

Minutes for the Sept. 21, 2023, Gerald Park Association Annual Meeting Held at Coventry High School

The meeting was called to order at 6:10pm. A quorum was established. Board of Directors members present were Lisa Catanese, Pam Cropley, Eric Miller, Raymond Perugini, John Petrovits, Kevin Ryan, and Dave Sutherland. Absent were Teri Norman and Syd Seale. Also present was Laura Young, tax collector. Approximately 24 GPA members also attended.

Audience of Members: Steve Bellucci said the recent storms washed out his gravel driveway, and he would like to connect to the storm drainage system. In light of the road turnover issue, he agreed to take up the issue with the town.

Minutes: Minutes from the May 31, 2023 Budget Meeting were approved unanimously. Motion by Eric Miller, second by Raymond Perugini.

President's Report: Eric Miller expressed thanks to the Member Involvement Committee for their work on the GPA picnic, full moon paddles, smores night, and other events throughout the summer season.

Tax Collector's Report: Laura Young reported a tax collection rate of 87.63%. She said there are 22 newly delinquent accounts and 7 habitually delinquent accounts. A total of \$26,165 has been collected, with \$7,340 still due from the delinquent accounts.

Treasurer's Report: Dave Sutherland submitted a report showing \$10,554 has been spent from a total budget of \$28,375. In response to a concern, he said he will speak with the port-a-potty company about not driving over the curb and lawn to service the port-a-potty.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Fuel Oil Cooperative: Ben Emanuele said he is willing to coordinate this again this winter and gave a brief summary of how the program works. Anyone interested in participating can send an email to geraldparkcoventry@gmail.com and it will be forwarded to Ben.

Eric Miller then made a motion to proceed directly to New Business, seconded by Raymond Perugini, unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Update on Avery Shores turnover: Eric Miller provided a summary of this issue. He said the town requested several things:

- 1) Tree removal. At first the GPA was told we needed to remove "several" trees. Recently the town said it was 22 trees. Pam Cropley got quotes from several companies and said the best quote was from Distinctive, for just under \$11,000.
- 2) Parking on the east end of Avery Shores. The town initially said that cars could parallel park only. Currently they have asked the GPA to take down retaining walls to expand the road and connect to the drainage system. The approximate cost is \$5,000-\$6,000.
- 3) Easements. Three property owners whose property goes right up to the existing road will need to sign easements, so workers can access it in order to pave and build curbs. Two property owners, Sam and Teri Norman and Jean Reis, have signed their easements. The third property owners, Mary Ann Hansen, has refused to sign, saying that the map used by the town to determine the property lines is incorrect.

The audience was then invited to ask questions.

- Scott Gallo said our original approach was saying that the town already owns the road. In light of Mary Ann Hansen's refusal to sign her easement, he suggested continuing with the Writ of Mandamus and letting the court decide.

- John Petrovits agreed that the GPA may want to go ahead with the Writ. He said the GPA was negotiating with the town at the request of the court, but that the town's asks keep growing and the GPA doesn't have the funds to do all they are asking.
- Jim Cropley pointed out that if the GPA somehow lost the case, residents would have to pay the estimated \$400,000 to fix the road. He suggested that the GPA goes back to negotiations with a list of what we are able to do and what can't be done.
- Bill Thurston, too, suggested that the GPA let the court make the decision.
- Marilyn Barrett said that in her case, she and her husband had to build and pay for their off-road parking, not the GPA.
- Barbara Washburn said there is a provision stated in her deed for the ability to park on the road.
- Ben Emanuele suggested that the GPA speak with the new town manager about the road turnover issue.
- Sharon Morel suggested that the GPA be 100% sure that the drainage is included in the road turnover agreement.
- Ben Emanuele agreed, saying that if the subject of the drains is silent, does this mean that the GPA would continue to own them?
- Mary Ann Hansen said she is still negotiating with the town about the easement issue. Board members informed her that every single avenue of negotiation has been explored, and that the town is adamant that they must have her easement in order to proceed.
- Pam Cropley pointed out that the town has already reduced the easement on Mary Ann Hansen's property from 6 feet to 3 feet, and they cannot go any less than that.
- Eric Miller said the town will not accept the sewer easement that Mary Ann Hansen signed when the sewers were put in because a sewer easement is different from a road easement.
- Jim Cropley said the paving of Avery Shores is bonded for next year. He said the town would regrade the road to avoid water runoff down private driveways, greatly improving it.
- Several audience members expressed dismay at Mary Ann Hansen's refusal to sign the easement, which simply give the town permission to stand on her land and is not a turnover of property. It could cost each GPA resident thousands of dollars, in some cases tens of thousands, if the road is not turned over and the GPA must shoulder the cost of repairing it.
- Some audience members were unhappy with the costs billed by the GPA attorney. Dave Sutherland asked if we could negotiate the costs, especially in light of the extensive work done by Board members instead of his office.

The final decision is that Eric Miller and Pam Cropley will attend the next court hearing next Wednesday, September 27, and will instruct the GPA attorney to outline the steps that we can take to meet the town's demands, and what the GPA cannot do. If the town does not accept this, the GPA will have no option but to proceed with the lawsuit.

Election to GPA Board: The seats of Eric Miller, Lisa Catanese, and John Petrovits are expiring. Eric and Lisa agreed to rerun. John, who has served for 20 years, declined and was applauded and thanked for his long service. Nominated for the three seats, in addition to Eric and Lisa, were Bill Thurston and Darby Pollansky. A vote was taken. Results were: Eric Miller, 17 votes; Lisa Catanese, 17; Darby Pollansky, 12; Bill Thurston, 6. Darby Pollansky will join Eric and Lisa on the Board.

After the meeting, the new Board met and chose these officers: Eric Miller, president; Raymond Perugini, vice president; Dave Sutherland, treasurer; and Lisa Catanese, secretary.

Date for next Board of Directors meeting: Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 6pm via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm.