

## Commons Observation Summary 2011

The following observations of the AHHA Commons are the result of multiple walk-through observations, discussions, and professional recommendations during the year 2011 to date. These observations are to bring to the attention of the Board any issues which affect the safety, investment or wellbeing of the Common property. This information is also offered as a tool for the Amenities Committee's planning process, the Reserve Fund, and the 2012 yearly maintenance budget planning by the Board.

**1).** The storm drain issue from Yappa into the big pond has been addressed by the Silverton Public Works. While this system worked for the first year of installation, it was not actually a long term repair. The result is the sand bags are broken and the sand scattered. The flooding concern to the back of the Kester's yard has returned. Currently, the storm drain cover (once bolted to the ground, then removed by the city), is subject to strong, fast rain showers, and gets pushed into the air and off to one side. This exposes the man hole.

### Recommendation

The Amenities Committee has discussed building a small boulder rock wall where the concrete pavers and sandbags currently are resting. This would be low in height and similar in appearance to the rocks used in the basketball berm. The entire structure would be small in cost, small in size and easy to construct. The path would need to be rerouted above the storm drain cover. The result would be to direct heavy rainwater towards the pond and not the member's yard.

The man hole cover should be brought to the city's attention, simply to show due diligence on the part of our HOA.

**2).** The Commons path system was installed when funds and member use were smaller in scale. Within the last few years the path system has been subject to a large increase in foot and bike traffic. The result is a degrading of the surface in many places to the point of little to no gravel. This is especially noticeable in the path down the hill from Yappa Ct. Because the paths are not permanent (the material of the paths are gravel), they require annual maintenance. This is separate from the long term surfacing reflected in the Reserve Fund previously submitted to the Board, involving major resurfacing and base layer repair. In addition, the edge of the paths has deteriorated, with the grass growing inside the edge line.

### Recommendation

The current path infrastructure system should be evaluated for its long term cost effectiveness: Does the annual and long term repair costs for a "gravel" path outweigh the cost of a more permanent infrastructure? Would the members be in favor of approving funds for a more permanent, less maintenance intensive system which in the long term might be more economical? If another surface is chosen, it could be installed in sections over a period of several years to lessen the financial impact on the membership.

**3).** The main storm overflow drain from the big pond into Abiqua creek is failing. The walls of the drain are square concrete layers, applied with mortar. The mortar is failing in multiple places from the bottom of the drain to the top on all four sides. This results in gaps in the mortar, allowing the water to pour nonstop into the drain itself. There are also multiple cracks in the concrete layers which allow water to drain down the walls. The pond drain pipe into the storm overflow drain has failed (this is the rusty box protruding from the water near the drain grate). The valve is stuck in the open position allowing water to drain continually into the main overflow drain.

Additionally, because the pipe was not installed properly, there is a large gap around the pipe where water continually leaks. Last, there is an additional small drain which has a valve below the water line and the pipe protrudes to the right side of the main. This arrangement was also installed improperly, and this pipe drains continually as well.

The result of these issues is a constant 24/7, 365 days a year draining of the pond. The effects are apparent to all, especially in the late summer, with severely lowered water levels. This single variable most affects the health of the pond and thus the shared AHHA investment. The impact on the pond environment, animal health, member safety and Common property value are substantially affected. This also is driving some of the maintenance costs up as well.

### **Recommendation**

Because this is a complex set of problems, fixing the drain will be difficult. It needs to be determined who bears the responsibility and cost for the repairs. Does the city actually own the drain, have control or simply have an easement? Members of the Amenities Committee are willing to open a dialog with the Silverton Public Works to work toward an equitable solution of repairing this system. If a property manager has been retained, they would also be involved. A combined solution could then be presented to the Board for a decision. It is also not known at this point what part this would play in the Reserve Fund.

**4).** The log raft which is attached to the rocks in the pond is in need of replacing. The water fowl use this platform throughout the day, all year long. Maple is one of the woods suggested because it helps promote bacteria in the pond. Several years ago, members from the maintenance and amenities committee discussed modifying the raft so it would be more usable for the birds. Now would be a good opportunity to do this.

### **Recommendation**

The amenities committee can draft a plan with sketches for a new raft. The construction could be accomplished either by hiring out the labor or enlisting interested neighbors. The large logs could be supplied by our maple tree which has several large branches which need removal (this is based on comments by both arborists). The rest of the materials are minimal cost.

**5).** The basketball hoop and post are damaged and need repair. The backboard and brackets are broken, and the height adjustment is either out of alignment or broken.

### **Recommendation**

Defer this repair to the property management or the Board. It is further recommended that the post be reinforced with supplemental brackets.

**6).** The basketball court needs maintenance. The concrete surface needs to be power washed. Pending research, the surface may need sealing. The dirt boarder around the concrete needs to be weeded and leveled. Currently this is a minor safety issue. The path leading to the court entrance is overgrown and needs to be redone.

### **Recommendation**

Power wash the court and seal if necessary. Address court dirt/grass perimeter and level the grade. Refurbish the gravel path to court. All these issues can be resolved utilizing the maintenance contract and minimal materials.

**7).** The plantings on the berm require hand watering. A waterline pipe stub was installed for the purpose of adding an irrigation system. A second waterline stub was installed to add an additional water bib, which would increase the ability to get water to the pond plantings as far as the Kester's, using hoses.

### **Recommendation**

Install a drip irrigation system for the berm plants using the berm waterline stub. At a cost of \$25 per man hour to hand water the plants, this cost would be quickly recovered by eliminating watering labor costs. Add an additional recessed water line bib using the installed waterline stub.

**8).** The pump house roof is in need of repair. At some point within the last year asphalt shakes were added to the roof cap and nailed down, negating the ability to open the roof. These had to be removed to service the pumps. In addition, it has been noticed that the temperature inside the pump house gets very hot during the summer. This very high temperature has a negative effect on the electric pumps inside. The result is unknown but it is generally agreed it will shorten the "lifetime" of the pumps by overheating them.

### **Recommendation**

Repair the roof to the pump house. Add 2 gable vents to increase airflow in the pump house.

**9).** The bench at the north corner of the bridge floods each fall & winter and becomes generally unusable. The slope of the ground is toward this area, and the water from the spring compounds the problem.

### **Recommendation**

Raise and redirect the slope above the path (Jack & John have included this in plan for leveling the playfield). Add large paving stones around the bench concrete pad, fill in with gravel.

**10).** The horseshoe pits need to be redefined. The runways between the posts, the pits and the backboards each need minor attention. Also, the beanbag boards need some paint freshening. Both games need a better way of storing the horseshoes and bean bags; many of our members probable do not even know where these items are stored or how to access them.

### **Recommendation**

Clean up the game area by defining the games, add some paint, and provide a better access system for the accessories.

**11).** The commons boat was used twice last year, possibly 4 or 5 times before that. The original maintenance tasks did require the need for the boat, both for practical and safety reasons. Currently, this need is not an issue since we are contracting out the maintenance tasks, and the potential for a member to use it for maintenance/repair work is negligible. It actually presents more of a problem than a solution.

### **Recommendation**

Sell the boat. We could recover 55 to 65 percent of our original cost (\$700 +).

**12).** The Arborist's who were interviewed had two similar comment concerning out trees in the commons. The first comment was that we have all old growth trees, and if we want to promote tree sustainability we need to add some younger trees amongst the old growth. The second comment was we have at least one tree which needs removal. That tree is the large maple next to the playground, along the path from Tillicum.

### **Recommendation**

The priority is to select an arborist. The first large project would be to address the maple tree. This tree is posing a significant safety hazard, and in fact has several large limbs which are detached and could fall anytime. Once this tree is removed, plant a large caliper replacement tree. Both arborists do not plant large caliper trees, but this service is available. The size caliper the committee has discussed (10 inch and larger) is available from several vendors. These trees are not inexpensive, but the trade is the guarantee and service as well as an immediate large tree. A tree this size is preferable to a small (2-3 inch) caliper tree and would "blend in" with our old growth trees better.

Long term planting of trees for sustainability has been a focus since the first amenities committee was formed. One suggestion which has often been discussed is the planting of one large caliper tree per year amongst the current old growth trees. This would provide a slow introduction of new trees, and spread the cost over many years.

**13).** The southeast bank of the large pond continues to erode at an increased rate. Because the bank has a steep angle to the water and is mostly bare of plantings it is subject to more erosion. Added to this is the duck traffic throughout the year and the problem is increased.

### **Recommendation**

Several recommendations are presented to offer a choice. One is to greatly increase the plantings such as sedges and grasses. This would also channel the ducks through specific areas verses the entire length of the bank.

A second idea is to line the bank with large rocks similar in size to the rocks on the berm, followed by layers of crushed rock on the bank, creating a rock bank in place of an earthen bank.

In conclusion, the Amenities committee currently is discussing the above concerns, and the recommendations are subject to revision and correction. The recommendations presented here are meant to be a starting point for discussion between the Board and the committee.

Also, the committee will be submitting both a maintenance budget and a separate amenities budget for 2012 in the near future. Each budget will include many mainly items which have appeared in the past and are, by necessity, repeated each year. Several items from the above concern list will also be included.

The Amenities committee thanks the Board for considering these concerns and observations, and looks forward to hearing their comments.

