Eidelweiss Property Owners Assoc, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting November 12, 2016

Present: Mark Graffam, Susu Wong, John Rocharz, Ralph Lutjen, Dinah Reiss and Bev Mattatall via phone

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am. The minutes of the Oct 1 meeting were reviewed. In the section about Ralph’s discussion it should read the “Pea Porridge Ponds”, conductivity results from salt”, the sentence about “the Commissioners decided” should be deleted, and it should read ”the phosphate and chlorophyll levels are stable/constant”. The sentence about John speaking to the Environmental Services should read” is looking for trends and we are looking for”. There was a motion to accept the October minutes as amended. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Treasurer’s Report – We received dues in error from a resident of Island Drive which is outside to Eidelweiss. Mark will contact them to see if they are interested in pond water quality and other mutual issues. If so we could accept their “dues” as a donation and continue to keep them informed. We should be involving other Eidelweiss residents on Big Pea. Mark may try to contact others who may be I interested as well. We have 9 new members. One new member paid at the foliage walk. Mark has transferred all the dues money out of PayPal in to our account. There have been no new checks to deposit. As of 11/8/16 our balance is $6.379.07. Outstanding bills are: the electric bill for the entrance sign, the R E tax bill for the entrance property and a check to the landscaper for $1800 for work on the flagpole garden etc., $11 to Dorothy for holiday bows, and a refund for $30 dues overpaid. There was a motion to accept the treasurer’s report as presented. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Membership renewals – We discussed sending a one page letter through the USPS again as we did last year. We hope that Tici, Anne, Dinah and Nancy will work on this again and update the list. We could include a newsletter or tentative calendar of events as we did last year. We have to send an electronic version to the USPS and it was quite efficient last year and the post office reduces the postage costs if we do it this way. We cannot send out a post card reminder this way. It seemed that we got a much better response with the renewal form sent to our members. We can ask that they renew and use PayPal account as well as sending personal checks. We can also send out a second letter to the smaller group of people who do not respond to the first mailing. Mark will check with PayPal to see if we can continue this system. It costs us $1.337 from the dues payment to go through PayPal. Bev and Dinah urged us to send out the first notice by USPS and felt it was not worth it to send out the email request first through PayPal. There was a motion to appropriate $600 for the annual membership mailings. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Hiking trail – There has been no survey done on the proposed route by the committee. The commissioners want 10 feet clearance on each side of the trail.

Lodge – There has been no final decision about what will happen to the Lodge. The VDOE has contacted the Madison Zoning/Planning Board to ask for permission to separate out the Lodge and other land in to two lots. They are contemplating $40,000 to bring the Lodge up to code taking in to consideration safety issues. The siding and decks need replacement. They are hesitant to add an article for this purpose because that would increase property taxes. They sent us a letter saying that our request for tree removal in the Lodge area was not included in the budget. The walkway to the Lodge was power washed and there was less moss on the walk at the Mexican shared dinner. They are looking at a selling price of $199,000 versus $40,000 in repairs. One commissioner suggested that they simply close the Lodge and avoid liability and cost. They hope to sell it for $199,000 as is rather than pursue the other options but they are waiting to hear from the Planning/Zoning Board before taking any action. We feel they are mistaken in thinking they will get $199,000. It is likely that they would need to tear it down and get between $30,000-40,000 for the land. We feel that they should work toward improving it. We discussed the actual need for the new community center plan. We have an existing office for the Village.

There are many other things that need improvements first (the roads, culverts, and water system to name a few). They are planning to create a Capital Reserve Fund to repair the Reinark tank from the water user fees. The water operator has no place to store his equipment (some is in at the cabana and the rest in the DPW garage. The EPOA should take a position on this. We will ask the membership to support the $40,000 to improve the Lodge. Non-residents could voice their feelings (no vote). The VDOE has already had some October hearings about the warrant for the VDOE Annual meeting on Feb 25. We would have to communicate info to our membership by the end of January. We are soliciting opinions from our membership on the Lodge issue. Article 1 is about periodic inspections of the water and DPW. Dinah and Susu will work to draft an email to our board and then our membership through Survey Monkey. There was a motion to do this. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous. Eidelweiss is similar to a condo association. To remove the Lodge will take away from our community.

Newsletter – Susu will draft a newsletter with social events, dinners etc. with info about picking up koozies and boat stickers and some information about the monthly summer water testing. The water testers are: Bob Ingram, Phil, Paul Mattatall, Ralph Lutjen, John Rocharz and John Upton. She will include info about other projects like the new playground sign that will be installed after the winter, the new flower beds at the flagpole, the continuing maintenance, the fall foliage walks, water reports, the water quality report and the barbecue. We need to recruit new board members in the spring, the spring and fall highway and internal cleanups. We hope the newsletter will go out at the end of January and let people know about the schedule for the budget hearings. The paper copy of the newsletter needs to be one page so some of the info may go out by email blast.

Winter plans – We decided not to pursue the idea of a bonfire on the beach on New Year’s Eve day and instead planned a Dec 28 dinner for members at Almost There. The room that is available for parties accommodates 24 people so we will send out an email and take the first 24 interested persons. Payment will be required in advance to hold the seats. We hope to get the event for $15 per person and people will carry a separate tab for their drinks. Ralph and Dinah will work with the restaurant for choices of food, options and availability.

We discussed the need for new protectors for the rhododendron plants at the entrance. Peter Cragh had made the original ones years ago and they need to be replaced. Ralph has talked to Wes Savery who is willing to do it but we do not have an estimate yet. Dorothy would like 4 protectors but there is a minimum need of 3. They should be 5 feet tall and made from pressure treated wood. There was a motion to appropriate $400 to construct 3 or 4. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Possibility of a Watershed grant through Dep.t of Envir. Sciences. Ralph has looked on to the requirements for a grant and the illustration of a 2015 grant report justifications for a grant. The pre application requirements and consultation deadline was in October. There are two types of grants available – planning and/implementation of projects need to be considered. If a grant were approved the maximum amount they would pay is 40% of the total. There would be a lot of paperwork and general background of the issue that are also required. New London hired a consultant and the total project was cost $694,000 but the portion we would be looking at was $20,000 to $30,000. Much of the New London project went in to things we do not need to look at. The scope of their project was 20 years. We already have many years of data, and have access to the same graphs, maps and aerial photos, an established water sampling procedure outlined by DES. We could cut and paste our application and proposal and have 50% of the data and work already done.

The water project that we would like to do focuses on the photos we have that indicate areas of polluting runoff. NH has a manual for best practices for road maintenance focusing on runoff, culverts, wetland areas, waterfront bunkers, and septic system improvements (installed prior to 2000). If we put some effort in we could write a report and warrant article for storm water drainage and maintenance of roads that would indicate areas of needed improvements.

Ralph and Mark will work on an EPOA initiative and get support for the practices. There could be some consulting costs and we could get some consultants on board but we need a lot of consulting as we do know what should be corrected. We could appropriate $2000 for a day or 2 from a consultant. We have serious issues with the water clarity and conductivity. Sara from DES said it would be unlikely that we could get a watershed grant. We aerial photos. We would have enough money and support to pursue this. We also have 20 years of VLAP data, as well as Mark’s Google photos.

We could target areas that the DPW should work to improve. We need photos of the problematic areas and where needed ditching has already been done. We have a lot of local knowledge but we do not have a lot of time. We need to have it done so we can take action on it. We should test the interest of the community before we do a lot of work. The Google aerials can only do specific larger area photos. Two streams run through our watershed. The VDOE is interested in beach sand quality and perched beaches. The Commissioners spent $17,000 for one lot on the waterfront. What we have in hand is overkill to test the community interest in this issue. It should be a concern to preserve the value of what we have here. The degradation of the ponds leads to lowered property values. The data we have from VLAP testing over 20 years will help us determine the actual speed of the life cycle of our ponds. Some ponds have varying lengths of life cycle depending on the care that the community gives the water and road issues. Our accumulated date would indicate that by continuing to ignore these issues the life cycle of our ponds will be shortened rather than lengthened. There is more foreign matter in our water than there was 20 years ago from construction and road works.

Mark suggested that Ralph write up a survey draft to review that could incorporate some of our photos (Mark’s photos were from 2014). Someone asked if we could get more recent phots. There is a lot of sand (from the beaches) visible in the water. At Thusis a lot of the sand that was added t enhance the beach two years ago is gone again. David Maudsley said that Google Earth has historic data but we are unsure of what that would cost us to obtain. It is likely that all Middle Beach residents who want a sandy beach front will have to perch their beaches. DES likes perched beaches. Ralph will write something about these issues for the newsletter. 114 people saw some of this info and photos on Facebook and liked it.

We are planning the winter snow shoeing/skating/cross country skiing etc. with cocoa and s’mores for Feb 18. There was a motion to adjourn at 10:50 am.

Respectfully submitted, Beverly Mattatall Secretary