

To: Abbottsford Neighbors

From: Townes Duncan

Re: Board Update and HOA Meeting Preview

11/7/24

I'm writing to provide an overview of the most significant projects that the Board has been working on for the last six months and to give all of you a preview of the agenda for the Semi-Annual HOA meeting next Tuesday November 12.

Landscaping: My knowledge of and interest in landscaping amounts to liking the look of an expansive green lawn and the fact that most plants are green , and some of them have flowers. They all look pretty good to me and I don't spend a lot of time thinking about them. Since taking this job I've learned that landscaping is a much more important matter to lots of folks. I've gotten an education in that regard and landscaping has been, by far, the area that's occupied the largest chunk of my time and that of the rest of the Board for the last six months.

In August I asked a group of three Abbottsford residents, Donna Kestner, Missy Voigt, and Ashley Cantrell to form a Landscape Task Force and work in conjunction with our Landscape Architects, BFT, to produce the following three deliverables, each of which they approved unanimously and which was approved by BFT.

- 1- A Landscape Vision Statement for Abbottsford to guide landscape decisions now and in the future
- 2- An executable plan to upgrade our Front Entrance with a budget for plantings of less than \$35K
- 3- A Summary Five Year Plan for future significant landscaping projects.

The group was also assisted by Greg Bowers. The group did excellent work and Julia Baker from BFT will be at the meeting to help present their work.

The Board also made the decision to restructure the Landscape Committee to create a less unwieldy committee with 5 to 7 members. Greg Bowers has agreed to chair the restructured Landscape Committee and Missy Voigt and Donna Kestner have agreed to serve on the committee. The Committee will recruit 2 to 4 additional members for the approval of the Board.

Ashley Cantrell has decided to step away from her membership on the Landscape Committee and her position as Chair of the committee to focus on her family and on her work with the Nashville Tree Alliance and other horticultural organizations. Ashley has worked long hours on Abbottsford's landscaping over the last several years and we thank her for her service.

As part of the landscape planning process, Chris Wells and I have researched the experience(s) of a number of comparable Nashville communities. I'll have some information to share at the meeting regarding those efforts. The estimated landscaping expense in the proposed 2025 budget was based in part on those other communities' experiences.

Paving: We've worked with the former head of Public Works for the City of Columbia, Chet Rhodes, and his firm, Rhodes Engineering to evaluate the current state of Abbotsford's streets, alleys and other paved areas, as well as our curbs, to identify areas which have structural weakness as well as areas that could use cosmetic improvement. Rhodes has delivered a recommended three phase plan with an estimated aggregate cost of just over \$1 million over all three phases, (likely a three year period). Rhodes will assist us in putting together an RFP, recommending potential bidders, evaluating bids and supervising the execution of the work. We will have information regarding Rhodes' recommended work at the meeting.

Engagement/Survey: Our Engagement Chair, Noelle Kinser, will not be able to attend the HOA meeting next Tuesday, but we will have a handout summarizing the (really broad) range of engagement offerings available in Abbotsford. Additionally, a significant project undertaken by the Engagement Committee in recent months was a Resident Survey touching on a variety of matters. There was a very strong response to the survey, with 102 surveys returned (over 58%). There will be handouts summarizing the results of the survey available at the meeting.

Budget: The notice of the November 12 meeting was accompanied by a proposed budget for 2025. I'm aware of some questions regarding the proposed budget. Our Treasurer, Brad Pendleton, will address those questions, and others, in his presentation at the meeting. Our budgeting process was complicated by the fact that there are three significant items which we can't firm up until we complete RFP processes. We believe the estimated amounts in the proposed budget are reasonable based on the information we currently have.

1— The Paving RFP. We have Rhodes estimates regarding the cost of the work that they recommended, but we're still in the process of putting together the RFP. We're confident that Rhodes' estimates are in the ballpark, but we need to complete the RFP process to get firm numbers.

2—Our Landscaping Services contract with Milosi is a 1 year deal, renewable for two additional years. The Board has decided to put out an RFP for landscape services. We're in the process of putting that RFP together with a goal of getting it out as soon as possible and no later than December 1. The Landscape Committee and the Board will both have input into the provisions of the RFP to ensure that it reflects the expectations of our residents. We will target firms which have experience with communities comparable to Abbotsford.

3—The proposed budget reflects our current management structure which includes an On-Site Property Manager. Our current On-Site Property Manager, Cody Carroll, has submitted his resignation. Cody worked tirelessly for Abbotsford and made a number of very significant contributions to our community. I'm sorry to see him go, and I wish him well in all of his future endeavors.

The Board has decided that rather than attempting to replace Cody's unusually broad skill set, Abbotsford would be better served by returning to our prior model of retaining a professional property management firm to handle many of the operations management and communications functions that have been Cody's responsibility. We will target firms that have experience with

communities comparable to Abbotsford. Cody has agreed to stay on the job until a management firm is selected and brought on board.

Reserve Study: our last Reserve Study was done in 2021. We have commissioned a new study. Importantly, unlike our prior reserve studies, which based their conclusions on the national average useful lives for various assets, we've asked that this study use actual useful lives for our assets. The prior approach makes sense for a relatively new community, but for a 40+ year old community like Abbotsford, we will likely find that some of our assets are closer to the end of their useful lives than the national average. Our current reserves are higher than they've ever been, but they're likely less than they should be given the age of some of our assets. Additionally, the paving work described above will hit our reserves pretty hard over the next 3-5 years. Brad Pendleton has done some very good work projecting various scenarios for our reserves over time. He'll report on that work at the meeting.

Spoiler Alert..... There's a reason that best practices in this area encourage reserve practices which minimize the need for assessments, including, at a minimum, annual increases that at least offset inflation.

Future Areas of Emphasis: As I noted above, landscaping related issues have absorbed most of the Board's attention for the last year. My hope is that in the next year we will be able to focus on getting the paving project done, addressing the implications of the reserve study, and two topics which have generated controversy in recent months. Both are, I believe, a result of the fact that we are a 40 year old community operating under governing documents that are, for the most part, geared toward a new development. Specifically.... There are remodeling projects going on in Abbotsford. There will be more. And, in the future, there may be buyers who want to tear down existing homes. Sugartree, which is about our age, has already had a couple of tear downs. These issues are to be expected in a 40 year old community. But we live in very close proximity to our neighbors and that complicates things. Our current governing documents don't address these issues particularly well, in my view. And the HOA has limited tools to enforce the rules that we do have. Somewhat related to these construction issues is the fact that 40 years of changing demographics etc. has given rise to parking issues that, in my view, aren't particularly well addressed by our governing documents. These include more than two cars in one family (older kids etc.), residents using their garages for something other than parking, and parking vehicles associated with construction projects... Again, the rules may need some revisions, and we need to think through what sort of enforcement tools the HOA can and should have.

My hope is that the Board can spend more of its time addressing these and similar issues in 2025.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on November 12.

