

The Village Voice

Published by the Board of Trustees of Grantwood Village

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Incorporated in 1937 - Serving Village residents for 75 years.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2012

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

We received numerous phone calls regarding misinformation provided to some residents by other residents. Because the claims slanderously misrepresent the handling of your tax dollars and the actions of your Trustees, we felt it best to explicate the information to all Villagers.

The Village **IS NOT** going broke. We have more cash-on-hand now than we have ever had. In fact, our reserves have grown 170% since 1999. We have over **\$252,000** in the bank at the end of February 2012.

The Village **CAN and WILL** continue to maintain and repair the roads. We just spent \$78,000 on the largest road repair project in recent memory, if not ever. This included a \$20,000 change order to the original contract, which actually lowered the cost per additional slab.

The Village **CURRENTLY HAS** a plan to improve and maintain our roads. A long term maintenance plan was initiated in the Summer of 2010. This introduced mud jacking as the first line of defense for saving our roads, as well as crack and joint sealing (first done on Whitehaven) which was completed using St. Louis County standards. Since then, we have improved our spec to ensure the new slabs exceed the current weight load

and exceed even our life expectancy. We have collaborated with three Professional Engineers, all either current or former Villagers and with no cost to the Village, and with St. Louis County, MODOT and MSD to ensure our spec and future plans meet the best practices of the industry. We now have two current Trustees with lifelong concrete industry experience. And we have street repair section identification and cost planned through the 2014 Fiscal Year. Finally, we have required our snow removal contractor to use rubber blades, which allows for fewer chips at the edges and corners, less damage to the (sealed) joints and cracks and much less surface wear (for both our concrete and asphalt streets).

The Village **IS** Transparent. Our website, transparency, and Sunshine Law adherence has been noted by local media as a model for any city, especially one of our small size. All meeting notices, agendas, reports, financials, ordinances and archives can be found on our website. Updates and actions from every meeting are posted within 48 hours of adjournment.

We hope this clears any confusion residents may have. If you have questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to call or email the Trustees.

STREET WORK UPDATE

Trustees spent the weekend of February 18th and 19th inspecting and evaluating the streets for upcoming work. Slabs and the needed maintenance are now identified through the 2014 fiscal year budget. Bids are currently being sought for the spring round of concrete work.

We are also seeking bids to complete the final phase of the Forest Haven West street work (the crack sealing). The crack sealing will also be done in phases since all concrete surfaces need to be sealed and will follow the progression of our concrete repairs. With the pot hole repair complete in Forest Haven West, the sealing will begin there and also include the few small sections of concrete in Old Grantwood.

While Trustees were out in February, they noticed several unreported areas of concern in Old Grantwood. These included minor potholes, a larger area showing signs of collapse and severe undermining where grass meets street. If you notice an area as mentioned above, please let us know; walkers often notice such issues very early on and can help us identify these areas.

BULKY WASTE PICKUP

The semi-annual Bulky Waste Pickup is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 18th**. Anything that can be picked up by two men is considered bulky waste. Furniture, such as sofas, chairs, outdoor furniture, almost anything, except, white goods, such as dryers, washers or refrigerators, and electronics, are acceptable. This time, we contacted American Kidney Fund to take advantage of our Bulky Waste. They have agreed to come through the Village, Tuesday, April 17th for donations. Please place your items at the curb Monday, April 16th if you would like to donate your bulky waste items to the Kidney Fund. Any remaining items will be picked up the following day by Waste Management.

REMINDERS

Please remember to remove your trash containers from the curb after Monday pickup. We have received several comments regarding containers remaining at the curb days after pickup.

GRANTWOOD BOOK

This is the final call for any pictures, artifacts, stories, anything you may have for inclusion in the 75th Anniversary Historical Book. If you have questions, please contact Kevin Bley at 729-0335 or Katy Forand at 843-0756. They can also help anyone interested in purchasing a Grantwood Village Flag.

APRIL ELECTION

An election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 3rd, which will decide two Grantwood Village trustee positions for a two-year period. The candidates that have filed for election are:

- Cathy M. Forand (I)
- Patricia Williams (I)
- Bill Hypes
- Walter Rust
- Will Larson

The polling place is our Village Hall (lower level); voting hours are 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. We encourage all registered voters in Grantwood Village to get out and vote.

FOREST HAVEN ASSOCIATION

Membership forms for 2012 have been mailed. Thank you to those who have sent in dues; if you would like to join but cannot find your form, you can download one from the Village Website (under Homeowner’s Associations) or call Katy Forand at 314-843-0756. Our Summer Picnic is June 10th.

GRANTWOODIANS

Our annual Grantwood Easter Egg Hunt at 10a.m. on April 7th at #15 Grantwood Lane. Please stop by for donuts, coffee, and egg hunt extravaganza. If anyone would like to help please contact Sheri Brimer. Our dues this year for our Grantwood events are \$30.00. Please send dues to Kathy Smith #43 Grantwood Lane.

NEW NEIGHBORS

Welcome to new Villagers, Patrick Heavey and Heather Dawson-Heavey at 8838 Bracken Circle and Timothy and Myco Wulkopf at 7473 Capilia Drive.

SUMMER SWIMMING

Crestwood Aquatic Center allows Lindbergh School District residents to join as non-residents. Prices have increased slightly from last year:

- Non Resident Family - \$400
- Each addl. Person over 4 - \$ 60
- Non Resident Individual - \$150
- Non Resident ID Card - \$ 35

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the center at 729-4860.

MEETING UPDATES

Last newsletter we began including the Monthly Meeting updates we post on the Website. The updates from the previous three months are attached to this newsletter. We hope this is helpful for residents who do not frequently use the Internet.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

A resident recently attended a program geared towards residential and civilian disaster preparedness and response and we are able to arrange the same presentation here in the Village. If we have enough interest, we will schedule the event; please contact us if this is of interest to you; 314-842-4409 ext 1 or trustees@grantwoodvillage.us. Information is also available at the Town Hall.

Reminders

Monthly Meetings

The Village Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm at the Village Hall. Agendas are posted at the Hall and on our website. Villagers are encouraged to attend and we appreciate your comments and concerns.

Auto Decals

The \$5.00 charge for each decal appeared on your Personal Property Tax bill last December, but, if you have added or changed vehicles since, please contact the Village Clerk, Pat Williams at 842-4409. Leased and company owned vehicles must have a decal.

Building Permits

If you build a fence, rent a dumpster, build a wall or remodel your home, you will need a Grantwood Village permit. Some activities require a permit from Grantwood; some require permits from both the County and Grantwood. Before you start a project, give Bob Bess a call at 842-4409 #1 for assistance with the requirements and various codes.

Notes from the December Meeting

With former Prosecuting Attorney, Rich Magee, filling the vacancy of Village Attorney, the Board appointed Mike Vogt to fill the Prosecuting Attorney position. Mike is a former State Representative from the Affton area and currently practices law with the firm Vogt and Howard. A graduate of Saint Louis University and Oklahoma City University School of Law, Mike is very active in the community, including the Affton Chamber of Commerce, Affton Athletic Association and Seven Holy Founders Church. Welcome Mike!

After several months of discussion and tweaking, the Board unanimously approved an ordinance allowing residents to own chickens. We have tried to consider the concerns of all residents, for and against the chickens, and feel we have produced an ordinance which allows families to have chickens while first and foremost respecting neighboring properties and residents. We will have a PDF file of the new ordinance posted shortly. Any resident wishing to raise chickens, must first apply for a permit, free of charge.

The Board also approved expenditures to replace the faded stop signs in Forest Haven and repair pot holes in Forest Haven West. All street signs and stop signs in Old Grantwood were replaced several years ago and remain in terrific condition. Two bids were received and the Board accepted the \$1,055.80 bid from FastSigns. Additionally, two bids were received for the pot hole repair, with the Board accepting the bid from Domian Asphalt. Their bid was for \$2,880, but the Board allocated \$3,500 in case other holes or issues present themselves during the repair process. The remaining pot holes in Forest Haven will be repaired in the Spring.

In an effort to enhance Grant Road and address some safety concerns along the road, the Board applied for a Federal Grant. The Grantwood Village Historic Corridor Enhancement and Safety Project seeks to pave the first gravel area and remove the second larger one, add solar powered street lights with decorative and informative banners and install an entrance sign welcoming visitors to Grantwood, Grant's Farm and the Ulysses S. Grant Historic Site. Due to the tight deadline, the application was submitted without final design plans. The goal of this project is to properly show the historic significance of this area while providing a safer drive for residents and other motorists. Flash flooding occurs frequently and lighting will offer drivers a better view of standing water. Plus, it will also provide better viewing of other obstacles as raccoons and other animals which frequent the area. The lighting will not be intolerable; it is only meant to provide Grant Road a bit of lighting, not the entire area. The general design has the support of the Ulysses S. Grant Historic Site. We do not know the timeline of approval or denial, but will provide an update as soon as we hear.

Notes from the January Meeting

We were honored to welcome a special surprise guest, St. Louis County Chief of Police Tim Fitch. Chief Fitch reported on the recently updated crime statistics for St. Louis County. For the third year in a row, crime was down in the 3rd Precinct. Crime throughout the County was also down this year, reaching levels not seen since 1971. He also reminded us that Grantwood was the first municipality to contract with the County Police, a relationship which started in the 1950s. He ended by thanking everyone and the Board for their relationship and “for having our act together.” We feel the same way, Chief!

Trustee Reports:

Trustee Kienstra, before giving the Treasurer’s report, noted December and January are big months for revenues as most real estate and personal property tax is received. Unusual disbursements for January included: Call Publishing for the candidate filing notice, Domian Paving for pot hole repair in Forest Haven West, Casey Electric for electrical repairs at the Town Hall, and new telephones at the Town Hall. For specifics, please refer to the Treasurer’s report on our Website.

Trustee Williams reported her progress on updating Village records, including improved filing systems and the scanning of documents into the Village computer. Filing for the April election is now closed, with five candidates filing for two positions. They are: Cathy Forand, Pat Williams, Bill Hypes, Walter Rust and Will Larson. The election is April 3.

Trustee Bess elaborated on the electrical work performed at the Town Hall. Several low voltage circuits were replaced and one of the entrance lights, which was knocked over after being backed into, was also fixed. Seliga Heating and Cooling also visited the Town Hall this month after the furnace failed. A group of wires were found to be burned and were replaced. This work was performed under a maintenance contract with Seliga.

Trustee Kelso updated the Board on the status of the private lateral sewer connection on Grantview. Due to MSD giving the wrong locate, work was prolonged, but the connection has been made and now we await warmer weather to repair the sections of street where the cuts were made. Pot hole repair was completed in Forest Haven West, with an additional 30 repairs being made. Pot holes repaired totaled 90. The Board approved \$3,500 for the repairs; \$2,900 was the bid for 60 repairs and the 90 repairs totaled \$3,200. New stop signs and sign pole painting will begin in Forest Haven as soon as weather cooperates.

Officer Mike reported another crime free month in Grantwood, and thanked Old Grantwood residents for handling the closure of the Grantview Entrance so well and without incident. Trustee Forand reported on Village communications for the month, which included her responding to 49 phone calls at her residence, 6 from the Town Hall voicemail, and 70 emails.

Village Attorney Rich Magee reported the transition of his Prosecuting Attorney duties to Mike Vogt is going very well and expects Mr. Vogt to serve the Village well.

Residents Questions and Comments:

A resident commented and thanked the Board for the robo calls made to Old Grantwood prior to the closing of the Grantview entrance. The Board will continue to use this timely and inexpensive method to reach residents when large scale projects, emergencies or short notices need to reach a large group of residents. Trustees and Officer Mike will continue to monitor the safety and placement of the pylons at the Grantview Entrance while the street remains partially closed. Another resident questioned the disbursement to Eckenrode-Maupin; this the firm of our new Village Attorney, who also served as Prosecutor. This month’s bill included work as Attorney and Prosecutor as the transition of the new Prosecutor is underway. The final two questions involved landscaping. To clarify, the trees located along Grantview Lane north of the entrance were not on Village property and were removed by the homeowner some time prior to the construction earlier this month. The Village is not responsible for any landscaping repairs or replacement due to the sewer work as all the landscaping was on private property. The Village is awaiting a check from the insurance company of the moving company who damaged the Zinzer Island, and hope to have the check before the end of the month.

Notes from the February Meeting

Affton Fire Captain Steve Davila spoke briefly about the proposed 26 cent tax increase which voters will see on the April ballot. The proposal is a result of new senior living centers in the Affton District and the increase calls expected from them. Should the measure pass, the funds would also be used to update the Valcour Fire House as it has not been touched since 1962, and would improve various equipment and trucks.

Trustee Reports:

Trustee Kienstra once again enthusiastically reported on Village finances. After disbursements, the Village reported having \$255,991 in the bank. This is remarkable, and quite possibly an unprecedented amount to have on hand. Unusual disbursements for February included: Call Publishing for the 6 month financial notice, John Hancock and Associates, \$50, for the robo calls Old Grantwood Residents received for the road closure, and Traffic Control, 804.54, for the highway sign used during the Grantview entrance closure. For specifics, please refer to the Treasurer's report on our Website. Trustee Kienstra also noted a \$1,075 reimbursement for the damage done to the Zinzer island, and thanked Trustee Kelso for his work in securing the reimbursement.

Trustee Williams reported on her continued progress on updating Village records, including improved filing systems and the scanning of documents into the Village computer. We have yet to hear anything further regarding the Federal Grant for Grant Road.

Trustee Bess presented three bids for replacing the flooring in the upper level of the Town Hall. He contacted and met with 5 contractors, with 3 returning bids. Trustees then unanimously approved the bid by American Floorcraft for \$2,900. Trustee Bess recommended American Floorcraft as they provided the most detailed and knowledgeable bid. The current fiscal year budget, which this expenditure will fall under, includes \$5,000 for flooring and other improvements at the Hall. This expenditure, plus other small improvements/repairs, to this point, keeps us under budget for the Town Hall.

Trustee Kelso updated the Board on future road work plans. Trustees inspected, marked and measured all Village streets last weekend and are working on a Streets Plan for the next 2 to 3 fiscal years. The new Forest Haven stop signs have yet to be installed, but once we get a streak of nice, warm weather, the signs will be in. The poles throughout the Village will also be painted.

Trustee Forand reported on various items including the possibility of storing the historical records, such as old maps and minutes, at the Historic Site, updating the Village Code on the website, and Village communications for the month, which included her responding to 47 phone calls at her residence, 10 from the Town Hall voicemail, and 77 emails. She also shared a letter from Commerce Bank noting the Village Line of Credit had been extended with no change in the terms and without a fee.

Officer Mike reported the Village saw a few minor incidents this past month. Two mailboxes were destroyed in what appears to be random incidents. Two walkers on the Trail reported another Trail user exposing himself. The incident occurred after 9pm and no one was harmed.

Village Attorney Rich Magee reported the transition of his Prosecuting Attorney duties to Mike Vogt is complete and went very well. He reiterated Mr. Vogt will serve the Village well. A resident requested a building permit for a fence. The permit was denied and a Board of Adjustment hearing is set for March 27.

Residents Questions and Comments:

A resident asked why the July and August 2011 FICA tax payments were not on the corresponding reports. The taxes were paid for both months and are shown on the June report. Due to irregularities from the payments in the months preceding June, multiple payments were made to ensure the taxes were current for the quarter ending in June. The FICA tax can be paid monthly or quarterly; the current treasurer opts to pay monthly. Another resident again questioned the Federal Grant the Village applied for to enhance and improve Grant Road. As was stated previously, this is an opportunity to beautify, improve and make safer, the road which leads to one of the most visited tourist attractions in St. Louis and a National Park Service Site; all within our Village. Both of these attractions are deserving of the upgrades and will only reflect positively on our Village. The discrete, architectural lighting will serve only to improve visibility along Grant Road, especially during flash flooding, and Grant's Trail.