



BIRCH BAY VILLAGE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 15, 2023

In person in Clubhouse

Members present:

Chair: Ruth Balf

Co-Chair: Kirk Martin

Secretary: Caprice Pine

Mark Hodges

Maj Nelson

Non-Committee Member: Gwynne Fowler Briggs

Board Liaison: Dave Wilbrecht (not present)

Quorum: yes

Call to order: 5:05pm

Minutes of last meeting, May 3, 2023

Kirk moved to approve as is, Maj seconded

Approved

Comments or Presentations from non-Committee Members (limit to 5 minutes).

We have one open position on the Committee. Gwynne is interested in filling it. She indicated that she had a lifetime of gardening experience, is passionate about gardening, and she wants to contribute to the village. She has good judgement and knowledge with regard to plans, and has lived in the Pacific Northwest for 26 years. Kirk expressed concern about the Village not being focused on buildings and facilities, and that these have been going downhill over the last few year. The Committee members decided that we need someone with Buildings expertise. We are happy to have Gwynne as an Adjunct Member of the Committee. The position is still open.

Business

Old

Updates on hiring for the landscape positions:

- Maj reported that Eleanor Burne has applied for the part-time Seasonal Landscape Laborer position. Eleanor, a UW student, works at Plantas Nativas two days a week, and has 2 ½ days available to work for the Village. (Update: Eleanor will be in the Village on Monday June 19, 2023, and Maj, Ruth, and Bobby Hoffer will interview her.)
- Mark reported that he talked to someone about the Landscape Manager position, and learned that there is a very small pool of people who might be qualified, and that they are all self-employed, doing well (earning six figure incomes), and fully committed for this year. His contact thinks we're hiring for next year realistically, due to the unemployment rate.
- Caprice is going to talk with the person in charge of landscaping at Semiahmoo to learn how they hire for their positions.

- Caprice will talk to Dave, our Board liaison, and ask him to emphasize the importance of the landscape positions to Rick Tanner, our GM, who seems to think the work should be done by volunteers. Dave may have thoughts as to where we can advertise due to his experience as Blaine City Manager – he had to deal with landscaping in that job.
- We need to work with Dave to come up with a Plan B in case we are unable to find a Landscape Manager. Hiring out someone on contract for a year to do all the weeding and pruning – but this would be too expensive. A Plan C might be to prioritize and decide what we can afford to have done 1-3 times per year, and what we can do with volunteers. Ruth and Maj will do this if need be. We are still hoping for Plan A – hiring a Landscape Manager and two part-time Seasonal Landscape Laborers.
- Per Ruth, the landscape work parties are poorly attended. People are working in their own gardens, and traveling. Maj and Ruth have been doing the majority of the work. This is not sustainable. The purpose of this Committee was never to do the work, just to work with the Board and make recommendations rather than relying on the General Manager.

Per Gwynne, yards throughout the Village need maintenance:

- Lowell English, our new Public Safety/Compliance Coordinator, will enforce maintenance requirements.
- Gwynne recommends that we take down the dead trees on the golf course. This is not our bailiwick. Gwynne will talk to Dori O'Dell about this.

Update on the Corten panels:

- Maj reported that the steel has been ordered, and that Travis will get it this week. It should take 2-3 weeks to install. Bobby and his crew will install the panels end of July/beginning of August.

Update on Accessibility (door opener/paths):

- Kirk reported that the door opener is a frustration. He has tried to be in touch with the company, but gets no response – they are in China. He is looking at other door opener options with a U.S. presence. They will be more expensive, but per Suzy and JB, we have the money for this. Everything is easy except figuring out the interface with the electronic lock. JB's electrician is on board to do the work, and the office has the money. Kirk sent the Committee drawings. We just need to get it figured out and tell Bobby to do it. Ruth will talk to Debbie about moving forward. Kirk says we have \$1,500 approved, but a little more is fine too. Kirk will continue doing research on the door opener and make a recommendation for something different than what we originally had in mind. He says its ok even if its twice as expensive. He has two different ones he's looking at, and they cost \$2,000 versus \$800. But we have \$5,000 to spend.
- The path at Sand Dollar has been approved by the Board. Ruth will get the money released and get Bobby to build it. Kirk already told Bobby which pavers to buy – they will come from Lowes.

Sport Courts Report (Caprice):

- Caprice organizes intermediate play via Spond – 10am Monday – Saturdays, 2pm Sundays; Bud Meltsner organizes advanced play, 10am Monday/Wednesday/Friday – we encourage intermediate players to play only on Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday/Sunday to ensure enough courts available; all weather permitting.
- Rae Smith organized free beginner lessons for Village residents – first lessons Wednesday evenings June 2023 – very successful – she had 8 participants.
- We have an umbrella, but no shade sail – Bobby was concerned that it would blow around too much, but folks say they have shade sails in Arizona and California and if they are firmly attached, they don't blow around. Caprice asked Bobby and Kirk again if we can put one up.

- Caprice has asked Bobby to look into whether we are still under warranty and can get cracks repaired, also asked him to beef up padding on basketball poles. Still have heard nothing back
- Caprice presented quotes for the safety fences for the Sport Courts to the Board on May 18, 2023, and they were approved. Bobby and his team began installing the fences on Wednesday, June 14, 2023.
- Randy Ambuehl, of the BBVCC Board of Directors, proposed that Sheriff's department deputies come to BBV to play Pickleball and be available to answer residents' questions, as a means of increasing their visibility to the public and for team building. It would be in the afternoon on a Thursday once a month or so. He plans to take it to the BOD for their support, but wanted to bounce the idea off the Sport Courts Committee first. The Committee is in favor. Caprice let Randy know and he thanked her.
- Maj offered to create a gravel garden next to the pool between the pool and the courts to provide a place to sit in the shade. The Committee wholeheartedly approved of this offer. It will be done this summer.

New

Poison Hemlock at Sunset Park:

- Mark reported that there is substantial and impressive poison hemlock growing at the east end of Sunset Park. It is attractive to children and animals, especially dogs. Mark advocates that we recommend that the Board address this. Mark made a motion that we strongly recommend to the Board that they direct Bobby to remediate the presence of poison hemlock at the east end of Sunset Park. Maj seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Grounds Report (Maj):

- Garden redesign completed in the Clubhouse area for less maintenance and less water usage is making progress. Many native and water wise plants are doing well in the new garden beds.
- For instance, the pool berm now has a soaker hose system running with a standard irrigation timer.
- A soaker system is now in the Lilac Tree border between the Clubhouse and Rec center tied into the existing irrigation timer.
- Large Rocks Grounds had these dug out of buried positions and Maintenance is storing them for final placement over the Fall season as time permits.
- Water saving – more to be done in the water saving area. Working with Maintenance on the sprinkling irrigation system times and areas, but will address this gradually after finalizing plans for the Bocce Court and gravel garden/ path to the Dog Park where the lawn grass is very old and soil is compacted.
- Wind Screen report: The steel has been ordered so fabrication should begin at the end of next week. Hopefully by the end of July or first of August we will see them installed depending on Maintenance availability and Clubhouse use times.
- New Clubhouse Fountain: installed and maintained by Maintenance. Positive comments by members and reports of people choosing to sit near the fountain. The fountain garden now can have all the plants put in place. (Side note: this new rock fountain has no relation to the operation and seasonal use of the memorial fountain at the Front Gate.)
- Clubhouse garden positive comments overall. Our resident member gardeners are especially enjoying the new plantings, strolling through to check the progress.
- Gravel Garden design and install along the new gravel path to the Dog Park will be in the Fall 2023 as an extra seating area with some shade trees for sport court users.
- Funds for the new and unprojected Clubhouse garden redesign and the new wind screen garden have come out of our 2023 yearly budget:
 - Plants

- Chairs for the Pocket garden
- Water spigot splitter fittings
- Soaker hoses
- Compost
- More large round Kettle Falls rocks
- From maintenance back stock:
- Wall blocks, sand and gravel
- This pushes our plant budget for the Office garden beds and the Front Gate new plants over to 2024.
- Wall blocks leftover and in Maintenance stock will be added (when maintenance crew has time) to the front of the Golf Club sign garden bed to retain the soil, keep the path neat and tie the entire garden bed system together across the front. Should be a much nicer presentation to golfers coming into the course.
- Garden weeding parties began as once monthly events and transitioned to once a week. Participation was steady though as summer arrived many participants are committed to family and travel.
- Clubhouse parking lot berms still need work. A plan is in place to cut and cover the horsetail as it browns, using chip mulch over cardboard for the winter. New plantings will be installed as time and budget allow.
- Maj and Ruth continue to work at least twice a week, often more, in weeding and planting in the Clubhouse and pool area. This is not sustainable. We have family commitments and our own gardens.
- The Landscape Manager and garden labor positions must be filled to sustain viable gardens in BBV.
- Grounds formed a small focus group on outreach to find Landscape Manager candidates and summer garden help. We are posting the positions widely now but have had no applicants except one possible for the part time summer garden help.
- Local professional gardeners report to Grounds members that most working garden managers at this level are already in positions for this summer
- The nursery area at the front of the Golf Course will continue to be used for plants awaiting garden bed planting and plants held for the Service and Social Club plant give away.
- Maintenance is planting the berm in front of their office as they have time.
- Grounds continues to interface with the Golf Course grounds volunteers. We plan to help by weeding and planting some ground cover at the smaller beds at the Golf Course entrance outside the course proper and the Rec center small beds.
- Summer schedule for Grounds includes:
 - Weeding in and around the Clubhouse, Front Gate and Office as we are available.
 - Prepare final design and planting scheme for the Office and Marina garden beds in Fall.
- Ruth asked Debbie to give us details on how much we spent. We need to spend everything in the budget in the 2023 fiscal year, which runs January-December, because it doesn't carry over to the next fiscal year.
- Mark asked who is the target audience for the Grounds Report. Maj said it is the Building and Grounds Committee, and that we want the Board to receive it as well. They will, through Dave.

Preliminary planning for next year's budget request:

- Ruth indicated that we need to start thinking about 2024 budget requests. They are needed in September, 2023.
- Mark recommended we conduct an email discussion about this.
- Ruth will talk to Debbie and get numbers.
- We will work to make recommendations for an operating budget – buildings, replacing.

- Kirk moved that we send the Board a strong recommendation that they have the Asset Management Report study they provided reviewed and updated for current costs. He thinks the numbers are way outdated. For example, a restroom that was going to cost \$40,000 would now cost \$75,000. If pre-manufactured, it would cost \$100,000-\$200,000. We are faced with a real escalation in costs for buildings and structures. Maj seconded the motion, and it was approved.
- Per Maj, we need a regular maintenance and painting rotation. Mark suggested we start at the front gate. We need to change color plans for facilities. Mark will propose a schedule. We strongly recommend that the Board get consultations from various paint companies like Sherwin Williams, Benjamin Moore, etc. to present color scheme ideas. No Building and Grounds budget item is needed for this. It's a Maintenance issue (in Bobby's budget), we just need to direct. We must maintain our facilities or it will end up costing us more. We must paint to prevent mold, etc.
- Ruth will talk to Mike Kent to get the real estate perspective on appearance of the Village regarding selling a house and maintaining property values.
- Mark will launch an email thread regarding the 2024 budget.
- Next meeting we'll focus on the budget.

Caprice moved to adjourn, Maj seconded, approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm

Respectfully submitted.