

**ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**of the**  
**Grapetree Area Property Owner's Association, Inc.**  
**January 20, 2018**

**Location:** St. Croix Yacht Club

President Jim Pedrick opened the meeting at 4:30pm. In attendance were 40 property owners and 25 proxies were mailed or turned in so the Secretary, Ona Alpert, verified that a quorum was met.

Jim began by thanking Karen Heckman for organizing the event. Then he introduced the Board:

Isabel Brady, Vice President and Architectural Review Chair;

Don James, Treasurer for two years;

Ona Alpert, Secretary and Beach Committee Chair;

GB Bucknell, Chair of the Roads Committee;

Sara McCambridge, a Board member for 4 or 5 years, serves on Nominating and Legal Committees;

Karen Heckman, Chair Nominating Committee.

Emelyn Morris-Sayre, 2017 was her first year on the Board, is Chair of Communications Committee;

Pam Clay, 2017 was her first year on the Board and is on the Roads Committee;

Sweeney Toussant, a Patriarch of the Association, served on the Beach and Legal Committees in 2017;

Luke Landon has served on the Board for three years and is on the Roads Committee.

Jim thanked the Board for serving and all their contributions in 2017.

Jim asked new homeowners or those who haven't come to the Annual Meeting before to stand and introduce themselves:

Jay and Barbara, 22 SGB, owned for five years and were attending the Annual Meeting for the first time;

George and Marie Schofield, recently retired, have owned for 15 years and were attending the Annual Meeting for the first time;

Win Thomas and Cheryl Hackett have been coming to St. Croix since the 1980s and recently purchased in Turner Hole;

Steve and Liz Crane have been coming to St. Croix for four years and also live in Turner Hole.

The first order of business was to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes from January, 2017's meeting. Don Gray made the first motion to approve the Minutes. Mary Sterling made the second motion to approve and the Annual Meeting Minutes from 2017 passed unanimously.

Jim then reviewed the Board's four primary goals in the last three years, since the start of his Presidency:

1. Improve Upon The Administration Of The Association.

There were several responsibilities that were not performed:

- The back property tax problem was solved. We negotiated away the late fees and were able to lower assessments on all road and drainage plots.
- Income tax returns for the past ten years were filed.
- The filing of ten years of Annual Reports was brought current and continues to be current;
- It was determined that we were paying too much for insurance and so the cost of insurance was lowered by approximately \$2000 annually. We went from \$2 million in coverage, which was deemed excessive, to \$1 million;
- The Board published an action calendar and redefined duties and responsibilities of the Committee Chairs and officers;

2. A Document Retention Policy Was Written And Implemented.

GAPOA's Google Drive database was created two years ago and documents have been uploaded to it. A membership database by plot has also been researched and created in the Drive. Now information relating to deeds is also uploaded to the plot in the Drive. Having information stored in this manner helps us legally if there are challenges to the Association by a homeowner;

3. Execute the Ten Year Road Improvement Plan.

The most important responsibility the Board has is to manage GAPOA's road system. In 2012, GAPOA's roads were in disrepair. Bob Carlin, the Road Chair at the time, evaluated all roads and documented their condition and subsequent repairs to them in the Road Manual. A strategy to stop filing pot holes and to start repaving was implemented.

The By-Laws were amended in 2012 and the dues were raised effective January 2015 from \$200 to \$300 annually which allowed us to execute the new road paving plan. Now we have approximately \$65,000 annually for road maintenance. In 2017, 1800 feet of roadways were paved. During the past five years over 7000 feet of roads were paved.

4. Instituted A More Aggressive Collection Plan.

By Law changes authorized late fees and liens. We changed our Collection Policy to allow earlier and more frequent intervention. We increased Board contact with members. We email, write letters and even call by phone when someone has not paid their assessment. As a result, there

have been no new liens placed in the last two years and only two non-lien members did not pay their 2017 assessment. We have increase our collection rate to 92%.

The Board has seven Committees and Jim impressed upon the membership that we need property owners to participate on Committees as it will help build the Board into the future. Jim explained that his term ends at the end of this meeting. Since there are about four Board Meetings per year, serving on the Board is not too time consuming or difficult.

Isabel then thanked Jim for his service and complimented him for doing such a good job as President.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Don James reviewed the P&L Statement. In 2017, GAPOA collected approximately \$104,000 and there were approximately \$102,000 in expenses. There is a \$25,000 cash reserve.

As of December 31, 2017, 62% of 2018 assessments had been paid totaling \$57,900.

There are 21 plots in arrears with liens placed on them. Of those 21 plots, eleven are owned by two people. Jim is in communication with half of them. A few we will have to collect on when the property changes hands.

Jim further explained aspects of the P&L Statement. He said that we incurred a \$5000 legal fee for extensive legal work performed to collect on six delinquent lots but does not anticipate having to do that again. In addition, we spent approximately \$6000 more on roads than what was budgeted because we were able to negotiate a better price for more work done. In other words, once the machinery is on-site, the more work performed the better price we get.

### **Road Committee Report**

GB Bucknell reiterated that GAPOA gets more paving completed for less money if we perform more work at one time. He said that he anticipates performing mostly pothole repair in 2018. Pothole repair is approximately \$800/pothole.

Each year, twice per year, GAPOA performs brush cutting, which is \$9000 per cutting. GB anticipates that it will cost more this year due to the hurricane.

There is extensive road erosion in three places due to Hurricane Maria and the rain that followed. Many street signs are bent or missing, including seven "Stop" signs. He is in the process of getting a reasonable quote to repair the downed and missing signs. He also said that the Board needs to decide if we need "Stop" signs at every intersection with the main road.

He asked that members contact the Board if they have issues pertaining to roads or signs.

The brush cutting company needed extra manpower help and had equipment problems so they were delayed. They were supposed to start in October but started in December and are almost complete.

Erosion on South Ridge Road at South Shore Road is serious. The lines are down across that road and so far the government and phone company haven't removed them. Once they are removed, then that section of So. Ridge Road can be repaired. The Divi Casino has not been helpful in repairing that road.

Isabel asked if anyone had engineering expertise to advise us on areas of extensive erosion but no one did.

Pam Clay asked if members were willing to pay a one-time fee to repair the roads.

Jim replied that it wouldn't be shared equally if we asked for a donation to cover hurricane repair. Win Thomas asked if it was possible to ask for it and Jim said that the By-Laws are specific about how we can collect fees and make changes to the amount of fees. In addition, we still have \$25,000 in reserves that we have not had to use. Also, we project to collect \$85,000 in annual dues and since we won't be paving roads this year we can spend more money on grading and hurricane repair. A comment was also made by Roy Chilson that we should have a budget first before determining if we need additional funds.

### **Communications Committee Report**

Emelyn Morris-Sayre thanked Jan Buell for her hundreds of hours creating and uploading to the Google Drive and for being the driving force behind the Document Retention Policy. Debra Tryon, GAPOA's bookkeeper, has been uploading bank statements and proxies, and Ona has been updating emails and uploading to the Drive.

Jim added that the website has not been a priority for the Board as we communicate through email. On the website there is the budget, P&L, C&R, By-Laws, Road Report and Beach Report. GB said that contact information for the Board is on the website, too.

### **Architectural Review Committee Report**

Isabel Brady said that there were four applications for buildings to be built in 2017. Three are new homes and one is a garage.

- Felice Quigley is building a new home at 29 N NS.
- Richard Haber is building a new home on 2 AA NGB.
- Dan and Pam Valenti are building a new home at 17 SS.
- Frank Colangelo is building a garage on 24 NGB.

She asked for additional volunteers to serve on the committee and explained that the Architectural Review form is on the website and addresses set-backs as per the C&Rs.

### **Beach Committee Report**

Ona Alpert said that the beaches had their highs and lows in 2017. One of the highlights was that volunteers removed approximately 1.5 tons of trash from GAPOAs beaches in the April cleanup, including the derelict boat that washed ashore at Grapetree Bay. Another highlight was that she was

able to get deeply discounted reef-safe sunscreen as give-aways to cleanup volunteers, which was as much as gift as well as an opportunity to discuss why we should be wearing reef-safe sunscreen.

As for low lights, unfortunately between Hurricanes Irma and Maria, GAPOA's beaches saw a lot of erosion, seaside vegetation loss and any turtle nests that existed at the time of the storms were destroyed.

She said that moving forward, she hopes that the impact of the storms remind us:

- How much we need shoreline vegetation and how native plants persist better even under difficult conditions;
- How devastating the season was for turtles and how much they need our help. We have to keep the beaches clean and we have to use turtle-friendly lighting, especially now that we have lost so much vegetation that had shielded light in the past;
- How a rain event effects water quality. There were warnings against swimming for a while after the storms and this was due to the fact that there was large debris in the water as well as bacteria. We should be cleaning and maintaining our septic systems regularly to help prevent this.

She also promoted the GAPOA Beach Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, January 27. She said that we really do have fun out there. She said that one great things about the beach program is that it is relatively low cost to GAPOA but that it relies on volunteers to participate. She concluded by saying that this beach cleanup is special because we will be recycling plastic this time.

Jim added that the Beach Party was a success as well. It was well attended and everyone had a great time. He confirmed that it takes place the first Sunday in March and so it will be on March 4 in 2018. Everyone should bring a dish to share and their own silverware, chairs, napkins and beverages. GAPOA provides a catered meat main dish.

### **Legal Committee Report**

Jim said that the Board has a policy of how it handles C&R violations regarding set-backs and has been consistent in dealing with set-back violations. If the set-back violation occurred in 2011 or prior than a forbearance is granted. There were approximately four granted in 2017.

HGTV's filing of properties on for their shows has necessitated that we create an HOA Location Agreement, and we signed two in 2017.

Jim explained that the \$5000 legal fee represented attorney fees to help collect two members that own six plots.

There were no liens recorded this year and one lien released this year.

He also asked that someone with legal expertise volunteer their time to the committee.

### **Nomination Committee Report**

Sara McCambridge began by thanking the exiting Board members, Jim and Don, and complimenting them on their hard work.

She said that in 2017 both Emelyn Morris-Sayre and Stacia Jung came on the Board but Stacia had to resign due to work commitments. Pam Clay filled Stacia's place. She strongly encouraged volunteers to serve on GAPOA's Board and Committees. She said we live in "a wonderful spot on the face of this Earth", that it is a true community and that many hands make light the work.

She introduced three new Board recruits for 2018: Marie Schofield, Win Thomas and Clint Simon.

She said that we need to fill the president position and that Jim has done much work to make the position easier. GB said that it is OK if you are not on-island full time and Jim confirmed that he was able to be President being on island three and a half months. It was also explained by Jim that the Board will continue to function with Isabel as Vice President and Jim, as Treasurer, and Ona, the Secretary, shouldering some additional duties in support of the Vice President.

Sweeney Toussant made a motion for Isabel Brady to become President. Pam said that Isabel did not have to accept the position. Jim told Sweeney that you can't elect someone who does not want to serve in that position. Isabel explained that she could not serve as President due to extensive work and volunteer commitments.

Rosaria Ambrosi asked if there has ever been a woman president and it was answered that there had been. Rosaria seconded Sweeney's motion. There were six yay votes and fifteen nay votes and so Isabel was not elected President. A comment was made to Isabel from a homeowner that her nay vote was not that she didn't want her as President, just that she understood that Isabel did not want the position. Jim also explained that Isabel could've been voted in but probably would've resigned anyway.

John Morra then said that he would like to be considered for President and his name was added to the Slate.

The new Board members introduced themselves:

- Marie Schofield said she and her husband owned 48 SS for 15 years. She is a retired Chief Economist and managed Mutual Funds. She is a native of Boston who recently moved to Colorado and will spend four months on-island.
- Win Thomas owned his own insurance agency but is now retired. He is from Rutland, Vermont and has raced in the St. Croix triathlon 25 times.
- John Morra has been on-island for one year and owns his own general contracting firm. He is from North Carolina, is married and has a son and daughter.
- Clint Simon was not present at the meeting but it was told to the group that he has a bistro in Gallows Bay and a young family with two children in Country Day.

The first motion to approve the Slate was made by Rosaria Ambrosi and was seconded by Steve Crane. Sweeney pointed out that, with the addition of John Morra, there were now twelve members proposed, which was one too many. Sara volunteered to withdraw but promised to serve on Committee(s).

Jim then reviewed the Slate:

John Morra, President

Isabel Brady, VP

Jim Pedrick, Treasurer

Ona Alpert, Secretary

GB Bucknell

Pam Clay

Karen Heckman

Emelyn Morris-Sayre

Marie Schofield

Win Thomas

Clint Simon

The Slate unanimously passed and the Board for 2018 was voted in.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

The Beach Party time and date was set for 1 pm March 4, 2018.

Jim Sayre made a motion to send out an inquiry to the membership to see if they would consider paying a one-time \$50 per plot assessment voluntarily.

Win Thomas seconded the motion.

It was commented that GAPOA does not have a problem with low funds. GB said that John Morra will give a bid to replace and/or repair the hurricane damaged signage and GB reiterated that we will not be paving in 2018 and so will have enough money to pay for hurricane related damage. Jim added that we should consider a properly voted-on dues increase in an upcoming year and not a voluntary contribution. He said that not everyone would voluntarily contribute and so it would not be assessed equally.

Jim reiterated the motion. It was voted on but did not pass.

The Official GAPOA Gavel passed from Jim Pedrick to John Morra.

A motion was made by Sara McCambridge to adjourn the meeting. Rosaria Ambrosi seconded the motion. At 6:30pm the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ona Alpert