

Minutes for the June 24, 2024, Gerald Park Association Budget Meeting

Held at the Coventry High School Lecture Hall, minutes taken by board secretary Lisa Catanese

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm. A quorum was established. Board of Directors members present were Lisa Catanese, Pam Cropley, Eric Miller, Raymond Perugini, Darby Pollansky, Kevin Ryan, and Dave Sutherland. Absent were Teri Norman and Syd Seale. About 30 GPA members also were present in addition to GPA tax collector Laura Young.

Audience of Members: Mary Ann Hansen discussed whether the GPA is tax exempt. Pam Cropley said she did extensive research into the issue and could not get a definitive answer from the state. If we claim tax exemption erroneously, we would be fined \$5,000 and would have to pay back taxes and interest.

Minutes: Minutes from the May 22, 2024, Board of Directors meeting were approved. Motion by Eric Miller, second by Raymond Perugini, approved unanimously.

President's Report: Eric Miller reminded members that town fireworks are scheduled for this Saturday, June 29, with a rain date of Sunday, June 30.

Tax Collector's Report: Laura Young submitted a report showing a tax collection rate of 95.81%. A total of \$28,794 has been collected, with \$5,733 due in delinquent taxes.

Treasurer's Report: Dave Sutherland presented a report showing that our year-end budget is break even. The Association has spent all of the taxes it collected this past year.

Eric Miller then made a motion, seconded by Raymond Perugini, that we skip the committee reports and move directly to Old Business. Approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Avery Shores Update. Eric Miller gave a brief history of the road turnover issue. He received word that day that the town apparently has accepted the settlement agreement to take over the road, although they have requested some minor wording changes. The funds to take down the trees and to pave Chase Avenue so Mary Ann Hansen could use it as her driveway, and the funds from the property owners at 6 and 8 Avery Shores for work on the east end so they can park perpendicularly, will be held in escrow by the GPA attorney until the settlement agreement is finalized.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed budget for 2024-25: Eric Miller said this year will require an extraordinarily large tax increase, but he is hopeful that it will be the last. He went through each line item in the proposed budget to point out areas where costs have increased:

- **Insurance.** Payment of our annual policy premiums is due each June 25. However, we don't collect taxes until after July 1. So the proposed budget increased insurance payments from \$6,000 to \$10,000 to cover that gap. Going forward, we will have enough in our bank account to pay the premiums on time.
- **Beach area costs.** Those line items remain basically the same, with a reduction in the drainage costs from \$1,500 to \$500.

- **Road expenses.** This is the area with the largest increase. Last year we budgeted \$13,000, but the fees actually came in higher. This year the proposed budget called for \$59,800, to pay what we owe from the previous year and what we expect to owe for this next budget year. In addition, the budget included \$6,800 for the paving work, \$15,000 for the tree work, and \$2,000 in the event the work at the east end goes over the \$16,000 paid by the residents of 6 and 8 Avery Shores, as agreed upon.

Eric Miller stressed that the board erred on the side of caution in developing this proposed budget. Any funds that are not spent this upcoming year could and will be used to lower taxes next year. He said the Board understands this will be difficult for many in our Association, but it truly should be a one-time increase and taxes going forward should return to the levels prior to the road turnover issue.

Charlotte Anderson asked that part of the beach repair fund be used to improve the walkway, which she said was hazardous to people using assistive devices.

Jerry Dallas suggested that GPA board members attend an upcoming meeting of the Town Council, to give them an update and ask for their support. After a deed is agreed to, the town Zoning Board and the Town Council would have to approve the final turnover. Board members agreed this was a good idea and said they would plan to do this after the final turnover deed is settled.

The Board in the past had assumed a tax collection rate of 95%. However, because the increase this year would be substantial, the Board is assuming a 90% tax collection rate.

Lisa Catanese made a motion, seconded by Kevin Ryan, that the proposed budget in the amount of \$78,325 be approved. The vote was 21-0 in favor of approval. A letter will be sent along with the tax bills to explain the large increase.

NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 6pm via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18pm.