

**Meeting Minutes  
Bretton Woods Home Owners' Association  
Town Hall Meeting on Perimeter Fence Project  
October 10, 2005**

**Attendance**

- Board members present: Ron Comeau, Roger Merritt, Guy Kargl, Brian Buss, Corey Dittamore, and Stefan Hipskind
- Board members absent: John Pellow (out of town)
- Residents in attendance: 27 lots were represented at the meeting

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Comeau at approximately 6:40 p.m.

**Purpose of Meeting**

Ron thanked everyone for attending the meeting and indicated the purpose of the meeting: to discuss the need for a new perimeter fence (including cost estimates), to communicate recommended payment options, and to seek any final input.

**Long-term Vision = Long-term Improvements**

Ron began the presentation by reminding the audience of his long-term vision upon becoming President of our association almost two years ago. Ron indicated he has always been very interested in making long-term improvements to the neighborhood since we have been running a surplus and since residents will probably care less about our neighborhood 10 years from now, especially as the number of renters increase.

Ron mentioned a few long-term projects that have already been completed by the Board: the 71<sup>st</sup> Street entrance sign, the sprinkler installation and tree trimming along Butternut Place off 71<sup>st</sup> Street.

Ron went on to say the Board felt the time was now to address our next long-term improvement, the perimeter fence project, for the following reasons:

- The Garnett Road expansion has been completed and looks great
- Our sprinkler system along Garnett Road is in need of repair
- We'd rather repair the sprinkler system once after we replace our existing fence
- The perimeter fence was installed in 1998 or earlier and is showing age and wear
- Most new neighboring subdivisions have brick perimeter fencing
- Construction costs keep going up and may go even higher due to recent hurricanes

## **Wood versus Brick**

Ron showed the audience several pictures of our fence, neighboring fences, and a new brick fence that was recently built by the vendor we are looking at for our fence.

Ron then showed a comparison of what it would cost to replace our perimeter fence with another wood fence versus replacing it with a brick fence. Ironically, the ten-year cost of each was pretty similar, \$67,965 for a wood fence versus \$69,000 for a brick fence.

*Questions/comments from the floor:*

- *Wood could actually cost more than brick with the recent hurricanes*
- *What kind of wood would we use? Response: The same wood that was installed over seven years ago that is now showing its age and wear*
- *Are you going to paint the brick fence? Response: No*
- *Did you figure an increase in insurance on a brick fence? Response: Yes, it would be higher but not significantly higher when looking at the entire cost of this project*

## **Payment Options**

Ron then discussed two different options to pay for the brick perimeter fence, as follows:

- Option #1 – Special one-time assessment of \$250, payment due in 30 days from assessment date, fence completed by Spring of 2006, and annual dues stay at \$150
- Option #2 – Increase our annual dues by \$150 per year for two years (which would make our dues \$300 for the next two years), spend \$2,500 in repairs to our current fence in 2006, fence completed by Spring of 2007

Ron indicated the Board strongly recommending Option #1 for the following reasons:

- It would take too long to build up the funds slowly; we can build the entire fence if we go with the one-time assessment
- Current bid only good through early part of next year and future cost could sky rocket
- Current bid is by reputable builder and is far below what other builders have bid
- We have not increased annual dues and don't plan to anytime soon if we assess
- Board members can change annually and a different Board may be in place next year
- We can fix the sprinkler system on Garnett one time after completion of the fence

## **Expenses and Budget**

Ron then touched on our expenses and budget. Roger covered our expenses and budget in detail. Roger predicted we would have an approximate surplus of \$28,000 at year-end.

*Questions/comments from the floor:*

- *We spend a lot of our budget on lawn care. Is there a way to get better pricing for it? Response: We re-visit this expense every year and have switched vendors every year due to poor performance. We currently are using Paradise Lawn, Inc. and are paying more for it, but we believe they are doing a much better job than previous vendors. We also have volunteer residents that have planted flowers at the entrance.*
- *I live close to one of the commons areas and can attest to the fact that the new company is doing a great job. It is so much better than last year.*
- *What are we going to do on Garnett regarding trees that were removed with the road expansion? Response: We actually saved most of them, but will look to plant more.*
- *Why would there be only one assessment? Why not break that out over three months? Response: Our bid will not last that long and the bid could go up significantly.*
- *Why not assess the fee at the end of January so that everyone has until February 28<sup>th</sup> to pay without penalty? Response: The Board will take this into consideration.*
- *If approved, what do you anticipate our surplus to be at the end of 2006? Will it be enough? Response: \$1,000 - \$5,000 conservatively. Should be adequate.*
- *If Option #2 is selected, can I pay \$250 one time and be done with it? Response: Yes.*
- *I will pay my \$250 assessment tonight if I can? Response: Thank you for your support, but we still need to review feedback and make a decision before we collect.*
- *What if there are “no pays”? Response: We have taken a few “no pays” into consideration in determining the assessment amount; however, we will charge late fees if not paid on-time and will eventually file liens on properties if we have to but we hope this won’t be necessary.*
- *What about an Option #3 that would replace the perimeter fence with a wooden fence? Response: Board has considered this, but does not recommend this. If you feel strongly about this, indicate such on your informal vote at the end of the meeting.*
- *I have a problem with a possible dues increase in 2007 if not enough people pay the assessment? Response: This is just an option that we would take into consideration. Again, we will file liens on properties if necessary.*
- *I see the advantages with brick, but why can’t we just let the wood fence run its course for the next 3-5 years until we have enough money from the annual surplus we are running? Response: We are open to considering all options; however, the Board feels the current fence needs to be replaced and feels strongly about a brick fence.*
- *Why not wait until March or April to assess fee? Response: Our bid would expire.*
- *Why not assess on January 1<sup>st</sup>, but have dues paid in March? Response: We will take this feedback into consideration and like the idea of delaying the dues.*
- *Why not wait until around tax time to assess fee? Response: Our bid would expire; however, we may be able to push the annual dues back to tax refund time.*
- *Is a vote by the residents possible? Response: It is possible, but not required in our by-laws per the legal opinion of our attorney. It is simply a Board decision. We are conducting this town hall meeting to seek your feedback and input before we move forward.*

## **Informal Survey**

Each lot represented at the meeting received one survey to indicate their preference on how to pay for the brick perimeter fence. The results are summarized below.

27 residents indicated their preference (not included Board members), as follows:

- Option #1 (assessment) - 14 residents
- Option #2 (dues increase) - 1 resident
- Option #1, but push dues or assessment back a few months - 7 residents

22 of the 27 votes were supportive for a new brick fence (81.4 percent)

Other responses - 5 residents, as follows:

- New wood using existing (budget) surplus
- None of the above
- Against - make assessment later date
- Need further discussion
- Spread payment over 3-5 years

## **Decision**

Ron announced that no decision had been made yet and that the Board would consider all feedback received tonight or in the next few weeks before making a decision at the next Board meeting on November 10, 2005. If passed, the assessment would be made no earlier than January 1, 2006.

Ron again thanked the residents in attendance for asking questions, voicing concerns, and listening openly to the Board's research, findings, and recommendation.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.