

Tavistock Civic Association Board Meeting

Minutes of October 17, 2017

735 Burnley Road, 7:30 pm

In attendance: Annie Baker, Michele Borzio, Meg Campbell, Tressa Catalina, Margaret England, Dave Gazzillo, Lisa Merenda, Frank Maderich, Eileen Measley, Rose Passarella, Carol Roth, Charlotte Rouviere, Kathy Wilson, Tim Wilson

The president called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

Treasurer's report

- The treasurer reported the following items:
 - The TCA has a balance of \$6,843.72 as of 10/17/2017.
 - Block party expenses were slightly higher than last year.
 - The TCA has incurred \$850.00 in legal fees related to an active lawsuit brought by a homeowner against the TCA.
 - The snow contract is expected at the end of October.
 - TCA Treasurer Annie Baker has assumed the role of registered agent for the TCA.
 - Website hosting was higher than budgeted; spending is complete.
 - The bank charged a transaction fee due to the volume of deposits.
 - Tree maintenance was slightly higher than budgeted.
 - Tree work planning may be adjusted to compensate for new expenses.
- Dave Gazzillo motioned to approve the treasurer's report, and Rose Passarella seconded the motion. The treasurer's report was approved by unanimous vote.

Committee reports

Deed restrictions:

- The Deed Restrictions Chair recently learned of a non-approved structure between two homes on Aldham Court and Severn Road. The chair will send a letter via certified mail to both homeowners to determine ownership and state that the deed restrictions committee never received a request for the structure and the board did not approve it.
- The Deed Restrictions Chair has also learned of another non-approved fence on Aldham Court and will work to determine the owner. The chair will send a letter via certified mail to the homeowner to determine ownership and explain that the deed restrictions committee never received a request for the structure and the board did not approve it.

Columbia Place:

- No further work has been done since the Pilot School was demolished; there is no date set for the second pre-construction meeting with Land Use.
- There has been no recent news from the developer. He had initiated discussions with Land Use regarding changes to the plan, but has not submitted any changes to date.

- A Working Group member met with Antoni Sekowski at Land Use on 9/28/2017 to ask about changes to the Columbia Place LDIA. Land Use confirmed that the changes had been inadvertent and would be rectified.
- Inconsistent care of the site (mowing the grass) was also discussed at the meeting with Land Use. Land Use Assistant General Manager Jim Smith said the requirements for a construction site are no different from other properties (grass must be kept below 8 inches). Mr. Smith said he would call the developer and tell him to get it taken care of on a regular basis.
- Working Group members plan to discuss speed hump installation on Garden of Eden with Sen. Lavelle.
- The Working Group is to meet on October 18 to discuss pending items and get back up to speed.
- Construction on the Columbia Place project adjacent to Tavistock might start soon. There might be issues with the construction activities or you might have questions. Tavistock residents are asked to contact Meg Campbell (meg.cam@verizon.net) or Jay Wheeler (Jay.Wheeler@RaymondJames.com), who are leaders of the Tavistock/Edenridge 3 working group, with questions or concerns regarding Columbia Place. This will be the most effective way for getting to the developer or to the right people in County Land Use.

Street Trees:

- There were two projects, planting and maintenance. Twelve new trees were planted.
- Next year, the committee is considering a special project: Maintenance of trees planted in 2003 and 2007. The committee is discussing the project with the state; it will depend on the availability of grant and community funds.
- In June 2018, the committee will do another walk-through to look for hazards.
- The committee wanted to remind the community that the state's Urban and Community Forestry program will send forestry professionals to provide insight on yard trees upon request.

Community safety

- The committee chair suggested that the community begin look into requesting a traffic survey for considering speed humps on Taunton Road, if Taunton Road residents are interested in speed humps.
- A new Community Safety committee chair would be needed to lead future efforts if residents choose to pursue additional requests for speed humps.
- The Columbia Place Working Group will revisit speed humps on Garden of Eden.

Old Business

Dues Collection

- Two homeowners have outstanding dues.

Brandywine Country Club Development Plan

- According to recent updates provided by New Castle Councilman Bob Weiner, part of the plan is being revisited due to conformity issues.

New business

Swale Drain Maintenance

- A resident attended the meeting to discuss a swale maintenance issue. A longtime resident noted that this has long been an issue for Tavistock homeowners, and provided an explanation of the history of Tavistock development and swale responsibility.
- Ten years ago, the board researched the issue and distributed an informational document (attached). The board has no role/responsibility/authority to maintain or enforce swale maintenance. Residents are encouraged to work together to resolve issues, and use the resources and legwork previously done by the board.
- Upstream homeowners are encouraged to keep swales free of leaves and debris in order to keep drains from clogging.
- The board encouraged bringing representatives from DelDot and the New Castle Conservation District to review problem areas.

New Civic Association Members

- Many of the area reps, committee chairs and board officers on the Tavistock Civic Association have been serving for well over 10 years. Tavistock residents are urged to consider joining the board or a committee.
- The responsibilities of Area Reps are outlined in Article 8, Section 3 of the TCA bylaws:

Sec. 3. The Area Representative shall represent his area on the Board of Directors. He shall also have the following duties: (a) To collect dues and other assessments adopted by the Association and the Board of Directors; (b) To gather opinions and suggestions from the residents in his area; (c) To act as spokesman for the residents of his area before the Board of Directors; (d) To present the views of the Board of Directors to the residents of his area; (e) To recommend his own successor and; (f) To perform such other duties as may be provided for by the By-Laws and by the Board of Directors.

- Homeowners interested in serving should contact the board president or their area reps.

Executive Session

The board entered into executive session at 8:55 PM. The executive session was adjourned at 9:16 PM.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 5 at 7:30 pm at Carol Roth's.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Meg Campbell, Secretary

TAVISTOCK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Do you have a drainage problem behind your property?

Some members of the association do and have contacted the Board for assistance in correcting the problem. The purpose of this flyer is to inform members of Tavistock of what the Board has done to investigate the situation with some public agencies and to offer you help in assessing your own situation and working with your neighbors to address the problems.

BACKGROUND: Storm water in Tavistock generally flows in drainage swales in the easement strips behind your properties until it flows into the street drains. In a few places on your properties, there are underground storm sewers (maintained by DelDOT) that are connected directly to the street drains. The Board has maps of the system.

The swales and sewers were built nearly 40 years ago. After a time, either of two things happen to drainage swales that cause problems. In a few places in Tavistock, the swales are eroding into ditches. In more places, the swales are being blocked by debris, vegetation, silt, and changes made by the homeowner. These blockages are causing wet spots and some ponding.

The easement strips are typically 10 feet wide with 5 feet of the width on each of the abutting properties. The adjacent homeowners will need to work together to correct any problems.

Tavistock is a civic association and not a maintenance corporation. Homeowners are responsible for maintenance of the swales. The association can help the homeowners address the problem, but cannot itself correct the problems.

(SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION)

WHAT CAN BE DONE? Contacts and discussions have been held with representatives of DelDOT, County Special Services, and the New Castle Conservation District. In some cases, technical assistance and sometimes financial assistance can be available from these agencies. Each of the agencies responded well and sent a staff member here to look at the drainage swales with us.

In the places where the swales are eroding into ditches, the agencies will be able to give designs for controlling the flow and stabilizing the swale floors and edges.

In the places where the swales are blocked, the debris and vegetation will have to be removed. There will still be problems where fill, silt, other materials have changed the slope of the swales and these will have to be removed. If changes have been made by the homeowner for flower/shrub beds and play areas that affect the drainage, then corrections will probably have to be made.

This might not be easy. We are fortunate in Tavistock that we have the easement strips behind our properties so that we have buried utilities. Delmarva's electric cables, Verizon's phone lines, Verizon's fiber-optic cables, and Comcast's TV cables are buried in the swales and probably not too deep.

While buried utilities certainly enhance the appearance and value of our properties they present problems. They are in the same easement strips where the drainage swales run. Options for what can be done about drainage will be constrained by these buried utilities. No digging should be done without first getting Miss Utility to mark their locations. One homeowner told us that it cost him \$95 some years ago when he inadvertently cut the phone line. Cutting an electric cable is dangerous.

The Tavistock Board wants to help facilitate cooperation by our members, provide information gained from the agencies and aid in the consideration of the options. In most cases, multiple neighbors will be involved.