

(Or ramblings of an old and soon to be ex board member - Spring 2018)

I am hoping some of the following will be helpful to those that follow me as members of the board as well as members of the community as I am planning on posting this on our website - more on that later. I hope my being on the board has been good for Cobblestone, but only time will tell. Any opinions expressed in these notes are the opinion of the writer and not of the board, any board members (past, present or future) or any management company (past, present or future) of Cobblestone Village HOA.

I have been on the board since 1996 or 1997, times that are lost in history (if anyone cares) and as such I would like to pass some thoughts on to those that follow. I first got on the board because there was some problems with other HOA's wanting to restrict homeowners from having an American Flag on display and I didn't want ours to join in this trend. However, it has not come up yet.

There are many things I would like to pass on but first you need to realize that one of the biggest problems here is the apathy of the residents - if it doesn't affect their money, they usually don't care. Being on the board can be a very rewarding position but it can also be a thankless position - and most homeowners will not volunteer to be a part of it - but unless they do, they will never have idea of what the board goes through to keep the HOA going and out of debt.

Some History

My wife and I moved into Cobblestone Village while it was still being built, so we got to watch the construction process. The walls were built elsewhere, delivered here by semi and placed into place by crane. Then the insides were finished. See the History page of our website - <http://www.cobblestonevillagehoa.org/history.html> for more details.

Parking Lot

Parking has always been a problem and always will be because our builder, Pulte, elected to not put in enough parking spaces. We have tried over the years to come up with ways to increase this but always found it was too expensive. We have tried having parking committees several times but usually they didn't last long. Another problem has been garage units using guest parking instead of their garages. Since we were supposed to have 2 spaces per unit (but really don't), this only compounds the problem. People having more than two vehicles just adds to the

problem. Another problem with parking is people not living in or visiting those who live in Cobblestone taking our parking spaces - such as the residents of Greenbriar. We have even had an owner suggest that we relabel the "GUEST" spaces as "PERMIT" spaces thinking that people believe that "GUEST" means anyone in the the world but "PERMIT" would keep those people out. My opinion is that those people who would park in the Cobblestone lot that don't live here don't really care how a parking space is labeled, they are going to park there anyway, and probably have learned that the numbered spaces are more likely to be towed.

01-22-2018 - we have tried two times this year to get a parking committee started, with only Danny, Bea and myself attending. Maybe next month...

In front of 2929 has been a problem due to the way the parking lot is built. There is a "ponding" issue starting at the west end. We tried parking stops to keep the cars away from the curbs so the water can flow - which helps some. We rebuilt the drain path through the parking lot to try to help the situation. I can only hope the board keeps these parking stops as it does seem to help. In the summer of 2008, we did major asphalt and concrete work in front of 2901, 2903, 2907 parking 2909A, 2927 guest, 2929, 2923 F and put a new concrete drain pan running east in front of 2929 to help with this problem.

Other sections of the parking lot that have been redone are as follows:

October & November 2013 Removed and replaced the section of asphalt from 2961 west thru 2973 & 2975.. As well as sidewalks in front of 2935 & 2933 parking in front of 67 & 75 not done

Summer 2016 (I believe) The section from between 2967 and 2975 running down past 2927 and including in front of 2915, 2917 and 2909 was redone.

This leaves the large sections from the northeast corner in front of 2939, 2935, 2941 and 2933 as well as the section starting at 81st running around to 2973 left to be done.

Between the sidewalk and the curbs had a grass strip when Cobblestonje was built. Sometime after I got on the board, the board decided to replace these strips of grass with a layer of sand (and?) with a layer of bricks on top of them as maintaining the grass was proving to be a real problem. The only problem with this is that sometimes the layer under the bricks sinks and causes low spots, requiring the bricks to be pulled up, level the layer below and replace the bricks. During the replacing of some of the sidewalks during paving operations, the board has had these bricks removed completely and the sidewalks extended to the curb. Hopefully, the future boards will continue this process. (These grass areas were replaced with sand under bricks throughout the property in the mid 1990's and in 2013 the board started replacing the bricks with additional sidewalk area.)

We learned the hard way to keep the drains clear. When the drain south of the east entrance

gets clogged, the water backs up in the pipe under the driveway and then up the east side of the 2941 building and possibly as far as flooding their basements. We did some work back there that seems to have helped.

Handicaped Parking - several years ago, we discussed making a couple of handicaped parking spaces. We found out that if we do so, anyone can park there - and we can't assign those spaces a number. So, creating a handicaped space for a particular unit would defeat the reason for having it and we would have no recourse if someone other than the desired person parked there. (also, we might be required to upgrade the whole parking lot to the current standards)

Pool and Park

The pool was not ready when we moved in but was soon completed. The park was not done for a couple of years. During the time when we were replacing many retaining walls, the wall around the pool was also replaced. At this time, the board decided to change the fence around the pool on the north side to run to the building in hopes that it would cut down on the kids climbing over the fence. Also at this time the side walk into the pool was changed to be more accessible and the path south of the pool was changed to be easier to walk on - it had been a series of small retaining walls.

There has been much discussion about getting rid of the pool as it requires a lot of money to keep up. However, the only option is to replace it with another recreational feature with the homeowners approval - so that will probably never happen.

Security

Security has always been a concern. Several times we have had a roving, usually random, security guard. This was mostly to simply be a presence in the property more than to prevent crime since that is not realistic. We had one property manager actually believe that Cobblestone should become a "gated" community without realizing the major expense that this would be. When I pointed this out to her, she said she thought that was what we wanted. At this point we don't have a security patrol. We will see what difference it makes. One reason for not having a security patrol was that he was not preventing any crime - how do we know?

Maintenance

When we moved in here, all maintenance was bid out, usually resulting in long delays in getting anything done. The one exception to this was the streetlamps which we had a contract with a company to check and replace as necessary - I believe they checked the lamps every couple of weeks. A property manager suggested that we try a company that she had used before to be on-site weekly to take care of the ongoing problems and to be available for the bigger issues.

This would result in faster response time as well as most of the bigger items would be handled as part of their normal on-site time, billing just for supplies. This worked for a while but then we noticed that we were being double billed for major projects that at least the time should have been part of the on-site contract. We put the idea out to bid and hired Chuck. This worked out very well for a couple of years. Chuck was replacing the bad siding and doing touch up work on the buildings so we could paint them when he had time. Sometimes he had another worker help him, with the board's approval. (Unfortunately, the board did not document this except for approving the checks.) One of the more noticeable projects that Chuck did was replace the badly deteriorated and heavily graffitied sign with two new signs with solar lights - this was done in the fall of 2016. Unfortunately, due to the previously mentioned lack of documentation and some other issues, Chuck was fired. So now we are back to bidding out any maintenance work and the related delays in getting things done.

Window Wells should have 16" of rock in the bottom of the window well to absorb the rain. If a window well is replaced, it must meet the current building code - including having a ladder. The original window wells don't meet the current building code.

Allen ditch

The ditch that runs west from south of the park to Elliot at the south boundary of Cobblestone has been a source of problems and will continue to be so. This is the Allen Ditch and is part of the farmers' canal system in Colorado, which has been around since the 1890's. The problem is that they don't take care of the sides of the area around the ditch, leaving the property owners to take care of it. Cobblestone is responsible for the area at the top (flat ground) down to some angle, I think 45 degrees, and the bottom section is their responsibility. I was told by someone at the City of Westminster that the city usually takes care of the Allen Ditch part and bills it back to them, including cleaning the debris. We just need to keep our part mowed and trimmed periodically. Unfortunately, the Allen Ditch also runs through the corner area south of 81st at Elliot that we are also responsible for, with the same requirements. (see the map)

Retaining Walls

During the spring of 2012, many of the major retaining walls were replaced - including one damaged behind 2975. Also, the pool retaining wall was replaced along with changing the north pool fence to add section next to 2987. See retaining wall pages on web site

Fence on the northwest side

In August of 2000, the board approved the building a fence between 2991 & 2973 around the northwest corner of our property. For reasons I don't remember, the board decided to run this fence at a diagonal from the end of 2973 across to 2991 instead of following the property

line straight out to Federal. As a consequence, no one is sure who actually takes care of the section of Cobblestone property north of the fence but I suspect that Greenbriar actually does.

Comcast

Periodically, Comcast approaches the board with a proposal to purchase exclusive rights to market their products, primarily cable, to Cobblestone in exchange for some amount of money. Evidently, our early board signed this agreement and now every couple of years they try to get us to sign another one. These contracts usually have a self extending clause. So far we have resisted since that would cause problems for our residents that don't desire Comcast cable.

FHA Approval

Some time ago, there was a lot of discussion about properties being required to get FHA approval or FHA loans would not be approved for home buyers. The board checked with our current lawyer at the time and he looked into this. We were told that as Cobblestone Village is not a condominium association and do not meet the requirements, we do not require FHA approval.

2901 - Swamp Cooler

Many years ago, the board discovered that a resident had installed a swamp cooler on the roof of 2901, unit F I believe. The board discussed it at the time and decided that since it had been there so long, that we really had no authority to have it removed. I believe that it was there before the roofs were replaced, so it was properly sealed. If you don't specifically know where to look for it, you will probably never see it, as it is on the south side of the roof and you cannot see it from our parking lot, only from 81st across the ditch.

Building 2993 is different from the rest of the buildings as it had the models when they were finally built, about halfway through the construction process. The model office was 2993C with the entrance there and with the sidewalks leading to the other units. These sidewalks are right next to the curb unlike the other buildings which had approximately 1.5 feet of grass between the curbs and the sidewalks. (These grass areas were replaced with sand under bricks throughout the property in the mid 1990's and in 2013 the board started replacing the bricks with additional sidewalk area.)

Websites

Many years ago, our then property manager suggested that Cobblestone Village have a website, or at least someplace on the web to post notices and other information. We started with a

company called Neighborhood Link - which offered a free website to communities. Actually, this site is still there but has not really been kept up to date since 2009. In the fall of 2008, I had my right knee replaced and looked into setting up a regular website for Cobblestone Village.

This resulted in our (at this time) current website. This was started out of frustration with the limits of Neighborhood Link as well as the desire to do something better for Cobblestone - something I enjoyed doing. It has been built into something that has history back to our beginning with lots of information and pictures. This includes assessment, property management company, board and meeting note history, with lots of documents.

One feature of our website is the ability of the residents to send an email to the board, the board and the property manager or just the property manager. Also residents can submit comments, maintenance requests and even complete a ARC submission online. The ARC online submission has the standard requirements for common requests, such as window replacements. As the website has been a growing thing since 2008, it has lots of information.

At this time, the future of the website is in question, so I don't know if it will survive. There is talk of moving it to our current property management company - but ...

01-22-2018 Update - I talked to Bob Weiss at LCM along with a person from Association Voice. They believe that the entire website can be transferred to LCM with no loss of information. I am to copy all of the website files to a USB drive and get it to Bob Weiss, and then transfer the domain to them, followed by them dealing with the email addresses. We will see how successful that will be. I just hope that all of the history is actually retained and accessible. (if not, well...)

In July of 2013, we joined the Nextdoor group of associations. This is primarily "Facebook" for each community. Each resident must confirm or have confirmed that they actually live in the community. There are many good and bad points about Nextdoor, but I believe the good outweigh the bad. 01-22-2018 as of today, I have been encouraged to not continue to post on Nextdoor. I have been accused of fanning the fires so someone else can deal with Nextdoor. (Then again,...)

One thing I have learned that should be passed on to all homeowners, but especially anyone on the board or anyone who desires to be on the board: remember that each board member must act with the best interests of the association in mind before that of their own interests. Along these lines, a concern of mine is that the association dues have not been raised in two years while the costs of being in business have continually gone up. This being the case, how are we going to keep up? Especially as the reserves are lower than they should be.

Several years ago I was asked if I ever foresaw a time when the dues would not be

raised every year and I responded that I believe that they will need to be raised every year something. While I don't remember who asked the question, I do remember that she said that she wanted to prove me wrong.

This is the end of my notes. My plan is to not run again - since I will have been on the board for at least 20 years if I make it to August. Then again, I may resign earlier, again only time will tell...

I have enjoyed most of my time on the board and will probably remember events and other information about Cobblestone Village for some time.

Again, please remember that any opinions expressed in these notes are the opinion of the writer and not of the board, any board members (past, present or future) or any management company (past, present or future) of Cobblestone Village HOA.

Mike Walker - CVH Board Member August 1997 to August 2018