

**VILLAGE OF GROSSE POINTE SHORES, A MICHIGAN CITY
MINUTES OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE MEETING
October 9, 2012**

A meeting of the Ambassador Committee of the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City, was held on Tuesday, October 9, 2012 in the Council Chambers of the Grosse Pointe Shores Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order at 10:06 AM.

Present:

DJ Boehm, Chair
Gloria Anton, Member
Alex Lucido, Member
Madeleine Phillips, Member and Recording Secretary
Kay Felt, Council Liaison

Absent:

Chace Wakefield, Member

Invited Attendee:

Mark Wollenweber

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The revised minutes of the September 11, 2012 Ambassador Committee Meeting were approved.

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Open Meetings Act Exception

Per the City Attorney, the Ambassador Committee does not need to conform with the Open Meetings Act because we do not make policy. The Committee discussed whether or not we should continue to follow the Open Meetings Act guidelines. After some discussion, the Committee decided to continue to meet according to the Open Meetings Act guidelines meeting in Council Chambers as originally scheduled.

B. Realtor Conversation Action Items

1. One-Day Park Pass

Minutes before the start of today's meeting, Chief John Schulte stepped into the meeting room to report that no one has yet used the one-day park pass. However, he stated that it was late in the season when the program started. The passes may be used more when spring arrives. He also said that he has received no negative feedback. The Committee is aware that the one day park pass garnered the City positive press among realtors.

2. Vacant Homes Update

Per Alex Lucido, there are four vacant homes. Regarding the “Babcock” home on Lake Shore Road, no further information is available on what may be done with it in the future. It is owned by the Wells Fargo Bank. The LaHood home, which is located next to the Babcock home, is also vacant. Other vacant homes are located on Shelden near Clairview, on Willison and on Putnam Place. There are 18 active listed homes for sale, none for sale by owner. This is down from 24 homes in September. Alex Lucido reported that he will let Chief Schulte know about the vacant homes.

3. “Open House” Sign Ordinance

Although our Committee supports modifying the zoning ordinance to allow “Open House” signs as directional aids, some members of the community oppose updating the ordinance. Alex Lucido volunteered to attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday, October 16, in order to state the case that the ordinance should be removed. Alex will invite other real estate agents to attend the meeting as well. Alex will review the draft ordinance regarding the two options—to use the median or not. Kay Felt suggested that she could give the Council updates on homes for sale and vacant homes.

4. Schools Update

DJ reported that there were no school E-alerts relevant to this Committee within the last month.

C. Current Real Estate Market Perspective

Per Alex Lucido, the local real estate market continues to maintain its positive momentum. The price points in the Shores range from \$260,000 for a modest, two-bedroom ranch to \$4.8M for a home on Lake Shore Road. Price points range widely enough to appeal to everyone.

D. Park Enhancement Update

Mark Wollenweber reported that he has been in contact with Vortex, a company that supplies splash pads. He will contact two more suppliers. D & B Pools has given Mark a list. However, D & B Pools prefers Vortex because they have installed about 200 units through the state of Michigan. Vortex could dig a well in our park as the source for the water. The cost for a splash pad is estimated to be between \$150,000 and \$250,000. The location would be near the children’s pool. The splash pad could be open earlier than the pools and close later in the season, giving it extended use. The water will be health department-sanctioned, treated water, not lake water. Other communities that have splash pads have received unwavering requests *not* to use lake water. The Grosse Pointe Shores Improvement Foundation will raise money to construct the splash pad.

E. Advertising and Promotion Discussion

1. City Website Brainstorming

Mark Wollenweber stated that there is an existing agreement with Tech Resources Inc. They will assist Grosse Pointe Shores with the city website redesign. The Grosse Pointe Chamber, Grosse Pointe Academy and Ford House websites are designed by Bill Costello. The price for Grosse Pointe Farms website was approximately \$39,000. Our website would be patterned after that one but at a lower price. The Shores website would have the ability to send instant notices to residents regarding scheduling, paying bills on line and so forth.

Prior to the meeting, DJ Boehm reviewed several award winning city websites. She presented two of the better city websites, one for Beaverton, Oregon and the other Huntsville, Alabama, both of which used e-features effectively and promoted their respective communities. There was much discussion by committee members (and enthusiasm) about the various features and options available and what would complement the Shores website. The following items, roughly divided into those that would update/upgrade the current website, make it more useable for residents and features that will support the remit of the Committee to promote Grosse Pointe Shores as a great place to live. The following features were mentioned for consideration and were not prioritized:

Modernization of the current website:

- E-Alerts for weather, traffic, etc.
- City laws - online database
- The Chamber of Commerce would like to be a link on our website, and we should include links to the Ford House, Grosse Pointe Schools, and State of Michigan. Links drive web traffic.
- Permits
- Voting information

Promoting Grosse Pointe Shores as a great place to live:

- Promotional tag line (and improved slide show for GPS)
- Mayor 's Corner, possibly with video testimonial
- "Our Community" section to include descriptive text helpful to potential residents.
- "Moving to Grosse Pointe Shores" section. The mileage scale topic was brought up. The point was made that higher the property value equals higher taxes.
- Affordability Index: fuel, property taxes, transportation, etc.
- Quality of life
- Testimonials: - "Why I like living in Grosse Pointe Shores." Testimonials

would set us apart from other communities. We have resources who have given us permission for some text from the original interviews.

- Transportation. PATS is now part of Harper Woods and it may soon be affiliated with SOC.
- SOC
- Grosse Pointe War Memorial
- Grosse Pointe Historical Society
- Events calendar
- Medical centers
- Realtor.com
- Restaurants. It was suggested that restaurants may want to compensate GPS if there is a link to their website.
- Library

Action Items: DJ Boehm will draft the “Our Community” web text for the Committee to review and will consider if the cost of living section is viable.

Kay Felt will write an article on the Ambassador Committee for the Grosse Pointe Shores “Shorelines” Newsletter.

2. Realtor Packets in City Offices

From a realtor standpoint, Alex felt realtor packets in the city offices was a good idea. However the logistics of keeping the packets current was an issue. Instead, the committee suggested citing www.realtor.com as part of the new website.

3. BooFest Recommendation

Grandparents love to attend Boofest with their grandchildren. Also attending are people who work for the City. As wonderful as the event is, the Committee will not promote at this event per Gloria Anton’s recommendation.

4. Grosse Pointe Shores Book Update

The book is proceeding. Kay has communicated with the Osius family and is awaiting their response. The hope is to have the book ready to release by late spring.

5. Grosse Pointe Shores Tile Update

A resource is making sample moulds for the Grosse Pointe Shores tile. If the sample is undesirable, another resource will be considered.

F. Other Items

No other items were brought forth by the Committee.

ADJOURN

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Ambassador Committee is Tuesday, November 13, 2012, at 10 o'clock in the Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine Phillips, Member and Recording Secretary