

# Bayshore Gardens Park & Recreation District Communications Committee Meeting Minutes January 6, 2021 @ 7:00PM

Members Present: Trustee Steve Watkins, Mary Lou Smith. Guests: Trustee Dan Rawlinson, Trustee Terry Zimmerly, Trustee Barbara Greenberg, Suzanna Young

The meeting was called to order by Communications Committee Chairman, Trustee Steve Watkins.

Mary Lou Smith volunteered to act as secretary.

There was a discussion regarding the shortcoming of the current Banner. It was pointed out that a calendar is needed in each issue to keep residents informed about upcoming events. Committee meetings need to be on the calendar. The Trailer Estates Tribune was discussed as a comparison to the Banner. TE has a company print the paper in exchange for the company inserting advertising into the paper. The company makes its money from the advertisers. Trailer Estates distributes its newspaper primarily from a box at the post office, since TE has all of its mail boxes at the post office and it is very convenient for residents to pick up a paper when they pick up mail. We do not have that situation here.

We discussed methods of delivery to get the Banner to 100% of households in the District. Some felt that what we are doing is adequate. We have about 500 to 600 email addresses at this point, according to Trustee Zimmerly, and the list is growing. She was unsure about the numbers being sent via US mail but thought it to be 60 to 80. It was noted that not all residents have and or use the computer, and with this COVID situation, some cannot afford to pay for internet at this time. Another member pointed out that we have an obligation as a District to keep all residents informed, not just the ones who had internet or asked for it to be mailed. A suggestion was made to send a letter to each household telling them how to access the Banner (computer, US mail, box at the office). A post card was suggested as a cheaper alternative if we can get all the information on a post card. Mary Lou will check on cost and report at the next meeting.

Chairman Watkins wants regular reporting of website activity, and Gia has reported that she can provide it any time. A member cautioned that "hits" on the website are not necessarily indicative of usage. Some people may hit it several times a day at times, making it look like more are using it than actually are.

Appropriateness of submission articles was discussed. We discussed the limitations of a governmental publication as far as personal opinion letters ("letters to the editor"), and the legal advice received by Trailer Estates about the issue. Some felt that it would be read more if it had personal opinion pieces. There are censorship issues created for a government if this type of personal opinion is allowed.

Chairman Watkins stated, for the sake of time, that we would discuss Banner delivery at another meeting.

Trustee Zimmerly brought up the fact that Belle Baxter has been doing the Banner since there were the mass Board resignations. Since the Banner is handled by the Communications Committee, Belle can only continue (if she wants to continue) if she is a member of the committee.

We discussed the issue of paying for Kim to set up the Banner monthly. Trustee Greenberg said that in a former job, that she used simple word processing software for her publication to 2000 people. Software programs were discussed as an alternative to sending the Banner out every month (at a cost of \$300.00/month, according to Trustee Zimmerly). Mary Lou will ask her husband, Dan to check out some publishing programs to see how labor intensive they might be. He resurrected the website several years ago to meet State requirements, trained Gia, and was webmaster for a year at no cost to the District. The District has since engaged a company to handle the website, other than the day to day postings.

Shortcomings of the website were discussed. There is conflicting information on different parts of the site. There is inaccurate information posted currently (Policies, for instance. Some are posted that were never Board approved). Residents complain that it is very difficult to find things. A suggestion was made to see if we could use a "search" box on a certain topic to make it more user friendly. We need to find out how much we can do and what the limitations are of the canned program we are using. Other Special Districts are using the same program. The website needs to be kept current daily if there are special things that residents need to know about. We want to encourage residents to go to the website for timely information. It was suggested that we put more photos of our beautiful District on the website, to encourage resident use. Trustee Watkins will look into these issues.

Chairman Watkins asked if anyone knew who scheduled the meeting and made up the agenda, since he was only named Chairman last night. All present denied any knowledge. He will follow-up with Gia.

Chairman Watkins proposed having the Communications Committee meetings each month the evening following the regular Board Meeting, which is normally held on the third Wednesday of the month. There was discussion that some dates were already set for committee meetings. It was brought up that all that is necessary to have a different date is to have Gia post it once a year, and it would give residents more options to attend committee meetings if they weren't held at the same times. Some committees need more time to get their work done, than others. Both members present voted in favor of the proposed new meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Mary Lou Smith, Acting Secretary

Additional note: After the meeting, Suzanna Young indicated to Chairman Watkins, that she would like to be a member of the committee.