

**FINAL**  
**ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**of the Grapetree Area Property Owners Association, Inc.**  
**January 15, 2022**

**Location & Time:**

Grapetree Bay Hotel & Villas and Zoom Audio/Video Conference Call  
4:00pm AST start

**Board Attendance:**

Greg Deegan, President  
John Morra, Vice President  
Tom Rodenhaver, Treasurer  
Pooja Vachani, Secretary and Communication Committee Chair  
Don Gray, Road Committee Chair  
Empty seat, Architectural Review Chair  
Win Thomas, Beach Committee Chair  
Naresh Boodhoo, Nominating Committee Chair  
Celeste Jarvis, Board Member  
Jon Barber, Board Member (via Zoom)

**Guest speaker: Acting Chief of Police Sean Santos & Police Sergeant Frankie Ortiz (ph: 340.712.6081)**

Note: This is a summary of this discussion as it was pre-meeting.

Both spoke about the issues around the Grapetree area with robberies, and attempts. Chief Santos said they are working hard to increase the police force to keep citizens of the East End and the Island safe, and to do more patrolling of the area. It is difficult to get recruits to join the police force, that is the biggest challenge and have supplemented with auxiliary officers.

Sergeant. Ortiz has been with UVI Police for 24+yrs. He has increased patrol between cheeseburgers and here.

Q: How does the Police officer know the directions for the property when a call is made?

A: Police officers use MAPGEO for directions:

<https://usvi.mapgeo.io/datasets/properties?abuttersDistance=120&latlng=18.043417%2C-64.825476>

Q: Are there any plans to reopen the Police Substation at Cotton Valley Fire Station?

A: Santos intends to. The biggest challenge is staffing and selection of applicants for the Police force is not the best. The budget is also a challenge. So the short answer is not anytime soon.

Q: What can the community do to help?

A: Neighborhood watch, whatsapp group, FB group to share suspicious activity. Ortiz also offered his email: [frankie.ortiz@vipd.vi.gov](mailto:frankie.ortiz@vipd.vi.gov)

Q: What is the estimated time of arrival when a case happens?

A: Santos described an incident where there was a burglary caught on camera, the owner called 9-11 and the police were able to catch the perpetrators and intercept them on the road. Instead of a substation we have placed officers in certain locations rather than a building. There is another group of new trained officers coming so focus will increase as resources become available. Santos is open to implementing a

communication plan and creating another separate meeting that can be monitored by the Police for GAPOA.

Q: East End Point has ATVs, motorbikes driving off land which has created runoffs and new trails that are damaging the corals. Signs have been removed.

A: DPNR, Directors are fully aware of this and DPNR should be patrolling as they have the resources. The Police also patrols this area and this topic will be taken offline.

Q: Are the cotton valley perpetrators in jail? Were they linked to any other robberies?

A: The officers did not comment and could not comment on the justice system and what the AG and Superiors have set on the punishment of the perpetrators

Q: Does the Police get involved in checking in on a home or a person if a neighbor is concerned?

A: Yes, the Police should be called to check if a neighbor has not been seen for days and are concerned

Suggestions from this discussion:

- ✓ Owners should have House # signs of their property visibly displayed as per law
- ✓ Setup a WhatsApp group for GAPOA community for Emergency
- ✓ Add Santos/Ortiz to the GAPOA Facebook group
- ✓ 9-11 is the only way to get the Police dispatched

### **Meeting Opening:**

President Greg Deegan opened the meeting at 4:35pm. Sixty-five (65) properties represented via in person attendance & proxy. Five (5) properties were represented via Zoom conference call. The Secretary, Pooja Vachani, verified that a quorum was met.

Greg began by asking for a motion to pass the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. Isabel had a request for change under Architectural Committee Report to strike 'the roads' as the Architectural committee does not oversee the roads. The request was noted and corrected in the Annual Meeting Minutes Final copy. The 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes passed unanimously.

### **President's Report**

Greg Deegan thanked the Board and the members for the hard work, effort & time it takes to get things done for the community. Greg encouraged members to join the Board and fill up 1 or 2 positions that are vacant on the Board. In 2022, the Covenants & Restrictions (C&R) needed to be reviewed and he asked for volunteers to get the C&R modified and get it done. A subcommittee for C&R will be formed under the Legal Committee.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Tom Rodenhaver walked through the Treasurer's Report. Tom shared that the GAPOA finances are in good order. GAPOA has approx. \$150,00 in checking account. These funds are parked for construction of the South Ridge Road. We also budgeted for two (2) brush cuttings and only got through one (1). We

had to refund a non-GAPOA owner who had been mistakenly charged for HOA fees for 3 yrs. We had Grapetree Bay Hotel pay \$537 for brush cutting. In 2021, we collected one of the liens

Q: John Benson from 85A asked if C&R suggestions and modifications are discussed during an Annual meeting?

A: Greg stated that it is not part of the discussion during the Annual meeting. We need a sub-committee under the GAPOA Legal committee to address that separately, take surveys, create a draft of the new C&Rs and then bring it up to the Board, Legal, and prior to the Annual meeting. John volunteered to be part of this committee and wanted to raise the issue of Wapa lines being underground for new construction vs. above ground.

✓ Create a C&R Sub Committee under Legal Committee

### **Road Report**

Don Gray, the Road committee chair shared that the roads take 70-75% of all the HOA dues everyone contributes to. Don acknowledged the members of this committee including GB Bucknell, Jim Pederick, John Morra, Eldon Lambert, Wayne Huddleston (who moved), as well as non-members Greg Deegan and Rob Bidelspacher.

4 issues to discuss:

1. **Brush Cutting**: GAPOA maintains the private roads. We do not maintain S. Shore Road or East End Road, the brush cutting, repairing potholes and paving of these two roads is the responsibility of the USVI. GAPOA maintains 12 miles of private roads, two thirds of GAPOA's roads are gravel while the remaining are paved. We plan on two brush cuttings per year that costs about \$10,000 each time. The first brush cutting is scheduled for January and it will take about 10 days. Please be aware that there are other brush cutters working on East End Road that are not part of GAPOA's efforts.
2. **Grading**: GAPOA grades the roads and clears the swales and culverts annually at a cost of about \$8500. The grading of the roads is typically performed in the late April - early May time frame after the spring rains and generally last through the year.
3. **Paving**: - this past year, GAPOA paved 2 roads including a section of S. Grapetree Road (1500ft) and Terrace road (860 ft). The cost of paving varies due to width and condition of the road. Typically we are putting down 1.5 inches, finished thickness, of paving when repaving the roads. The cost of paving a gravel road is much more expensive as a base needs to be constructed and at least 3 inches of paving is required to create a sustainable road. Because of this it would cost millions of dollars to pave all of the roads in the HOA. The road committee, specifically Jim Pedrick, suggested it would be more cost effective to pave every other year to save the expense of mobilizing the contractors every year which typically costs about \$5,000 of the \$40,000 budgeted for paving annually. The Board adopted this recommendation.
4. **South Ridge Road**: Quick background is, if you are over by the Divi Casio and looking at it from S. Shore road, there are a couple of gravel roads that go up to the right of the Casino, both roads are on land owned by the Divi. The one to the immediate right of the Casino is GAPOA's official end of South Ridge Road which is not always passable. The second dirt road further to the right away from the Casino was created by the WAPA contractors following Hurricane Maria. The problem with GAPOA's existing official roadway road is its location. The watershed from the surrounding hills funnels down through this area and can wash out the roadway. While contemplating how to repair the existing roadway, GAPOA encountered potential permitting

issues from DPNR and CZM. After considering many potential options, GAPOA approached the Divi about relocating the roadway even further from the Casino on a residential plot that is owned by the Divi which is not part of GAPOA. This plot does not see the runoff from the surrounding hills. The Divi agreed and GAPOA has been working to complete the process of relocating the road for over two years. First, we had the land surveyed to allow it to be subdivided. The new subdivision created a Road Plot which needed USVI approval. The Divi then need to register the new subdivision as they are the owner of record. Currently, we are in the process of acquiring the title to the new Road Plot in exchange for relinquishing our claim to the existing roadway, once the new road is completed. The new Road Plot is located even further to the right of either of the existing gravel roads in this area. The Road Plot is slightly more than 0.20 acres with an assessed value of approximately \$20,000 which the Divi is essentially gifting to GAPOA. That new road will be a gravel road and should be much more sustainable. The current timeline is the GAPOA hopes to close on the transfer of ownership by the end of January 2022 of Road Plot 36-1 Turner Hole. Once we have title we will enter into a contract to have the new road designed, permitted, with both DPNR and CZM, and constructed with Eleven Construction LLC. Eleven anticipate the design and permitting process will take approximately 4 to 6 months. They also estimate that construction will require 5 to 6 weeks once work begins. Construction of the road hopefully will occur after the 2022 hurricane season ends but before the end of 2022.

One final note, neither the Divi nor the Grapetree Hotel are part of GAPOA. In addition to the land the Divi is gifting GAPOA, the new owners of the Grapetree Hotel have taken a different position with respect to contributing financially to the costs GAPOA has incurred in the past maintaining the roads in and around the Grapetree Hotel's properties. In areas where the Grapetree owns land on both sides of the road, they will be responsible for maintaining the road. In areas where the Grapetree owns property on one side of the road they have agreed to pay 50% of the cost of maintaining the roadway. Under this arrangement, the Grapetree contributed approximately \$500 for brush cutting and road grating in 2021. Additionally, they paid approximately \$6,000 directly to the paving contractor for a portion of the paving on South Grapetree Bay Road in 2021 where they own 2 residential plots.

Q: Emelyn-Morris Sayre on Turner Hole own lot 18 & 19 asked to see the survey

A: Don asked and Eldon Lambert agreed to share a copy of the survey with Emelyn as Eldon already has a copy of the survey.

### **Communication Report**

Pooja Vachani shared that she chairs the Communication committee along with being the Secretary for the Board. She acknowledged Debra Tyron as our wonderful hard working bookkeeper. She encouraged volunteers to join this committee to improve communication and create a camaraderie within the community.

There are quite a few new members of GAPOA owners that were welcomed! Pooja urged members to provide latest contact info for our records and keep them up to date with physical addresses.

There are 80+ individuals on GAPOA Facebook private group. The group is private for a reason so we can keep it small and contained only to the GAPOA members. The group is to share news, ask questions, share any safety incidents or concerns. Pooja follows up with email

communication for announcements for those who do not use Facebook.

The website <http://gapoa.com> has gotten a new uplift and has more readily available information. Thanks to Tim Hales, who is the member of GAPOA, has volunteered his time to make good changes to <http://gapoa.com>

✓ Pooja will share John Benson's contact information for those who want to volunteer time to be on the C&R sub committee to revisit and modify the current C&Rs.

Q: To have Santos join the GAPOA Facebook group?

✓ A: It is a possibility to have Santos join the FB group. He has to be tagged to notice and to get his attention.

Q: Can we have a Whatsapp group that is for Police related concerns within GAPOA?

✓ A: Yes, Pooja will survey if people would like to be part of such a Whatsapp group, if so, she will collect the contact info and create a group and get permission to add Chief Santos and Sergeant Ortiz to join.

### **Architectural Committee Report**

Sara McCambridge was the Chair for this committee for a short period in 2021. She stated that the architectural committee did not have anything to approve this year.

There was a question about a setback which was answered through our existing C&Rs. She thanked Isabel Brady for helping this committee.

Q: Sweeney Toussaint asked if this committee will oversee the construction, run off, easement, materials, environmental issues.

A: Greg answered that what Sweeney is talking about is in the jurisdiction of the DPNR and not the HOA. We remind the owners what the guidelines are. DPNR & CZM have more power, and the HOA Board does not have authority to oversee such things. The contractors and builders worked with the lot 63 where DPNR got involved and solved an issue. Greg encouraged that everyone work with their neighbors closely.

Don suggested looking at the Contractor/Builders contact information on the construction property to get something fixed quickly. Most people are reasonable and want to work together to get something fixed if there are any concerns.

✓ It is possible that the current C&Rs need updating around Architectural section of the C&Rs

### **Beach Report**

Win Thomas is the Beach Committee Chair. Overall, the beaches enjoyed being clean and less debris due to less use because of covid restrictions. Sargasm was less than last year. GAPOA residents were provided a letter on Turtle etiquette that Ona (previous Beach chair) wrote. The Turner Hole beach gets most debris and Smugglers + Grapetree Beaches are much cleaner with volunteers cleaning as they use it. We did not have any Beach clean up in 2021 as the beaches were in good shape and Win + Sheryl (his

partner) cleaned as much as possible. They collected 20 bags x 50gal each in 2021 with debris. Emelyn wanted to thank Eldon Lambert who picks up bags of trash from the beach everyday during his morning walks.

- ✓ Suggestion to bring the Beach clean up back as it was a way to get to know new members
- ✓ Beach picnic party will be announced soon, usually early March. Save the date and info will be shared.

### **Legal Report**

John Morra introduced himself as the Vice President of the Board and the Legal Committee Chair. He shared that the C&R will be the main focus as part of the Legal committee for 2022. He will have an attorney on retainer and use the allocated budget (approx. \$1500) for discussions around C&R.

### **Nominating Report**

Naresh Boodhoo introduced himself as the Nomination Committee Chair. He said that two (2) positions are open for nomination for the Board. Sweeney nominated Andre Toussaint as a member of the Board and was selected. Jeff Hennings got nominated and selected as well.

He ran through the slate.

Greg Deegan, President

John Morra, Vice President

Pooja Vachani, Secretary

Tom Rodenhaver, Treasurer

Don Gray, Road Committee Chair

Empty seat, Architectural Review Chair

Win Thomas, Beach Committee Chair

Naresh Boodhoo, Nominating Committee Chair

All in favor, the Board was slated for positions for 2022.

### **Old Business** - none

### **New Business & Closing**

1. Container homes - there are C & R guidelines for container homes. The new C&R might get a bit more strict. DPNR has approved container homes guidelines.
  - ✓ C&R needs updating around this topic.
2. Legal support and retaining was already covered by John Morra earlier
3. East End Marine Park - Greg will be sharing documentation from the East End Marine park that is working on the USVI Water Use Plan for the three (3) islands. There will be a Public hearing on this, it's very involved and has 30-40 pages of information on if you can put mooring, anchor and other detailed items.
  - ✓ East End Marine Park USVI Water Use Plan documentation to follow
4. Rental issues - absentee owners rent out their properties for parties. Lot # 39 had been rented

out for parties which was a big noise issue on weekends and late nights.

5. Overall, Greg urges and requests everyone to talk to your neighbors about concerns respectfully and politely before asking the Board to do something about it. For example, there were rooster's on someone's backyard and the Board was asked to intervene. It turned out that the owner did not have a chicken coup and hence did not violate any rules. This could have been resolved quickly without Board intervention by just talking to your neighbors, building a relationship first to resolve together.
6. Speed road bumps: Andre Toussaint wanted to discuss that with the new construction there is a lot of traffic and workers/trucks speeding down the road. There was a cement spill and it was hazardous. He suggests speed bumps to be considered even though it is expensive to be placed on roads.

Don Gray responded that he did reach out to Andre via email and did not hear back. During a phone conversation between Andre/Don, there was a suggestion to obtain 'slow down' signs but it wasn't received well. Adding a speed bump requires cost assessments and every owner that is connected to that road to vote 'yes'. It should be noted that the Board is not ignoring you and trying to partner with you.

7. Increase HOA Fee: John Morra brought up the motion to increase the GAPOA HOA dues because of the asphalt material, labor cost inflation, speed bumps, and many other items. Jim Pederick chimed in that the process will be to document the reasons for the by-law change with the justification of the new amount for a HOA fee increase.

John made the motion to continue the process and explore the HOA fee increase, Greg second it and all were in favor.

✅ The HOA fee increase plan will be shared with all the GAPOA members before November 2022, so the Members can review the change and vote on an increase of HOA fee in January 2023. This is tied into the C&R modification.

### **Closing**

Greg closed the meeting at 5:45pm and thanked everyone. He motioned to adjourn was made, John Morra second and all were in favor to close the meeting.