

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
GREAT ISLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
AUGUST 23, 2023  
6:30 PM IN ROOM 206**

ATTENDANCE: Jon Zagrodzky (BOS), Chair; Mark Adiletta (RTM); Mike Burke (BOS); Bruce Ferguson (resident member); Daniel Kolakowski (resident member); Jim Palen (Board of Finance, Chairman); Jeffrey Taebel (resident member); Kipp Visi (resident member)

STAFF: Monical McNally, First Selectman; Edard Gentile, Director of Public Works; Tony Campanella, Facilities Supervisor

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Zagrodzky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. REVIEW OF GREAT ISLAND TOUR**

The Committee members discussed areas for concern:

Is it safe?

What can the public do on the Island when they get there?

What behaviors are expected of the public?

Enforcement

How is access to the Island going to practically work?

Mr. Zagrodzky explained that members of other groups had an opportunity to tour the Island and it is inspiring. The assets are remarkable, especially the stables.

Ms. McNally noted the residents still cannot go to the Island. They are working on a one-hour bus tour of the Island for some time in late September or early October. It is an opportunity for people to go to the Island and bring back ideas on how to use the Island.

**3. UPDATES FROM MONICA MCNALLY, AND ED GENTILE, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Mr. Gentile updated the Committee on what the Public Works department has been doing.

Contractors are on site on a daily basis. There are 60 acres on the Island and they have been working together to clear the Island. The equipment belongs to the landscaper and they have a contract to store their equipment on the Island. The landscapers are part of the original staff who worked with the Steinkraus family and they work from 7:00 to 3:00.

Mr. Gentile described the tree work that is being done as well as the pot hole repair. They cleaned six catch basins and will complete the rest this fall. They added signage on the property and if the Committee wishes any more signage they will get that up quickly.

There is 24 hour surveillance on the Island and Ms. McNally suggested reviewing the surveillance on a more frequent basis.

Mr. Gentle discussed the infrastructure work that is being done. He said they identified some of the water valves around the horse paddock. They also addressed the bees on the boat dock. They are working with the DEP on warning buoys.

Mr. Gentile described the maintenance that is being done to the beach house. There was not a lot to do at the main house. They want to get the facility watertight. They have not found any mildew. They fixed the thermostat and turned off the heat.

Mr. Gentile described the repairs made to the stable. They identified some roof damage and got a quote for that. They will also check out the sump pump at the stable.

A pool assessment was done at the white house. They have to finish the pool enclosure per building code. The pool pump was not functioning and Mr. Campanella will get a quote. Right now there are two tenants at the white house, but they are not using the pool.

They did some work in the kitchen at the pink house (#18) and continue to check the sump pump. There were some issues with the Bilko door and it needs to be repaired.

The floor at the squash building was repaired. They identified roof damage and obtained quotes.

The stone garage is a nice building. They obtained a quote of about \$100,000 for repairs on the slate roof.

Mr. Gentile reviewed other remediation repairs to the property. Starting from Rings End Road to the Cul de Sac, they are planning for a 22 ft roadway. This work will include the removal of about 16 trees; however, the design plan includes a planting plan to address the loss of these trees.

A Committee member asked if they wanted to cordon off the squash court building. It was suggested that the buildings should be stabilized before making any decisions on the buildings.

The main house has an oil tank that is required to be removed and placed inside. The estimate to do this work came in at about \$26,000. The main house has a functioning heating system. The oil tanks at the dolphin house are outside. Mr. Gentile said they received a quote of about \$11,000 to remove them. He said these are very rough estimates and was seeking guidance from the Committee.

There are some old transformers that need to be removed. In addition, Mr. Gentile said they want to remove asbestos from some of the buildings.

It was noted that the pink house and stables are in good shape.

There is a need to run a new electrical line from the stone garage to the beach house because it is no longer functioning. Mr. Gentile said they received an estimate of \$40,000. He said that if they do any work there, they bring a generator with them.

Mr. Zagrodzky suggested they create a priority list of the projects, that would include cost and status.

The current landscaping contract is with Santos and they are looking at the winter proposal that will include snow removal and salt.

The trash hauling contract is with City Carting and the oil contract is with Petro.

The Committee members held a discussion. It was noted that the architecture of the older buildings is unique. One said their take away was that parking is the first order of business to create the initial access.

A Committee member asked if there was a prior property manager. Ms. McNally said they have a lot of information on the assets and they hired the landscapers who worked on the property. She said the caretaker retired but will reach out to him and ask if he wishes to come to a meeting.

Mr. Gentile will provide a priority list with estimates. He will have the transformers removed as well as the asbestos. It was noted that it is important to make the squash building watertight.

#### **4. DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON GIAC MEETING SCHEDULE**

Mr. Zagrodzky said he wants to get this Committee more synched in with the work and get different individuals focused on work based on their expertise. At the next meeting, Ms. McNally will have a list of different committees for Committee members to consider and will align them with the appropriate Town staff.

The Committee members agreed to meet on the third Wednesday of each month and will come up with a proposed meeting schedule.

#### **5. DISCUSSION OF MATTERS RELATED TO THIS COMMITTEE**

A Committee member said they need to focus on the visual of the entrance to the property. Another Committee member expressed how impressed they were by how much Mr. Gentile, Mr. Campanella and their team accomplish. The Committee members agreed.

Mr. Zagrodzky urged the public to offer practical ideas. They are currently in the phase of preparing the Island for access. No one is permitted on the Island due to safety reasons.

#### **6. ADJOURN**

**\*\* MR. BURKE MOVED TO ADJOURN**  
**\*\* MR. ADILETTA SECONDED**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services