Southern Bluffs HOA Board Meeting

August 16, 2021, 5pm

Board Members Present: Karen Sheek, Vice-President (Presiding), Sally Planalp, Roger Fulk, Bill Marty; Robert

 Stump, not in attendance; Several owners were also present.

A resolution was proposed to elect officers for the HOA Board. Fulk moved that Planalp be elected Secretary and Marty Treasurer. Marty seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Street maintenance was discussed extensively. The prevailing issue was whether the HOA could continue to maintain the streets or if they should be turned over to the City of Cortez. Significant pros and cons were discussed for each option.

Eberhardt’s research indicated that it would be necessary to remove weeds and blow out cracks before sealing so that the seal will take. For the HOA to repair cracks with volunteer labor would cost $5-7K for equipment and materials, but Eberhart has not been able to find enough volunteer labor for the job, and time is now running out before winter. The estimate is about $20K for an independent contractor to do it. Another owner raised the issue of whether seal coating has been done throughout the development, particularly on Jennings. The HOA only has the money to do street repair piecemeal, it would be an ongoing and expensive maintenance issue, and it probably will not be possible to rely on volunteers to do the work.

Sheek and Eberhart met with a representative of the City of Cortez earlier about taking over the Southern Bluffs streets. The City is willing to come on site to reassess the roads in September and to give a bid to bring them up to standard before taking them over. The initial judgment was that they were in good shape. No estimate of the cost of transfer to the City was given, but it would be added to owners’ taxes over a 10-year time frame as a special tax assessment. The City may require Southern Bluffs to take down one or both of the existing gates off of 7th Street for emergency access, though that may be negotiable. This option has the advantage that the City would plow the streets, maintain them in perpetuity, and collect fees via a special tax assessment. Questions were raised about the quality of street maintenance in other areas of the city.

One owner, who is a contractor, suggested that the HOA look into chip sealing vs. paving and will find out more. He suggested also looking into settling issues and how sewers are implicated. Marty suggested two separate accounts for road repairs and other HOA expenses. Issues related to lots for sale on 7th street and access were also raised.

One owner asked about the placement of solar panels on a south-facing roof, with installation probably in the spring. The Board indicated that they would make a decision as soon as possible.

Upcoming expenses for the clubhouse were discussed including possible replacement of the refrigerator and dishwasher, fresh painting, and new flooring (carpet or tile). One owner raised the possibility of selling the clubhouse, and another suggested charging fees for owners to cover costs. Sheek and Planalp are working on a proposal to the Board, and Sheek is heading a group to hire a new Clubhouse manager.

Sheek raised the issue of weeds as a fire hazard if more than 6” high, according to the Cortez fire department. It was proposed that an independent contractor be found to mow any HOA-owned grounds in violation and any lots whose owners are not already in compliance. Non-compliant owners would be charged for those services.

Other issues discussed by the group were water use by the HOA and possible xeriscaping on HOA grounds. The argument was made that initial cost would be high but long-term savings might make it worthwhile. To encourage wise use of water on private lots in the community, one owner with expertise indicated willingness to do a presentation for the HOA on drought-tolerant plantings.

Planalp reported that more mailboxes will be needed soon because there are only 4 or 5 available for new residents, and at least 3 houses are currently under construction. The Post Office requests and perhaps insists that the HOA buy mailboxes for all possible future residents so that the carriers can make their delivery systematic. New 16-unit + parcel box banks of mailboxes retail at about $1650 each, and the HOA may need 2 or 3. Planalp will talk with the Postmaster when she returns at the end of the month to find out if she would approve only one for the time being. Planalp will also investigate used Post Office-approved alternatives to new.