

Minutes
GHI Board of Directors
September 8, 2005

Present: Alexanderwicz, Alpers, Eichhorst, Hudson, Lauber, Lewis, Moore

Excused: Abell, Hess

Others in Attendance: Stephen Ruckman, Director of Finance
Eldon Ralph, Director of Physical Plant Services
Joan Krob, Director of Member Services
Brenda Lewis, Director of Human Resources
Tom Sporney, Staff Engineer
Dianne Wilkerson, Chair, Audit Committee
Mary Crellin, Audit Committee
Diana McFadden, Audit Committee
Genevieve Courbois, Recording Secretary
Mayor Judith F. Davis, City of Greenbelt
Lora Katz
Ruth Wilson
Lynn Clinedinst
Renauta York
Ed James
Brett Fishburne
Raymond King
Brian York
George Branyan
David Morse
Esther Yalowitz
Alan Turnbull
Bill Muney, Lanham, MD
Elizabeth Shepard

President Eichhorst called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: MOVE APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AS REVISED.

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Hudson

Carried

2. Visitors and Members

Mayor Judith Davis, City of Greenbelt, elaborated on her discussions with the City Manager and the Director of Planning and Community Development regarding a permit application of July 22, 2005, to the City of Greenbelt by GHI for the installation of a storm drain

system at 25 Ridge Road. She explained that due to the very specific factors associated with this permit application, processing this permit took longer than usual. She clarified that while the storm drain system will be installed in the City right-of-way, the City does not participate in paying for the system, as it is a private system. She further explained that the pre-cast storm water inlets, which must be installed in this private system, are required by both City and County codes.

In the context of Hurricane Katrina assistance, Mayor Davis said the City has offered its public works resources; the tactical squad of the police department will spend a week in New Orleans; and a financial gift will be made through a program whereby City employees may donate a day of sick leave and the City would then write a check to the Red Cross or other approved organization for the value of the leave. She said the County has devoted a telephone number, 1-866-952-7426, to be alerted about county-wide evacuees needing social services. The County will then notify any local municipalities of the presence of these evacuees. Mayor Davis stressed the importance of knowing if any evacuees are in Greenbelt. She strongly discouraged clothing and food drives, as they are very labor-intensive for receiving organizations and encouraged gifts of cash to enable recipient to purchase items that are needed.

3. Discussion of Minutes

MOTION: MOVE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 18, 2005, AS REVISED.

Moved: Moore

Seconded: Alexanderwicz

Carried

4. Approval of Addendum for Trust Ownership and Trustee's Affidavit

Member, Lynn R. Clinedinst, requests the approval of her Addendum for Trust Ownership and Trustee's Affidavit. Member Clinedinst will serve as trustee and beneficiary under a trust agreement dated August 23, 2005.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE ADDENDUM FOR TRUST OWNERSHIP AND TRUSTEE'S AFFIDAVID OF LYNN R. CLINEDINST THEREBY ALLOWING HER TO PLACE HER MEMBERSHIP AND EQUITY INTEREST INTO A LIVING TRUST DATED AUGUST 23, 2005.

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Alexanderwicz

Carried

5. Approval of Membership Applications

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

- DAVID M. WILMES
- ROSALYN ALLEMAN
- MARTHA R. GARCIA
- KYLE M. WHELAN & MARNI S. WHELAN

- **CYNTHIA JOY NEWCOMER**
- **MICHAEL A. NEMETH**
- **MARIAN J. KLETT**

Moved: Lauber

Seconded: Alexanderwicz

Carried

FOR THE RECORD: BOARD POLL ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2005 ACCEPTED THE FOLLOWING PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS INTO THE COOPERATIVE AND MEMBERSHIP AFFORDED THEM AT THE TIME OF SETTLEMENT:

- **JAMES R. RIORDON AND MARTHA HEIL**

Moved: Lauber

Seconded: Hudson

Carried

6. Committee Reports

There were no written committee reports.

7a. Proposed Gardenside Addition, 31-A Ridge Road

On April 27, 2004, member Brett Fishburne submitted a permit request to GHI to construct a gardenside addition at 31-A Ridge Road. On July 27, 2005, the A&E Committee considered this case and recommended 7-1-0 that the Board of Directors not approve the proposed addition as presented. Subsequent to the A&E Committee meeting, Mr. Fishburne provided to staff further supporting information.

At the onset of Board discussion, Mr. Fishburne clarified some of the talking points made in the A&E meeting (as detailed in the Board packet) and stated that others were never discussed. Treasurer Lewis agreed that two points were added to the A&E's talking points that were not in the original A&E report. She opined that the amount by which the proposed addition exceeds half the average depth of the garden side yard is not significant enough to override the care that Mr. Fishburne has invested in the design of the addition, specifically in terms of the addition's compatibility with historic design. She did not see the addition as hindering the view of the common area from the road as a garage is already obstructing the view. While conceding that the addition is large, she said it does not exceed what is allowed. She emphasized that applying rules across GHI is crucial, however, simply applying them to one member individually is not right. Director Alpers offered her support for the addition's design and placement. Secretary Lauber cited retaining families in the community in offering her support for the addition. Director Alexanderwicz said that the Board has "looked at this situation from all angles" and strongly agrees with Treasurer Lewis that the rules should be applied evenly.

Director Moore expressed concern about the placement of the window on the side of the addition but Mr. Fishburne said that the angle was such that anyone looking out would not be able to see into the neighboring court. Director Hudson stated his support for the decision of the A&E Committee.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES STAFF TO APPROVE THE PERMIT REQUEST FOR A GARDENSIDE ADDITION AT 31A RIDGE ROAD WITH CITED SIZE AND ROOF EXCEPTIONS AS PRESENTLY PRESENTED IN CONCEPT FORM, UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF ALL OTHER SUBMITTAL DETAILS REQUIRED BY GHI RULES.

Moved: Lewis
Opposed: Hudson

Seconded: Alexanderwicz

Carried

7b. Rules Change – Abrasive/Water Blasting Prohibition

At the A&E Committee meeting of August 17, 2005, staff requested that the member handbook be amended to specifically prohibit removal of paint from brick homes by water blasting. Currently the handbook only prohibits the removal of paint by sandblasting (§X.A.6). The A&E Committee recommended 7-0-1 that the Board of Directors approve prohibiting waterblasting, with further description of the difference between powerwashing and waterblasting; the final wording is to be detailed by staff.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO GHI RULES:

delete: ~~strikethrough~~

add: *italics*

§X.A. SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS

6. Removal of paint from brick homes by sandblasting, *blasting with any other abrasive media (e.g. grit, glass bead, oxide, corn cob, pumice, plastic, walnut shell, dry ice, etc.), or high-pressure waterblasting (greater than 400psi).*

§XI.C.7.

Proper preparation of the wall surface prior to a painting is essential. Although difficult and not immediately rewarding, time spent in preparation is the most important single aspect of a successful paint job. ~~Waterblasting~~ *Cleaning with low-pressure powerwashing (up to 400psi) and then hand-tooling of the surface before the application of primer is recommended.*

Moved: Alpers

Seconded: Lewis

Carried

7c. Rules Change – CLEAR Definition of Yards for End Homes

At the A&E Committee meeting of August 17, 2005, the Committee reconsidered its previous CLEAR (Clarify Language Eliminating Ambiguous Rules) conceptual discussion regarding the definition of gardenside, serviceside, and side yards for end homes of a building row. The A&E Committee recommended 7-0-1 that the Board of Directors define yardlines using staff's wording, with the recommended wording and diagram changes.

During Board discussion, Staff Engineer Sporney explained that establishing the proper wording and determining how to handle the "outside quadrant" is a basis for yardline discussion in the future. He stated that this would apply to all types of GHI homes.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO GHI RULES:

add: *italics*

§VI.B.3.

For the purpose of considerations of size and location for future additions, decks, porches, any accessory structures (sheds, gazebos, etc.), and fences (including privacy screens), the following definitions apply to homes at the end of a building:

- *Side yards are an area between extension of the lines of the serviceside wall and the gardenside wall of the original structure continued outward to the side yard line.*
- *Gardenside & serviceside yards are an area similar to that of interior units, except extending to the side yard boundary line.*

Moved: Lewis

Seconded: Hudson

Carried

7d. Salary Ranges 2006

The last adjustments to GHI's salary ranges were made in 2003. GHI's salary structure was revamped in 1998 to a merit based system. It has worked well for GHI, allowing for the hiring of qualified candidates as well as retaining loyal and competent staff. For the past few years, however, comparable salaries for the skilled trades quickly got beyond those offered in our salary ranges, and new hires wanted significantly higher rates than we were able to offer. The recently concluded salary survey, as discussed at the last Board meeting, indicates that GHI's salary ranges are lagging behind our nearest competitors, as well as the national and local companies we monitor by way of salary surveys, by as much as 20% in some categories. GHI's system is merit-based, and allows for a minimum, midrange and maximum rate. As performance is measured during the review process, a salary matrix is used to increase individual salaries as authorized by the Board's budgeted overall salary line. Director of Human Resources Lewis provided a Salary Scale Analysis outlining the costs when a 10%, 15%, or 20% increase to the ranges is made, using present salaries, as well as an analysis that shows the impact when a 1% through 5% merit increase is factored in.

President Eichhorst stated that the Board also discussed this during a recent work session. Treasurer Lewis pointed out that during the session positions were identified as not being competitive, and the entire scale must be adjusted or completed anew to rectify the situation. An increase to the salary scale will primarily affect staff at the bottom, she said. She emphasized that a 20% increase to the range will make GHI competitive in some areas and ahead in others. Director Hudson expressed his views that if the salary ranges are too high, the employees' expectations may be raised to an unreasonable level. If we anticipate adjusting salary ranges every two years, then the merit increases could raise salaries to the top of each range within the two years. He emphasized that the Board has a responsibility to be fair to the employees and members. Speaking on behalf of Director Hess, Treasurer Lewis stated that he strongly supports merit increase and that every increase of \$20,000 translates to \$1 per month per year for each member. Speaking on behalf of Vice President Abell, Director Alexanderwicz said that she feels strongly in being fair to staff and not budgeting as low as possible. Member, Brian York pointed

out that when determining if a company was competitive with other companies, the entire benefits package, not merely salaries, must be considered.

Director of Human Resources Lewis stated that the decision to increase the salary scale and by what percentage should be done independently of merit. Ensuring that employees have room to improve salary-wise is important in fine-tuning the salary scale, she said, and GHI relies on adjustments to ensure this. Treasurer Lewis suggested that the Board revisit the pay scale again next year in the context of the 2007 budget.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER TO INCREASE THE GHI SALARY SCALE BY 12% PERCENT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2006.

Moved: Alexanderwicz
Opposed: Hudson

Seconded: Moore

Carried

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES OF A 4% INCREASE IN THE OVERALL SALARY LINE ITEM FOR THE 2006 BUDGET YEAR; AND AUTHORIZES THE MANAGER TO APPLY THE 2006 SALARY SCALE AFTER MERIT INCREASES ARE MADE USING STAFF'S 2005 SALARIES.

Moved: Lewis
Opposed: Hudson

Seconded: Lauber

Carried

7e. Request for Contribution

Each year the Board entertains requests for contributions in March and September. The Bylaws allow for a total of \$2,000 to be spent for charitable contributions. The two requests received are from the Cooperative Development Foundation to support their Annual Race for Cooperative Development and the Katrina Cooperative Recovery Fund.

Member Renauta York posed the idea of GHI offering the guest house to an evacuee family affected by Hurricane Katrina for one year. Board members cited several reasons why this was not feasible including the bylaw rule which states a total contribution cannot be in excess of \$2,000, the financial impact the lost income of \$10,000 – \$12,000 would have on the budget, the current bookings of the guest house, and the liability and responsibility associated with such an undertaking. Director Alexanderwicz also explained that members would shoulder this financial impact and it is “important for people to be able to honor those areas to which they want to give.” Member Alan Turnbull, stated his strong support for the need to make this offer and also suggested that more GHI guest houses would enhance the community and generate more income. In response to Mrs. York’s request for a fundraiser, Board members suggested she partner with the City. President Eichhorst suggested talking with the Member and Community Relations Committee about her idea and stated that GHI is committed to help.

MOTION: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES OF A CONTRIBUTION OF \$750 TO SUPPORT THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION'S KATRINA COOPERATIVE RECOVERY FUND.

Moved: Hudson

Seconded: Moore

Carried

8. Items of Information

No discussion.

9. President

President Eichhorst said that GHI's booth at the Labor Day Festival went well, however, its parade float sustained an accident and for this reason did not compete. She encouraged everyone to attend and RSVP for the October 9th celebration event scheduled for 1 p.m. on the community center lawn. She noted an upcoming Marketing Committee coffee for new members on Monday, September 19 and the Woodland Committee's rain garden workshop on Saturday, September 10, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

President Eichhorst appointed the following members to the Ad Hoc Sustainable Design and Practice Committee: Melissa Ehrenreich, Alice Mitchell, Suzette Agans, Kim Kash, Gwen Turnbull, Kathleen Cooney, Matt Berres, William Barnett, Ed James, Nancy Solomon, Corey Carter, and Chris Logan. Director Hudson will serve as Board Liaison and Director of Physical Plant Services Ralph will serve as Staff Liaison.

10. Board Members

Director Alexanderwicz inquired whether the *Greenbelt News Review* meeting had been scheduled for September 26 or October 3. Director of Human Resources Lewis said GHI has not been able to confirm either date at this point in time.

Director Hudson noted that an employee injury has broken the continuous streak GHI had for number of days without an accident. He suggested that GHI consider a portable information board displaying information about board meetings and asked that this be an item for a Board agenda.

Treasurer Lewis announced that a source she consulted indicated charges for electricity would be increasing by 17%, oil by 31% and gas by 71%. She was thankful GHI uses electricity.

Director Alpers thanked Elizabeth Shepard for attending the meeting.

11. General Manager

Director of Human Resources Lewis announced the birth of General Manager's Overdurff's new grandson.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN.

Moved: Hudson

Seconded: Moore

Carried

The meeting recessed at 9:30 p.m. for continuation of the executive session.

Dorothy Lauber
Secretary