

# Glastonbury Landowners Association Newsletter

Winter 2010

## A Warm Welcome to our New Board Members...

At the Glastonbury Landowners Association's annual meeting held on November 14, 2009 the following Board members were elected:

### North Glastonbury

William Smith (*re-elected*)  
Paul Rantallo (*re-elected*)  
Daniel O'Connell

### South Glastonbury

Richard Bolen (*re-elected*)  
Neil Kremer  
Clare Parker

In 2010, the following Board members will be completing the final year of their two-year terms:

South Glastonbury: Laura Boise, Alyssa Angelis and Rich Spallone.

North Glastonbury: Janet Naclerio, Sheridan Stenberg and Gerald Dubiel

Ombudsmen: Penelope Price (North Glastonbury) and Jeanne Campbell (South Glastonbury).

## Executive Officers & Committee Chairs

On December 14, 2009, the new Board appointed the following Directors to serve as its Executive Officers and Committee Chairs:

### Executive Officers

President: Laura Boise  
Vice-President: Richard Bolen  
Secretary: Janet Naclerio  
Treasurer: Sheridan Stenberg

### Committee Chairs

Road & Weed: William Smith and Rich Spallone  
Project Review: Alyssa Angelis  
and Rich Spallone  
Community & Recreation: Richard Bolen,  
Laura Boise and Janet Naclerio  
Website: Daniel O'Connell

## Please Sign Up For Our Newsletter Online!

In our continued effort to streamline operations, you may now sign-up to receive GLA newsletters online and have these conveniently delivered right to your inbox. This will reduce costs and enable us to put those funds to a better use. It's easy to do: just log on at [www.GLA-MT.org](http://www.GLA-MT.org) and sign up today!

## GLA Board Meeting Schedule for 2010

Held at St. John's Church, Emigrant 6:45 - 9:30 p.m.

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| January 12 | July 13      |
| February 9 | August 10    |
| March 9    | September 14 |
| April 6    | October 5    |
| May 11     | November 9   |
| June 8     | December 14  |

Annual Meeting & Elections - Saturday, November 14

## Introducing Our New Virtual Message Service!

Each year the Board works diligently to stay on budget and reduce expenses. During the coming year, we are committed to finding new and better ways of operating the GLA. With a limited budget, over 380 parcels to serve with twelve volunteer Board members and a handful of independent contractors, it is definitely a challenge. Therefore, we are always in search of finding creative and inexpensive solutions to run the organization resourcefully.

To keep pace with the increasing demands of the Board's time and better facilitate our communications with the Landowners, we have purchased a virtual message service. For a nominal fee of \$15 per month, this "virtual office" has the capability to route and record your messages to five different mailboxes (including emergencies when necessary). Your message will automatically be forwarded to the appropriate Board members' home phone, cell phone, fax, or email-address. This service provides a practical way for the Board to respond to your needs in a timely manner.

You can now call our virtual message service at (406) 451-0033, and follow the prompts to leave messages for the specific committee chairs. In the near future, you will be able to ask questions and convey ideas or concerns by filling out an on-line form on our web site, which will save us the additional expense of having your message transcribed.

## Owner Contact Information

Please be aware that it is each Landowner's responsibility to ensure that the GLA has current contact and ownership information at all times. Also, please inform us whenever a parcel changes hands. This includes correct name, mailing address, parcel number, and physical address. When any of these changes occur, please contact the GLA Treasurer, Sheridan Stenberg, through our virtual message service described above.

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## Building Projects

Whenever you are planning to build or make property improvements, please remember that our Covenants require that Landowners submit a project review application to the Board prior to beginning construction. This ensures that the standards outlined in the Covenants and Master Plan are being followed.

To allow sufficient time to review your project, it is necessary to submit your plans at least two weeks prior to our monthly board meetings, which are usually held on the second Monday of each month (see schedule on front page).

Forms and instructions can be found on the GLA website under the link, "Applications for New Structures." If you need paper copies mailed to you, have questions, or need assistance in completing the forms, you may leave a message for Alyssa Angelis at our virtual message service under Project Review.

## 2010 Budget Set!

We are pleased to announce that with the Board's diligence we once again ended our fiscal year in the black with a balanced budget. Per our bylaws, the Board finalized the budget for 2010 at its last meeting of 2009. We continue working on long-term planning, better management practices, and fiscal responsibility, so that the progress we have made these past few years can continue long into the future. As ownership continues to increase, the demand for services also rises. This results in greater challenges in providing the same level of services owners have grown to expect. Although the Board has been in existence for 13 years, it has only recently been determined that in order to keep pace with the rising cost of living, nominal increases to the annual assessments have become necessary.

We hope that the information in the following articles will assist you in gaining a greater awareness of our operations, and the expenses involved in running the Association. For those of you who were not yet Landowners during the original paving project of 2001, we are also offering a historical perspective on the paving loan, its development, and the actual costs of the project.

We are providing more information in this current newsletter than we have normally done in the past, so that it will assist you in gaining a better understanding of the enormous tasks that are involved in the volunteer management of such a large association with 22 miles of roads to maintain. It is our hope that this information and expanded awareness will assist the owners to be on the same page with the Board as we move into the decade ahead. As always, we invite you to work with us by becoming more involved in the day-to-day operations of the Association.

## Snowplowing Reminder:

With a second snowplow truck investment, reserves of dry sand, and qualified independent operators, we have improved our ability to serve the community during the winter months. The GLA is making every effort to commence snowplowing on asphalt/paved roads when snow accumulation has reached a minimum of two inches and on gravel roads when it reaches a minimum of four inches in depth. It is important to note that both the paved and gravel roads can sustain damage if plowed when snow accumulates at less than these levels. Priority is always given to paved roads and then to the main graveled roads, with an emphasis on sanding steep grades.

Although we strive to provide the best service possible, and effectively utilize all manpower and equipment available to us, please remember that we are not a municipality. We are mainly a volunteer organization, with a set budget, and no full time employees. Snowplowing is done as quickly as we can mobilize equipment and manpower. Please understand that we cannot provide greater levels of services without having to pay full time employees. To increase services would require hiring full time employees and necessitate an even greater increase in assessments. In order to continue to operate on such a low budget, please be patient and be aware of these limitations.

## Annual Road Committee Report

At the annual meeting, many Landowners requested additional information regarding road maintenance. As questions were asked and awareness was raised, Landowners began to develop a deeper appreciation of how much work actually goes into running the GLA, especially concerning the roads. Because of this interest from the Landowners, the Road Committee will conduct a special road meeting (date to be announced). For those of you who were unable to attend the annual meeting or will be unable to attend the Special Road Meeting, we hope the information that follows will be helpful.

We had another tremendous year with regard to our road improvements. Seventy percent (\$81,802.00) of the GLA's current budget is allocated toward roads. It has been said that our privately maintained roads are some of the best in the county. Last summer, the Chip Seal Project in North Glastonbury was a huge success. Through the Landowner's vote and participation, it was fully funded and self-financed, through a special assessment, as well as Landowner investors from both Glastonburys. This much-needed work significantly improved the condition of our roads. Through the decision-making power of the Landowners, the GLA's ability to self-finance other capital improvement projects in the future has great possibilities.

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We had unexpectedly dangerous, icy conditions for a few days early in the season. Please remember that during the winter months we can have warm daytime temperatures melting the snow, with freezing temperatures turning it to ice during the evening. Because we have no control over the weather, great caution must be exercised while driving under these conditions. Again, please remember that the GLA does not have full time employees. Although we plow and sand as soon as possible, (usually in the early morning hours prior to heavy traffic), it is still the responsibility of the Landowners to exercise safe driving habits. Please refer to your copy of "Driving Safety Requirements in Glastonbury" which we mailed to you in 2009. For your reference, this information and all GLA policies can always be found on our website.

This past year you also received a copy of the standard "GLA Road Policy," which defines the priority of roads to receive maintenance, improvements, and snowplowing in a range from "Primary" through "Fifth Tier." This illustrates an equitable distribution of road budget funds throughout the different areas and terrain within Glastonbury. These vary greatly from lower and flatter areas with little snowfall, to the higher mountainous regions that receive many feet of snow, thereby making some roads impassable during winter months. We hope that this reminder to be aware of the established maintenance priority policy will help to show what level of care Landowners can reasonably expect to receive in their areas. If you are unaware of which area you live in, you can refer to your Master Plan map, or find the information on-line at the GLA website.

## The 2001 Asphalt Road Paving Loan

Through our discussions with Landowners at the annual meeting, it became apparent that many were not aware of how the original 2001 asphalt project was financed. It is important to note how this part of our road history continues to have a considerable impact on our current and future annual budgets.

In 2001, the Landowners voted to approve a fifteen-year loan for \$254,000 for the paving project. A *vote for a special assessment* was not presented to the Landowners to offset the additional \$30,000 in annual payments. We currently have six more years to pay on this loan. When including the \$30,000 down payment, and the interest over the life of the loan, the real cost to the GLA is \$483,379. This breaks down to \$30,225 annually or \$2,518 per month.

It was originally anticipated that the cost of road maintenance on the gravel portions would decrease as the result of paving, and therefore offset this expense. However,

the cost of maintenance on the paved portions actually added to the overall road expenses; specifically, for crack sealing and chip sealing. Even when taking into consideration the 5-mile paved portion of the 22 total miles of roads that no longer need grading (offsetting the \$30,000 by \$7,500), it still leaves us \$22,500 short each year for grading and graveling on the remaining 17 miles of roads.

A plan to cover these additional expenses was not in place at the time the project was initiated. Therefore, subsequent boards were left with the dilemma of how to cover these costs. Without a vote for an increase to cover this expense, this amount had to be taken from our annual Road Budget, therefore decreasing the amount of funds available for regular road maintenance. Consequently, in the first few years following this paving project, very little grading and almost no graveling was done on the remainder of our roads.

To compensate for the additional expense of the paving loan, in 2004, the Board completely reprioritized the budget. Reducing it by twenty percent in all other areas, and re-allocated those funds toward upgrading the gravel roads to a satisfactory condition. After five years of hard work, this has finally begun to pay off, and the roads are now closer to where we would like them to be.

Through responsible budgeting, the Board was also able to absorb the extra \$15,000 cost of the first asphalt crack-sealing project at North Glastonbury. However, because the added expense of the Chip Seal Project was more than our total annual budget, it was necessary for the North Glastonbury owners to vote for a special assessment to cover the \$130,000 Chip Seal Project.

Although we have made every effort to cut our costs over the past few years, the only option available to address these challenges has been through minimal increases in assessments.

## The Future is Bright for Our Roads!

The upside to all of our streamlining, expense tracking, and cost cutting is that recent Boards have taken these lessons from the past and are now transforming them into long-term planning for success in the future.

For instance, specific improvements to the gravel roads over the next few years are planned, including an application of magnesium chloride on selected lengths of gravel roads. These applications prove to be effective in stabilizing and improving road conditions, as well as reducing the cost of routine maintenance on additional lengths of gravel roads to be treated.

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An alternative option that some owners had proposed was for the Board to consider allowing the Landowners to petition their neighborhoods to determine whether they would be interested in making improvements with a special assessment in their area to fund it.

If you would like to make a proposal to the road committee chairs, please contact William Smith or Rich Spallone at the virtual office number listed on the front page of the newsletter. Because this has already been done successfully with the Chip Seal Project, the future is full of possibilities.

The Board is open to looking for creative solutions and we are willing to go out of the proverbial "box" to find them.

## A New Perspective

Over the past few years, it has become apparent that many Landowners expected the Board to act in the capacity of paid management staff. Please remember that our Board is comprised of elected volunteer Landowners who are required to serve only a few hours per month, and cannot be expected to perform all the operational duties of the GLA. Generally, the correct role of a board is to direct the administration of the organization. It is not usually expected that board members act as the "employees."

Most associations have full-time paid positions, such as managers, secretaries, accountants, maintenance and road personnel. To lend a further perspective, some local condominium associations in the region assess \$90 to \$120 per month or \$1,000 to nearly \$1500 per year, compared with our \$30 per month or \$380 per year! This equates to only about a dollar per day. As you can see, this is a tremendous difference, especially considering that our volunteer Board manages 380 parcels and 22 miles of road, compared to many associations, which have sometimes half the number of owners, and less than a mile of road. Because of our already low assessment levels, we are unable to provide additional services without having to increase assessments substantially.

## Looking Toward the Future

As the Board considered planning for the decade ahead, along with reflecting upon the lessons of the past, we determined to set a blueprint for future Boards to know how the association could best be managed.

To this end, we are working toward developing a 3, 5, 7, 10 and 15-year plan (15 years being the life of the asphalt loan). This will be a tremendous asset in managing the Association, providing future Boards with general guidelines regarding normal day-to-day business operations.

We appreciate all owners asking pertinent questions, offering suggestions, and taking the time to learn more about how the Association is run. The Board looks forward to serving you in the coming year. With this foundation in place, it is our hope that with increased perspective, we will all be able to work together in the coming decade for the overall success of our Community.

## Financial Considerations

We understand that these are difficult financial times. The Board is sincerely interested in working with owners to help them remain current with their assessments. If it becomes difficult to make your annual payment in one lump sum, we can set up a quarterly or monthly payment plan, or you can schedule monthly electronic payments through your bank.

If you need assistance, please feel free to call our Treasurer, Sheridan Stenberg, at the virtual message service number.

## Fire Safety in Winter

Due to a recent grass fire in South Glastonbury this past week, we would like to give a timely reminder concerning fire safety. Please be aware that even during winter months when snow is present, due to our dry climate and high winds, it is always important to follow fire safety measures in order to save lives and property.

Remember that woodstove pipes should always be cleaned before the winter season. When cleaning out the ashbin of a recently used fireplace, woodstove or grill, remember to properly dispose of the ashes in a metal can, checking for hot embers, then watering them down thoroughly to make sure they are extinguished. It only takes one ember or spark to start a grass fire that can quickly spread to adjoining properties within minutes.

Special thanks to the efforts of the Boise family for being first responders in helping their neighbors at the recent South Glastonbury fire.

## Replacement of Glastonbury Signs

We are also very grateful to Ron Wartman for volunteering to install the replacement road signs that were stolen again.

This vandalism is not only an inconvenience for the Board, and an additional expense for the Landowners, but it also delays emergency responders from quickly locating emergency sites. If you see anyone tampering with the signs, please report it immediately to the GLA virtual message service (again, the number is listed on the front page of this Newsletter).

*The GLA Board would like to wish you and your families a happy, safe, and prosperous New Year.*