain the tradeoff between higher HOA fees versus protecting their most valuable investment, which is their homes.

Decision Requires Widespread Consideration Dick Cook (Village 9), Ray Goff (Village 6) and Jack Gisler (Village 8) propose the VGC Board of Directors to initiate an open and transparent exploration during the coming year to determine the feasibility of professional management for VGC. Proposal elements include:

1. A resolution to be voted on at the annual meeting for the board to form an ad hoc committee comprised of delegates invited from each Village to determine the feasibility of professional management for VGC.
2. The committee will report its recommendations to the Board and the homeowners on or before June 30, 2024.
3. If a plan is presented to the homeowners along with a 2025 budget line item for VGC to contract with professional management, it will be decided by vote at the 2024 annual HOA meeting and consistent with VGC’s governing documents.

David Siviter commented: First of all, the whole issue of an aging population, my view is that a lot of that is untrue. We don't make it clear that we need volunteers. We talk about the problems but not what is needed. Second, I don't think we can afford it. It will cost a lot more than 5 or 10 dollars a month. I think we need to be very careful, and we should not rush into this. I am satisfied as a homeowner with the actions of the board. Many things I don't agree with, but I value the board. David had no issue with exploring management company options. Two comments by Ray Goff the board did reach out actively to approve our governing documents and we couldn't even get a quorum. It will probably cost \$60,000 - \$80 000 which would be about \$30 dollars more a month. Another member feels it is something worth researching honestly. People may think their voice just doesn't matter. Linda asked David how we could do a better job asking for volunteers. He suggested going door to door and asking for volunteers. David Siviter indicated that it is inevitable that we need professional help in certain delegated responsibilities but where I get nervous is bringing in a management company to manage the Villages. John Jaso and David Siviter are willing to be on the committee to investigate a management committee.

Next Board Meeting – Sunday, October 1, 2023, 2:00 P.M. at SonBridge

Executive Session – Marie moved that the board go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal, delinquencies, and personnel. Mike seconded. Motion passed. No action requiring a vote was taken in the Executive Session. Marie moved. Linda seconded to come out of Executive Session. Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned