

Arboretum Community Association
Homeowners Meeting
Monday, June 26, 2017
Arboretum Clubhouse – 7 PM

MINUTES

President Bob Hittinger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members present: Marty Clarke, Frank Lisnow, Jim Plant and Sharon Remaly. Board member absent: none. Also in attendance were 49 residents.

The only business to be discussed at this meeting was the bridge repair and financing of same.

Marty gave a synopsis of activity to date. This information has been detailed in previous minutes. He discussed the three options the Board has considered: a steel-supported structure; concrete culverts with a concrete bridge; or replace with a new wooden structure. The Board met with an engineer and discussed all three options.

The Board dismissed the steel option due to the size of the beam that would be required to span the distance. This would raise the roadway of the bridge by 12 inches, requiring ramps and greatly lessening the clearance between the roadway and the canopy. Also, the price of this could be prohibitive.

The concrete option has the advantage of longevity and could be a bit cheaper. The disadvantage is the length of time it would take for the permitting process before construction could begin, and associated costs to guide the activity during that time would push the price closer to the wood option. The Board hired a consultant (a retired Corps of Engineer expert) to advise on this process. Because the waterway under the bridge is considered a "blue stream", the Corps has jurisdiction. They would have to come out to survey, and after they make a ruling the issue goes to CAMA for their consideration. All in all, this process would take 4 to 6 months, with no guarantee that it would be approved. Also, the current requirement for culverts under roadways is open-bottom. Our service bridge culvert is not open-bottom. The possibility exists that we would be required to re-build the service road. It is also possible that the dam that creates our pond could become an issue.

Replacing the bridge with another wooden structure was explored. The engineer did a design study and has drawn plans for this option. The design calls for treated lumber and stainless steel hardware. The substructure would have a 30-year estimated life. Estimated cost is \$97,000 (includes work already done). This would replace all parts of the bridge except the existing pilings, which the engineer has said are good. As the remainder of the supports are removed, if any damage to the pilings is seen, we would take necessary steps to address that.

After questions and opinions from the membership, Marty made a motion to proceed with a wooden bridge as the replacement. Sharon seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Jim then addressed the issue of how to pay for the bridge. As per the email which was sent on June 22, the Board was open to any combination of 4 funding sources: using reserves; a special assessment; raising annual dues; or borrowing money.

Many members had already expressed their opinions via email, and these ranged from taking all of the costs from the reserves to a special assessment of \$1000 and increase dues by \$600 per year. Eleven of the opinions received by the Board favored a special assessment of \$500 now and taking the remainder from reserves. Eleven others were in favor of a special assessment plus an increase in dues in some amount.

There was much discussion at the meeting, with varying opinions reflecting much of what was seen in the emails. Many members preferred to have a special assessment as opposed to a dues increase, pointing out that we put \$40,000 per year into the capital reserves, and that if we take \$50,000 from the reserves now, we will pay the reserves back in a year or so without a dues increase. This assumes little to no capital expenditures in that time.

Members in favor of a dues increase pointed out that our dues have not increased in 14 years and have been kept low because much of the work is done by volunteers. However, as we are getting older, some of this work may have to be hired-out in the future. Also, our infrastructure is aging as well, and we will face additional costs for replacing aging assets. Sharon noted her opinion that the reserves are not as healthy as they should be and that a dues increase would allow them to be beefed up. Jim noted that dues have been at \$1200 per year since 2003. Inflation in the past 14 years has been about 27%.

Many members suggested that an increase in dues be addressed in the normal budget cycle, looking at long-range plans and be voted on at the annual meeting.

Frank made a motion to have a special assessment of \$500 per lot at this time and take the remainder of the bridge needs from reserves. Jim seconded that, but amended it with Frank's concurrence to include language that an increase in dues would be considered in the normal budget cycle, and thus be voted on by the Board in the annual meeting. Again, after much discussion, the motion was passed, with Marty opposed.

Adjournment – At 8:24 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Frank, seconded by Jim, and approved unanimously.

REMAINDER: There is no HOA meeting in July. The next regular Homeowners meeting is 7 p.m., Tuesday, August 8, 2017, at the ACA Clubhouse.

(Respectfully Submitted by Sharon L. Remaly, Secretary, ACA BOD)