Ocean Walk Condominium Association

Board of Directors Meeting

July 21, 2023

Board Members present were Tracy Brookshire, Janet Hueners, and Karen Robinson. Baxter Peffer and Pat Yoder attended via Zoom.

Karen Robinson presided over the meeting because of the absence of Allen Gilbert and Tommy Smith.

Owners present: Merrill Templeman, Bonnie Smelley, Jane Young

Staff present: Theresa Taylor

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am.

A quorum was established.

Pat made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 20th meeting as presented. Karen seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Trees:
	1. The landscape committee, led by Tracy with members Janet and Karen, met with Miriam Lancaster, Golden Isles Funds for Trees. She is a master gardener who has worked with the arborist from Ossabaw Consulting and Roger Ditmer who advised the board on which trees need to be removed for the paving project.
		1. The purpose of the meeting was to consult with Miriam about what trees we should use as replacements for the trees being removed.
		2. Miriam gave us a list of indigenous trees we could consider planting:
			1. Sweet Bay Magnolia
			2. Dahoon Holly
			3. Red Cedar
			4. Elm
			5. Red Bud
			6. Fringe tree
		3. She also told us about a listing post that can be placed to measure if a tree, which appears to be leaning, is actually leaning more over time.
		4. Miriam mentioned that any trees we plant should be watered by an irrigation bubbler.
			1. The bubbler attaches to our existing irrigation system and will take water directly to each new tree.
			2. Bubblers will enable us to keep the new trees adequately watered without a lot of intensive labor.
			3. If irrigation is not nearby, gator bags can be used.
		5. She advised using 30-gallon trees as replacements because larger trees would require flatbed trucks and hoists to install them which could damage new pavement. Our landscapers can install 30-gallon trees.
		6. Miriam provided the names of some wholesale nurseries we can obtain the trees from if our landscaper does the planting.
		7. Three to five years after a live oak is planted, it needs to be trimmed and shaped in order to grow the way it should.
		8. The committee asked Miriam about using palm trees.
			1. They are not really trees and mentioned a grub which eats the trees from the inner stem outward making them a hazard.
			2. Because of their short life span, palm trees are not an investment the way other trees are.
			3. Palms are not desirable because of the problems they cause with Palmetto bugs and rats.
			4. Some residents of D building have requested palm trees which is why we spoke with Miriam about them.
			5. If we want the tropical look some people want, a Sego palm is an alternative to a tall palm.
		9. Miriam and Roger Ditmer prefer a more conservative approach to removal of trees. It is her opinion that if some trees could survive the paving project, we should give them a chance rather than remove all the trees at once.
	2. Pat mentioned the motion from the May 20th meeting deciding which trees we would remove.
		1. Since that motion is in the official record, he thinks it would be dangerous to reopen the question of which trees should be removed.
		2. The board has examined the question extensively and we have done our due diligence therefore we should stand by our motion of May 20th.
		3. We should have contracts in place and should move forward with the tree removals.
		4. Janet reminded the board that we have made ‘final’ decisions twice before and with new information decided to change those decisions. At what point do we stop getting new information to inform our decisions?
		5. A contract has not been voted on by the board and the questions Janet raised about the bid were not addressed by the board. Allen told Theresa to sign the contract because the price was within our parameters.
	3. A written report from Roger Ditmer been helpful but it would have cost us $1,000.
	4. Theresa is concerned that once we have been notified a tree might need to come out, it will create a liability for the association if we do not remove it.
	5. Merrill Templeman thinks we should stick with the motion of May 20th. He’s also concerned that if we wait to remove some of the trees, heavy equipment needed to remove the trees could damage the new pavement.
	6. Bonnie Smelley agreed with Janet’s comment that removing so many trees all at once from the front of the complex would impact our property value. Merrill and Baxter disagree about the impact on the value of our property. Bonnie Smelley prefers a more conservative approach.
	7. Janet made a motion that we reopen consideration of which trees should be removed, based on new information. Tracy seconded the motion. Karen, Janet and Tracy voted in favor of the motion and Baxter and Pat were opposed.
	8. Unless some ‘earth-shattering’ information comes through in the next ten days, we need to sign a contract with the tree cutter after that time period.
	9. Miriam will return to look at specific areas where we will be replanting to advise us on specific trees and placement.
	10. Baxter objected to reconsidering tree removals out of concern for timing of the project and the problem of heavy equipment on the new pavement. He appreciates the time limit added to the motion to reevaluate.
2. Paving Project:
	1. According to Austin, the project will be done before the end of the year. He is fully aware of temperature requirements for application. He is coordinating the project so meeting the temperature requirements is his responsibility.
	2. Bids for the concrete work and deep patch repair were supposed to be sent to the board on Friday, July 21 but they have not been forwarded by Austin.
	3. Irrigation and electrical work need to be done before the micro-surfacing.
		1. They were included in the bids for deep patch repair and concrete work but since they are add-ones to the original contract with Roberts Engineering, he will have to charge us for the time he spends coordinating that work.
		2. The additional charges will be at the hourly rate specified in our original contract with Roberts.
		3. If he were to quote a flat fee for that coordination, it would have to include a profit for RCE and would cost us more.
		4. The additional coordination time would also apply to the concrete work and all work on the proposed new entrance except for the gate and its installation. The parking pad, island planter outside the clubhouse as well as the electrical and irrigation work are additions to the original contract.
		5. Janet made a motion to authorize the additional hourly charges for coordination of the new driveway, the parking pad, the island opposite the clubhouse and the electrical and irrigation. The motion was seconded by Baxter. The motion passed unanimously.
	4. Baxter understood there would be a graduated curb rising from the roadway up to the planter because vehicles will hit the curb damaging it each time if it is a straight curb.
	5. We need to see a rendering or an existing structure on the island we can look at.
	6. The concept must exist since it was included in the RFP. We need to get a description, rendering or example we can look at.
	7. Bonnie doesn’t think additional parking is needed in front of U building and would prefer to have the grass left alone.
		1. She doesn’t want a concrete jungle outside her unit.
		2. On one night in mid-July there were 27 spaces available.
		3. The plan is for only four parking spaces and just part of the grass will be removed. No trees in front of U building will be removed.
		4. In the area between R, U and T there is emergency vehicle restriction which will reduces the available parking.
		5. Merrill does not believe more parking is needed because there is plenty of parking most of the year. Parking decisions should be made based on average usage not peak.
	8. There are four projects that have to be done before the deep patch repair is done.
		1. Irrigation and electrical have to be installed.
		2. Tree removal must be completed.
		3. Scoping of the water lines in the complex should be done before asphalt repair.
			1. There are only two companies that offer the work and one of them has not responded to a request for a bid.
			2. The company that bid just under $8,000 is the company we rely on for our major work in the complex.
		4. The dumpster area should be demolished, and the dumpster moved to its new location.
3. Electric Panel Updates:
	1. External panels on each building are all Federal Pacific and need to be replaced.
		1. It will probably cost between $450 and $550 per building including the new breaker panels and exterior photocells which would turn the lights off in daylight.
		2. Theresa estimates there are 16 buildings which will need the new panels.
		3. The cost may drop as more panels are installed and more is known about repairs.
		4. There is money in the reserve for building repairs which can be used for panel replacement.
		5. Karen made a motion that Theresa move forward with replacing the exterior Federal Pacific panels. The motion was seconded by Baxter and passed unanimously.
	2. 96 panels have been changed, that we know of, although there may be some which have been replaced but Theresa hasn’t been told.
	3. The board set a hard deadline of December 31st for the panels to be changed. The board needs to send a stronger message to owners informing them of the deadline, not just saying we “hope” they will change their panels.
	4. Karen asked Theresa to send an email to the owners who have not changed their panels telling them of the hard deadline.
	5. Theresa thinks there are just 32 units that need to be changed but she has to verify which buildings do not need to make the change.
	6. Bonnie thinks owners need more information about the cost and contractors who can do the work. Not everyone knows who to contact and what the cost will be. Owners need a stronger message about the safety issue involved.
	7. The board does not recommend contractors and cost can vary depending on each unit.
	8. An official letter from the board and property management should be sent to the owners who have not completed the work. The letter can include a list of contractors and a range of prices that have been charged.
	9. Theresa will start with an email asking people to update the status of their panels because there may be some changes Theresa does not know of.
	10. Merrill says the real advantage of the updated panel is that each has a switch that can cut power to the panel. In the past it has been necessary to go outside the unit to turn off the power.
4. ACC:
	1. The ACC took into consideration a new requirement for low-flow toilets.
	2. Pat thinks we should stay out of owner’s bathrooms.
	3. Merrill doesn’t think there is any difference between the two types of toilets and dislikes the low-flow toilets.
	4. Janet says the most persuasive reason to stay out of the issue is that owners don’t need ACC approval for bathroom renovations and there will be no way to enforce a new requirement.
5. Carpeting:
	1. Carpeting will cost more than we expected.
	2. Brunswick Floors’ bid is around $40,000 but needs to be updated.
	3. Dukes Flooring’s bid is over $63,000.
	4. New flooring in the gym is being installed now.
6. Towing:
	1. Theresa spoke to a tow company that is willing to tow off our property but wants Theresa to create signs for the complex.
	2. Theresa does not have to consult with the board before towing a vehicle or trailer.
	3. Theresa should record the tag number of any vehicle which is towed, in case she is questioned about the whereabouts of a particular vehicle.

New Business

1. Finances:
	1. All budget line items are on budget so far this year.
	2. We do not pay for the water for the lake or irrigation because it comes from our well.
	3. Damage to downstairs units caused by leaks from upstairs units must be repaired by the owner of the downstairs unit unless an amicable agreement can be reached between owners.
	4. A/C drain lines in the buildings with flat units are shared among all the units but each owner is responsible to treat the drain line to keep it clear. All drain line outlets that can be found are marked on the buildings.
	5. Pat made a motion to accept the financials as presented. The motion was seconded by Janet and passed unanimously.
2. Board meetings:
	1. The next scheduled board meeting is on September 9th.
	2. There may be a meeting in October due to the start of the paving project.
3. Transfer fees:
	1. Several HOAs assess a transfer fee on new owners to build the reserves and make new owners contribute to existing repairs.
	2. Current owners are funding future projects, making it hard to justify charging new owners for repairs previous owners have contributed to.
	3. A transfer fee could be justified as a way to build the reserve.
	4. We could see how it works for HOAs which have instituted it.
	5. Merrill says it is common in the condo market to assess a transfer fee and he believes we should do it even if it is a minimal amount.
	6. Board members will consider the idea and it will be discussed at a future meeting.
4. Existing Loan Payoff:
	1. Theresa wants the board to consider paying off the loan in order for us to create a budget that reflects the end of that loan.
	2. If there are excess funds in the paving project assessment, they could be used for that purpose.
	3. Theresa will provide us with a payoff amount so we know how much will be needed.
	4. By the next meeting, we will have a better understanding of the costs of the paving project.
5. Engineering Reserve Study:
	1. Merrill suggested the complex would be improved by an engineering reserve study.
	2. It is expensive but worthwhile.
	3. Mortgage companies are now asking for them.
	4. An engineering study tells us the approximate remaining useful life of each element in the complex and estimates the cost of repair or replacement.
	5. A decision on a transfer fee can be made later in the year when we know where we stand financially with the paving project.
6. Property Manager’s Report:
	1. Janet suggested Theresa could open each meeting with a manager’s report to update the board on issues she wants to present.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am