

Tavistock Civic Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
November 5, 2020  
By Zoom call, 7pm

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**In Attendance:** Annie Baker, Steven Bozzo, Meg Campbell, Dave Gazzillo, Brad Haines, Maria Jose Pacheco de la Calle, Frank Maderich, Carol Roth, Rose Passarella, Jeff Porter, Charlotte Rouviere, Tim & Kathy Wilson, Eileen Measley

The president called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. She welcomed Maria Pacheco as the new Rep for Area F.

### Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the report and highlighted the following items:

- The Association's current balance is \$11,168.53.
- A copy of the report is attached.
- An invoice for tree maintenance totaling \$7,502.00 will be paid in November. \$5,000 had been originally budgeted for maintenance and \$5,000 for tree planting, but no trees will be planted this year.
- The treasurer is coordinating with the president to get the 2020-2021 snow plowing contract signed. The vendor is only charging the community half price, because of the negligible snowfall during the 2019-2020 winter. He will ask for a payment in January of 2021 (or before if multiple snows occur prior to January).
- A resident expressed concern regarding the cost of printing the directory. **Action item:** The board will get two quotes for the job; one quote will come from SITE, the Brandywine School District's vocational training program for students with special needs.

Dave Gazzillo motioned to approve the treasurer's report, and Jeff Porter seconded the motion. The treasurer's report was approved by unanimous vote.

### 2020 Dues collection

- \$1,545.00 in dues is currently outstanding. The deadline was October 31; residents are asked to submit payment to their Area Rep or the Treasurer as soon as possible.
- A resident asked about paying via Venmo. The treasurer noted that VenMo is limited to individuals. Several board members suggested looking at Zelle, which can be used by organizations. **Action item:** The treasurer will research using Zelle and report findings to the board at the next meeting.

## Committee Reports

### Tree Committee

- The Tree Committee asked the board to consider forming a separate committee to manage the emerald ash borer issue for non-street trees. Many homeowners in the neighborhood will be faced with the decision to take down infested trees, or perhaps treat them to prevent infestation. This will be a costly prospect for those with many ash trees, and the committee suggested the community might be able to negotiate more favorable rates for tree removal than individual homeowners.
- The board discussed the proposal, but tabled the decision to form a committee at this time.
- In the meantime, the board will reach out to several arborists to ask about treatment costs, and will make that information available to homeowners.
- The tree committee asked that the board and community pledge its support of the State's efforts to apply for a US Forestry Service grant. The board says fine.
- Fall maintenance will be conducted in November by Stein Tree Service. Contracts been signed. Expect to be out on November 17.

### Columbia Place

- The working group is in talks with CCOBH and the developer regarding his variance request to increase the height of condo buildings. The developer has said he will accept a deed restriction to ensure that the increased height cannot be used as increased floor space. The CCOBH may decide to oppose the request due to concern that it could set precedent for future development on 2020. Land Use also said in a conversation with a working group member that the agency is rethinking how they submit proposals and recommendations to the Board of Adjustment due to precedent.

The request is not currently on the Board of Adjustment calendar. The developer has indicated that he is willing to wait for the community to complete their considerations before he applies to have the request scheduled for a hearing.

- Heavy rain in August led to flooding and sediment running from Columbia Place to yards in Tavistock. The Working Group considers that the developer is not complying with the stormwater and sediment control plans that were approved by Land Use. The group contacted Land Use, but officials there indicated that they are satisfied with the way things are going. The group then solicited the assistance of Sen. Laura Sturgeon and Rep. Krista Griffith to meet with DNREC. At that meeting, DNREC noted that management of the stormwater and sediment has been delegated to Land Use. However, DNREC officials agreed to review the recorded plans and inspect the site. They will invite Land Use staff to attend that meeting. Working group members and elected officials will also attend.

### Deeds Restrictions

- A homeowner on Aldham Court has requested to erect a fence around their backyard and pool. The committee chair met with the homeowner and reviewed the plans. The fence is split rail with mesh. The homeowner indicated to the chair that he intends to comply with all county regulations regarding pool enclosures. The chair recommended that the board approve the homeowner's request, noting that the board vote only recognizes that the fence conforms with Tavistock deed restrictions. The enclosure's compliance with county ordinances is outside the scope of the board's mandate.

Annie Baker motioned to approve the homeowner's fence request, and Jeff Porter seconded the motion. The fence was approved by unanimous vote.

- The chair reported that a number of homeowners had reached out regarding renovations to exterior spaces, and confirmed with the board that projects don't need to be approved unless the footprint or grading changes.

### **Swales and stormwater drains**

- The chair explained that a homeowner with a drainage problem called believing that the swale committee would resolve the issue for them. The chair asked Area Reps to remind homeowners that the committee's role is limited to sharing possible solutions and resources that homeowners can use to solve issues. **Action item:** Add this information to the website.

### **Community Safety**

- In a Community Update response, a neighbor raised concerns regarding safety in the traffic circle. The committee chairs will reach out to the homeowner to discuss the issue and invite them to join the safety committee.
- A homeowner reached out to their Area Rep to say that a neighbor continues to block the sidewalk when parking their car in their driveway. The homeowner reached out to the neighbor, and the situation improved for a time, but the neighbor is once again blocking the sidewalk. Action item: The Area Rep will recommend that the homeowner reach out to New Castle County enforcement to report the safety issue.

### **Website/Communications**

- The annual update was distributed to neighbors electronically. A few printed copies are needed for neighbors who don't use email.
- Updates to the directory are nearly finished. Homeowners are urged to turn in directory forms if they have not yet done so. The directory will be available near the end of the year.
- The board discussed the possibility of distributing an electronic version of the directory, but agreed that a pdf format is not a tenable alternative, as it exposes homeowner

information to harvesting. It may be possible to make a password-protected, interactive version of the directory available on the website. **Action item:** Committee members will research the interactive option and report back to the board at the next meeting.

### **501 Mt. Lebanon**

- The developers are meeting with the historic review board on November 17.

According to Councilwoman Dee Durham, the purpose of the hearing is to rezone the 501 Mt. Lebanon property as historic, which is the avenue the developers are taking to allow office use, which is one of the allowable "adaptive reuses" of historic properties. It also confers certain restrictions, such as the area the developers are allowed to expand. The meeting will not be used to consider the actual plans for the property, although it is one necessary step toward that end.

- Although the community supports the efforts to save the farmhouse, the current plan is not acceptable because it places the driveway and parking lot close to a neighbor's home. The Committee will reach out to elected officials to determine a way forward.

### **Old Business**

No old business was discussed.

### **New Business**

No new business was discussed.

There being no further business to discuss, Tim Wilson made the motion to close the meeting, seconded by Annie Baker. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The president called the meeting to a close at 8:24 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Meg Campbell