

Glastonbury Landowners For Positive Change

This Summary/Interpretation of the GLA's Board of Directors meeting on January 16, 2017, is offered as a volunteer service by the GLFPC.

Your suggestions are welcome, should there be oversights or errors.

Key Points

- The newly elected GLA president introduced his meeting protocol, which now allows landowners to be more directly involved.
- One landowner urged this board to make equality and transparency hallmarks of their service. She emphasized the need for an end to the “us vs. them” thinking of the board.
- Dobrowski’s board position came into question due to his alleged violation of board procedures while working as a contractor on a landowner’s construction project.
- The work to collect delinquent assessments remains hindered until the Governing Documents and Legal Committees complete their preliminary legal business.
- Treasurer Mark Seaver will attempt to have accurate 2016 financial reports completed by the February board meeting.
- Dobrowski was also confronted for micromanaging the snowplowing contractor, with whom the GLA has a new two-year contract.
- Yet again, the board denied Dobrowski’s insistence that the GLA needs to buy a new snowplow truck.
- The current lawsuit against GLA is expected to be covered by the former liability insurance policy. The plaintiff is the real party of interest to a previously filed, virtually identical lawsuit.

Summary and Interpretation

With a refreshing tone of civility and respect, newly elected GLA Board President Dennis Riley conducted his first full board meeting at Emigrant Hall on Monday, January 16, 2017.

During the landowner input period, long-time financial consultant Regina Wunsch was the first to speak. She was very concerned about the current financial reports and alerted the directors to the fact that these reports were not only incomplete, but that other vital reports were simply missing. This did not bode well for the new GLA Treasurer Mark Seaver, who tried to participate

in the meeting by cellphone from his main residence in Maryland. Reception was very poor which negatively impacted lucid communication. Eventually, Seaver had to request that Wunsch email her concerns and her corrections, to him. She agreed and then declared, "We do not know what has been spent. Nobody can tell what happened to the money. You need to show the landowners where the money has gone!"

GLFPC Note: A disconcerting pattern of erroneous financial reports had been generated by the previous GLA treasurer during his entire 1 ½ years in office. Based on observations of the new treasurer and his reports, apprehension has not waned.

A landowner urged the whole board to begin this brand new year with a more open mind to input from landowners, and to put an end to rampant favoritism. "The 'us vs. them' attitude, along with the thinking that landowner help is but interference and criticism, leads only to distrust," she stated. The landowner reminded the directors that, though the past board took credit for paying off the road loan ahead of time, it was actually a landowner's idea. She then listed at least ten additional positive changes that were sparked by (GLFPC) landowner input. "There are many knowledgeable and talented landowners who want to work with the board. It is time for a new attitude, to handle our association with better business practices...and to stop the illegal discrimination. Make the hallmarks of GLA equality and transparency, she concluded." Silence followed.

Her thought-provoking letter can be accessed here:

<http://glastonbury.freeforums.net/thread/532/open-letter-board-sally-muto>

In his President's Report, Riley announced the implementation of a plan to allow landowner participation after directors discussed each separate agenda item. This new protocol was slated to continue as long as it did not overly extend the length of the board meeting. Riley's pilot project was a success!

GLFPC Note: It is noteworthy that this meeting ended about 9:45 pm, instead of the usual 11:00 pm, as had been the rule under the previous board president. Likewise, throughout the succession of the 2016 board meetings, landowner input had been strictly prohibited.

In the absence of any new applications, the Project Review Committee reported they were looking into a complaint about an allegedly illegal driveway built by contractor Ed Dobrowski, a board member of this committee. Dobrowski justified that the "new driveway" was actually a walkway and that it did not need prior approval by this committee. Seaver charged, via cellphone, that Dobrowski was "lying through his teeth". He said the photo of tire tracks in the snow made it a driveway. Seaver asserted that by violating board procedures, the question arose as to whether Dobrowski should remain on the GLA board. The attending landowner who filed the complaint added key details during the disagreement. In order to resolve this dispute, further investigation will be conducted at the next Project Review Committee meeting in early February.

Next in line was the Treasurer's Report. As more financial discussion ensued, Seaver indicated that, "I am not going into great detail, so go to the handouts on the website and look at them. There are no complete numbers for 2016 yet, I will have them finalized in February."

Then he voiced the following:

- ✓ The collection rate was almost 90%
- ✓ Accounting fees were over \$13,000 (only \$7,500 had been allotted for 2016)
- ✓ We also overspent on the Administrative Budget by almost \$3,000
- ✓ That \$15,000 of snow removal funds had already been spent from a budgeted amount of \$22,600, and more bills were still coming in

Disagreeing, Wunsch quickly brought up that specific financial reports were missing, as well as noting major errors in his calculations. Continuing, she stated, "I don't know where he got his numbers from." The bottom line became clear when Wunsch affirmed, "We are not really over budget, per se... We cannot afford our lifestyle on the budget we have!"

Yielding to the Finance Committee Report, it was stated that because the rate of collection was determined to be a touch over 89%, the 2017 GLA Budget needed to be changed. This time-consuming process will be done at the committee level at the end of January. Similarly, the ongoing deliberations about changing the interest rate charged on delinquent accounts will be handled in committee.

In her Secretary's report, Charlene Murphy said it was necessary to vote on official committee appointments, even though the annual appointments were made at December's board meeting. Without any discussion, board action followed Murphy's call "to do it right." Murphy also said she was very happy to announce that 35 long-overdue welcome letters had been sent to new GLA members. She disclosed that it was a project that had been pushed back since 2015.

During the Road Committee report, President Riley clearly stated that there is to be no micromanaging of Fred Counts, who has a new two-year snowplowing contract with the GLA. Riley was referring to Co-Chair Dobrowski's adamant refusal to allow Counts plow any of GLA roads as an independent contractor, until every last piece of paperwork was in hand. Mr. Counts has been snowplowing Glastonbury roads for the last four years.

Undeterred, Dobrowski moved on with his Road Committee report. For the umpteenth time, he spent the next 30+ minutes cajoling and badgering other directors about his belief that the GLA needed to purchase a brand new snowplow truck, and how to contrive paying for it. Throughout all of this, Wunsch meticulously explained in depth, significant financial details from the budget, saying decisively, "That there was not enough money left in the budget!" On multiple occasions the board had already voted not to purchase a new truck. When landowners called for an end to this "mindless debate," the matter was finally dropped.

The chairman of the Communications and Technology Committee, Newman Brozovsky said the

committee is Working on two matters: 1). Additional discussion about charging landowners for extra research time to fulfill document requests because the administrative assistant has to ferret through the paper files. 2). Fine-tuning the tracking system for every incoming and outgoing email. Consequently, many requests have remained unanswered.

GLFPC Note: What is most curious about this notion to charge landowners for time in finding paper documents is, that during a recent board meeting members were assured that all GLA files had already been digitized (at considerable expense to the Association).

The newest lawsuit falls under the umbrella of the GLA's old insurance policy, according notification from Atty. Griffith to Dan Kehoe, Co-chair of the Legal Committee. He explained that, "This one is basically the same lawsuit, so it's a real party of interest, and basically we are asking that it gets dismissed. It's basically one property that is trying to launch two lawsuits," he contended.

For now, the board can disregard its own standing Confidentiality Agreement. Unbeknownst to GLA Attorney Alanah Griffith, the GLA Board had been requiring each director sign this agreement. However, when the time came for new board member Leo Keeler to sign it, he flatly refused, on the grounds that IT WAS ILLEGAL and could create a potential lifelong liability for himself. The Legal Committee then consulted with Griffith. Her first impression was, in fact, there may be additional liabilities created by individuals signing it, and that in general, the Montana Non-Profit Corporations Act does cover confidentiality. Griffith is doing additional research on the topic. The current GLA Conflict of Interest Policy may be legally similar. Keeler had studied the material and pointed out that, "It was strictly a financial conflict of interest and does not get into the arena of a personal conflict of interest."

As the close of the meeting drew near, at a much earlier time than the usual 11:00 pm, several landowners called the meeting, "Well done!"

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