

Wild Rose Meadows Annual Meeting 2021, held virtually via Zoom

Meeting date: February 28, 2021 4:00-6:00pm

List of attendees:

Current Cluster Representatives (WRM Board):

West Cluster Reps:

Jami Mitchell jamjami@rockisland.com (Facilitator)

Annie Moss Moore anniem@interisland.net (Treasurer)

East Cluster Reps:

Eros Belliveau luckyydogonorcas@gmail.com

Kurt Hunt kshunt@live.com

South Cluster Reps:

Debbie Liblik liblik@orcasonline.com

Veronica San Martin ysmintl@gmail.com (Secretary)

Fabrice Van Putten

Elaine Shiozawa

Melody Funk

Annie Moss Moore

John and Vicki Clancy

Robert Ru Rorabaugh

Kurt Hunt

Issa Parker

Carla Stanley

Poke Haffner

Carly McNulty

Emily Birky and Al Bentley

Cindy McGrady

Casey Hons

Guest: Jeanne Beck, OPAL

Agenda:

- Proposed budget for 2021
- The reallocation of \$17 monthly amount
- Exterior painting of homes
- Propane rates
- Garbage issues
- Guest Parking and Parking Signage
- Roundabout tree
- Berms, Bushes, Trees

Meeting Opened:

Jami welcomed All and thanked neighbors for attending as well as Cluster Reps that have stepped forward to help their Clusters and be part of the Board.

Discussion on the Budget:

We thanked Annie for her continued work on our neighborhood budget. It includes the 2020 Actuals which show that we spent little money last year because of the pandemic. Gravel, bark, and asphalt cleaning were not expenses in 2020.

Proposed 2021 budget is similar to last year's budget, with a few changes. For example, Line (11) weed whacking - we would like to spend a little more money on that and rely less on free/volunteer labor. Contingency on line (13) is for unexpected expenses that we don't anticipate. We are saving money aside each year for future parking lot maintenance, as shown in lines (30) and (31).

It was also discussed and clarified that the gravel portion of the budget is for all 3 Clusters, and the East Cluster needs gravel to maintain its pathway. In the past year, Vicki created a document explaining the processes and procedures for ordering gravel, and it was sent out to all households. If anyone wants it emailed to them, ask Jami. Elaine noted that the document is on the opalhomes.org website. That website has numerous useful documents uploaded for our reference in the section devoted to Wild Rose Meadow.

It was noted that any costs associated with maintaining the wetland come out of the Long Term Reserve Fund which is separate from this neighborhood-controlled budget.

The proposed budget includes what it would look like if we put the \$17/month per household into our general neighborhood fund as additional savings for future neighborhood expenses. Because this has not yet been discussed, the group consensus was to wait to approve the budget until after the next agenda item.

Discussion about the reallocation of the \$17:

The neighborhood has paid off its loan from OPAL for paving the road. Going forward, OPAL has asked the homeowners to decide how to handle this \$17 amount that was being collected every month from each home.

Jami said that the WRM Board, comprised of the six Cluster Reps, discussed this at length at their meeting, and got information and advice from Lisa Byers. A neighborhood survey was also conducted to get a sense of homeowner opinions. It is the decision of the neighborhood, not the Board, but after information gathering and discussions, the Board recommends that the \$17 be saved in our neighborhood fund.

The WRM Board proposes this option, explained Jami, because the neighborhood is aging and will likely see future expenses which we haven't had to face yet. This is a common issue in the other, older OPAL neighborhoods. By saving the money in the neighborhood fund, the homeowners control it as part of their budget and as a group can decide how and when to spend it. Money in the neighborhood fund can even be returned to homeowners down the road, or be used to make loans within the neighborhood. All use of the money must be approved by the neighborhood, and having the money in this account accessible for the group to decide how to use it retains 'local control' of the money. It is also possible to change later – the arrangement is not set in stone and could be modified at future meetings if the neighborhood wanted to do something different.

(At this point and again later in the meeting, the 'free 40 minute' Zoom session timed out and participants had to log back in to continue the meeting.)

Jami pointed out that WRM uses consensus for decision-making as outlined in the CC&Rs. She noted that proxy votes could not be used to block consensus as stated in our 2011 CC&Rs, but that line was removed when the CC&Rs were updated in 2015. Jami suggested that blocking consensus with a proxy vote is not in the spirit of the model, because consensus is about those present setting aside personal interests and working toward the best interest of the community as a whole, with the members present in the meeting being swayed by the discussion. This key component of the process is impossible if someone is absent. When asked, Lisa Byers was very clear in her interpretation of consensus that a proxy cannot be used to block consensus. However, Jami said that this is not how the CC&Rs currently read, and it is important to follow the process the CC&Rs lay out, especially with respect to homeowners not able to be present and who think they have stated their wishes in a formally approved manner. Therefore, it is highly likely that this is only an informational meeting regarding this agenda item, and we will need to call another meeting to decide this \$17 question. The CC&Rs state that if consensus is not reached after 3 meetings, then the neighborhood can take a vote and decide by majority rule.

Various homeowners offered their thoughts regarding the \$17 question. Cindy supports the money going into personal home maintenance funds which will be really depleted after painting. The question was raised as to what specific neighborhood costs might be coming down the road, and examples of community fences and mailbox towers were mentioned. Annie pointed out that putting the money into individual home accounts is not that much per year, \$204 per year, and dissipates the opportunity for group purchasing power if we saved it up together. As a group it totals almost \$7K per year, which is much more financially powerful. Annie noted that she hopes to eventually see the other parking lots get paved, but in the meantime she is happy to just see the money get saved, and she is opposed to putting it in to individual home accounts.

Other homeowners expressed support of the group savings option, and also asked what types of projects we might need to spend it on. The question was also raised of how much we are already contributing to the various funds. Elaine said that from our monthly lease fees, \$55 goes into the individual homeowners fund, \$10 goes in to the Long Term Reserve fund, \$2 pays for water, and \$17 goes in to the neighborhood fund. There was also \$17 going to repay the loan, but since that is paid off, this is the issue that we are now trying to decide.

It was pointed out that this decision could be changed at any point, like at the next annual meeting. We could put the \$17 into a neighborhood savings fund this year, and then decide next year to do something different.

The other homeowners present in the meeting that had not yet spoken up each shared their opinions, and many were in support of saving the money as a group. A few suggested to revisit the issue again next year to see if we want to change it then.

Cindy pointed out that the lease fee has gone up a lot since she first moved into her home, and yet her income hasn't risen. Saving \$200/year in the individual home account might not seem like a lot, but it will add up to \$2K after 10 years, and that is a significant amount to lower income households. She said maybe there is a possibility of splitting it between the neighborhood and the individual homes. It is very important to her that she has a say in how it would be spent, as she supports having the orchard, garden, and playground, but is not inclined to spend money on those items. Annie noted that all money in the neighborhood fund can only be spent with the neighborhood approval of the budget, and so homeowners definitely have a say in how group money is spent.

Jami noted that there did not seem to be a consensus forming at this point, and those present agreed. In the interest of time, the topic was tabled to a special meeting so that the group could move on to the next agenda item. Jami emphasized the importance of being present for the \$17 discussion, and said another meeting would be called at a later date to decide the issue.

Discussion about Exterior Painting:

Jami welcomed Jeanne Beck from OPAL to present the topic of house painting to the group.

Jeanne said that she had contacted local painters in San Juan County with minimal results, because the local building trade is off the hook. CJ Eberly owns a local painting service and he agreed to bid on single-story homes but doesn't want to paint any two-story homes. The East Cluster will be the first in line to be offered getting painted, because those homes were built first. Jeanne said that CJ's bid of about \$6,500 was included in an email which she will re-send. She also contacted Top Quality Painting, a company based in Bellingham, regarding the two-story homes. Their bid including taxes is almost \$14K per home. Almost all of the WRM homes have approximately \$6,500 in their home fund accounts currently. Jeanne will email each homeowner their exact account balance. Top Quality Painting can handle up to 8 homes this summer. Jeanne is getting a second bid in early March and will let us know when it is complete, but she thinks it will be fairly similar to the other bid. She also said that "at OPAL we hope to do what we can to help, we need to figure that out" suggesting that OPAL will help homeowners figure out how to pay for the painting. Jeanne says that the goal is to get all of the WRM homes repainted in the next 4 to 5 years, and so there is no pressure for everyone to do it right now.

(40 minutes in the free version of Zoom ran out and participants needed to rejoin)

Jami said that some homeowners want to know if it is possible to paint your own home. Jeanne said that is allowable. Be aware that doing a poor job may mean that it has to be re-done when you sell, which could reduce your share at the point of sale. Homeowners can use their home fund to buy the paint.

Ru and Fabrice both had additional questions about doing the work themselves. Ru wondered if CJ would consider painting just the first floor of the two-story homes. Jeanne will ask him. Fabrice wondered if he would get credit in his resale value for repairing some rotting window sills, and Jeanne said that is considered on-going maintenance versus a major capital improvement. Jeanne said that she can meet with individual homeowners to address each of their unique situations, questions, and plans for painting.

Jeanne also noted that the painting company will do the prep work such as pressure washing and caulking. CJ's bid does not include painting the doors. Cindy and Jeanne discussed removing mold. It was also noted that the paint choices would be colors selected by WRM for the approved color palette, which is available on the opalhomes.org website.

Jeanne noted that homeowners can ask her specific questions once she sends the info individually to each homeowner. She will email each homeowner the full bid info and also the amount of money they have saved in their own home fund.

Jami thanked Jeanne for the help with this big project, and for her offer to be available for questions from each homeowner as they make their own painting plan.

Discussion about Propane:

Kurt said that if you suspect that you have been overcharged, you need to contact the gas company directly. It's recommended to monitor your per gallon rate. The only way to dispute or ask questions is by contacting AmeriGas directly. It was suggested to try calling the Friday Harbor number. Kurt did a spreadsheet comparison which he is happy to email to anyone who is interested.

Cindy noted that we should all be paying the same amount per gallon. Jami said that the frustrating thing is that we can't have a hold of them. They don't get back to clients and have poor customer service. They own the propane tanks underground and so we can't switch providers unless we buy new propane tanks.

Discussion about Garbage Issues:

Jami highlighted the importance of using bungy cords for all trash and recycling bins because of wind and animals. It's very important to pick up any trash that does blow or get spread around, and check outside your fenced area as well. Neighbors noted different instances where the trash goes outside one's yard, from raccoons, wind, pets, and etc. Please take extra steps and scout for debris that goes on the other side of the path, your berm, and your neighbor's berms. Please help care for others by caring for your own stuff.

Vicki invited everyone to please review the CC&Rs. She said they refer to the number of trash cans, their size, and visibility. Please also pick up around your parking area. If it happens that you see a candy wrapper please bend over and pick it up. If we all do that, we will not need to be discussing this. Thank you for acting as a good Samaritan.

Jami said that if you are having specific issues with the garbage from a particular household, please speak directly to the homeowner, because the CC&Rs ask for the first step in any issue be homeowner to homeowner. We can also discuss this sort of issue at our Cluster meetings, so we can continually support each other with consistent messaging.

Discussion about Parking Lot Issues:

It was noted that Guest Parking spots should only be used by Guests, not people living in WRM homes, unless the entire Cluster has agreed to redesignate a specific spot for a specific use or exception. If a WRM resident is using a Guest parking spot on a regular basis, please stop, or bring this issue to a Cluster meeting to get permission from the full Cluster to be able to park there.

Vicki (and Lisl before her) labeled the West Cluster parking lot bumpers with each house number on each specific bumper assigned to that home. The other Clusters have neighborhood approval to do something similar, if they haven't already, and this includes painting or signage. Vicki suggests using outdoor-quality paint, and Kurt says he has stencils available if anyone wants to borrow them.

Discussion about Roundabout:

This agenda item was regarding the tree, which some homeowners think might be ailing. Maybe it needs more water or to be moved. It should not be cut down or removed without permission, and Veronica is willing to transplant it if it really does need to go. Issa said it is not the right time of year to transplant it. John volunteered to water it on a weekly basis in the summer. The group agreed to revisit the topic later in the year or at the next annual meeting after John gives it regular water and we can see how it does.

Discussion about Berms and Weeding:

Jami said that berms which are neglected and in disrepair are not just an issue for that household,

but also spread weed seeds to all of the surrounding berms of neighbors that are trying to keep the weeds down. This is a struggle for homeowners that are trying hard to keep berms weeded, and those neighbors ask that everyone do their part to respect the homeowner agreement and respect the other neighbors. This is another topic that can be discussed at Cluster meetings, to encourage homeowners to care for their berms and support the common areas by not allowing weeds to flourish. Vicki noted that some homeowners might not know about deadheading or other fall cleanup, and it's helpful to teach each other neighbor to neighbor how to care for the berms. She said that it's sad to see some landscape dying from lack of water, so be sure to give some water to the berms around your areas during the dry months.

Fencing/Wetland:

In wrapping up the meeting, Jami noted that fencing was not on the agenda, but be aware that repairing and replacing your fencing is a homeowner's responsibility. Community fencing is paid for from the Long Term Reserve fund. Vicki noted that the fencing around the wetland will eventually come down after the 10-year monitoring period ends. Kurt asked about the tree that fell in the wetland, and John said that the professional wetland monitor person will look at it during the inspection, but John suspects that we will be advised to leave the fallen trees where they are because dead wood is part of the natural ecosystem.

Approval of the Budget:

At this point, Annie noted that we had not yet approved the budget. Jami asked if the group had consensus to approve the budget, after it was revised by removing the references to the \$17 being reallocated to the neighborhood. The 2021 budget was approved as revised, without the \$17 being referenced.

Closing:

Jami noted that there will be a future meeting to decide the \$17 issue. Vicki said that it would be helpful to have a better idea about what neighborhood expenses might be coming our way in the future. Jami said that would be helpful, and homeowners are welcome to ask questions and try and find answers so that we have as much useful information as possible when we discuss this again. Keep an eye out for a meeting date, to be decided. Jami thanked everyone for showing up, even virtually, and said it would be nice to do this together next year in person instead of on Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.

Wild Rose Meadow					
2020	2020 Budget	Total Actual Exps	Still to Pay	2021 Approved Budget	
Fees	10.00	10.00		10.00	
Insurance D&O and HOA Grounds	1,010.00	1,098.00		1,100.00	
Gravel	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	
Bark/Mulch	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Pervious Asphalt Cleaning	400.00	0.00	400.00	400.00	
Labor (weedwhacking etc)	900.00	855.00		1,500.00	incl \$100 for East Cluster along Welty fence line; Vicki's recommendation on increase since some volunteers have moved
Wetlands watering & maintenance	0.00	0.00		0.00	paid from LTR, but nothing in 2020
Additional labor	400.00	300.00	move south cluster mail boxes	400.00	contingency
Signage	0.00	0.00		0.00	
Signage additional	200.00		wetland signage	200.00	wetland signage not spent from last year
Rosehip Road pothole repair	350.00			350.00	materials \$250, labor \$100; is this enough?
Total Grounds	4,200.00	1,155.00			5,350.00
Total Expenses	6,170.00	2,263.00	3,450.00	6,460.00	
Beg Bal 1/1/20	8,471.45	8,471.45	Beg Bal 1/1/21	13,144.45	
Revenues (\$16/mo x 12 mos x 34 households)	6,528.00	6,936.00	Revenues (\$17/mo x 12 mos x 34 households)	6,936.00	Revenues (\$17/mo x 12 mos x 34 households)
Expenses	(6,170.00)	(2,263.00)	Expenses	(6,460.00)	
Net Gain/(loss)	262.00	4,673.00	Net Gain/(loss)	476.00	
Ending Bal 12/31/20	6,560.01	13,144.45	Ending Bal 12/31/20	13,620.45	Ending Bal 12/31/21
Less Allocations:					
Storm Cleanup Fund	(1,200.00)	(1,200.00)	Storm Cleanup Fund	(1,200.00)	
West & South Parking Lot Repair Fund yr 3 of 5 @ 1700/yr	(5,100.00)	(5,100.00)	Parking Lot Repair Fund yr 3 of 5 @ 1700/yr	(6,800.00)	West & South Parking Lot Repair Fund yr 4 of 5 @ 1700/yr [saving up 1700/3 = \$567/lot/year]
East Parking Lot Repair Fund year 1	(600.00)	(600.00)		(1,200.00)	East Parking Lot Repair Fund year 2 @ 600/yr
Available Bal 12/31/20	1,960.01	6,844.45		4,420.45	Available Bal 12/31/21
Discussion of the additional \$17/mo each due to the road loan payoff has been tabled to a future meeting					