

**Tollgate Association  
May 2014 Board Meeting**

**Date and Time:** May 17th, 2014 at 9a.m.

**Location:** 133Tollgate Way (Connor residence)

**Attending:** Chuck Connor, Ed Hahn, Rob Ochsendorf, Joe Romer, Bob Donaldson, Garry Sauner, and Marie Murray

1. Approval of the April Meeting Minutes

2. Financial Report

[http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014\\_expenses.pdf](http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014_expenses.pdf)  
[http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014\\_net\\_worth.pdf](http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014_net_worth.pdf)  
[http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014\\_budget.pdf](http://tollgateway.org/budget/2014_budget.pdf)

3. Committee Reports: Committee Chairs

- Social – The spring social is planned for Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, from 2-5:00p.m.
- Landscaping – Proposed plantings for spring have been approved by the Committee, and are scheduled for June 17<sup>th</sup>. Marie visited Merrifield Garden Center twice to handpick bushes, but they are not yet available. Plantings will consume approximately \$2,100 of the planned \$2,500 budget for new shrubs.

The Committee received a request to remove and replace certain shrubs in the front of #105 (Beyer) at owner's expense. The replacement shrubs were approved by the Committee. If there is a surplus in this year's budget for shrubs, the Committee agreed to contribute some money to this project. One bush was transplanted from #105 to the area just in front of the circuit breaker at #121 (Bronikowski).

The Leyland Cypress trees/stumps next to #124 (Murray) were removed. The Murray's are working (at their expense) to obtain a landscape plan that will involve re-grading in this area. Plantings in the area will be postponed to the fall.

Several homeowners (Rivkin/Powell and D'ermes) contacted the Committee regarding bald patches in the grassy area of their yards. The issue has contributed to erosion in some areas. Marie asked Ramiro for an estimate for shade seed in those areas. The work may cost a few hundred dollars, which

could be drawn from the projected \$400 planting surplus, or from another area of the tree/landscape budget. The lack of grass in some areas opened up the conversation generally to similar areas in other parts of the neighborhood. The Committee is going to discuss in more detail what areas need attention and how to address them.

The spring landscaping tour is scheduled for Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 1 pm. Interested homeowners should meet in front of #118. Rob will send a reminder to neighbors one week prior to the event.

Trees – In addition to the tree removal at #124, pruning was performed in the following areas:

- Maple in front of #135
- Holly next to #135
- Holly behind #114
- Redbud in front of #113
- Cherry at #101

Some concern was expressed regarding the silver maple between #114 and #116. Girdling root may be responsible for the lack of leafing on one side.

- Architecture – The Committee reached a decision on the Dau’s request regarding shutters and vent replacement. See Appendix II for details of decision. Jim Dau recently joined the Committee.

The Committee received a request from #110 (O’Hara) to replace the front door. The homeowners and the Committee agreed on a fiberglass, six-panel replacement door without windows.

- Garry received a request from #100 (Rivkin) to re-point portions of the brick wall at #100. Garry referred the homeowner to Brian Black who re-pointed the brick walls in front of #100 and #101 in 2012, and suggested he provide an estimate for any additional work that needs to be done. The Board’s assessment is that (1) there is not enough work to merit hiring a contractor and (2) there is not money in the budget to perform work at this time.

#### 4. Old Business

- a. Continued Discussion of Tollgate Branding – See Appendix I for draft language for branding. Ultimately, branding could be leveraged for the Association’s website and real estate brochures. Marie is working on a history

of Tollgate, and met with the original architect of Tollgate for insights into the design of the neighborhood. Descriptions used in the original advertisements for Tollgate included: Homes in the Williamsburg tradition, classic architecture, top quality construction, careful attention to the smallest detail, custom millwork, designed for those people who care about distinctive living, located in one of the City's prime residential areas, an easy commute to Washington, D.C. Draft branding language, and front signage, were discussed.

- b. Nationals Game – Joe is working on seat selection for a Nationals Game. Tickets will either be in section 206 or 204, and will cost \$33 apiece. Headcount stands at 11. The event is planned for Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- c. Some concern was voiced over visible trashcans in front of some homes and how and when trash and yard waste are being put out for pickup. There was brief discussion on how best to address the issue. Rob proposed adding language to the next newsletter to address the issue. He will also speak to some homeowners in a week if this is not corrected.

5. New Business – No new business.

6. The next meeting will be on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at #127 (Hahn residence). The Board meeting concluded at 10:40 a.m.

## APPENDIX I

### Email from Chuck Connor to Tollgate Board on May 2, 2014:

Fellow Tollgate board members:

Below is a very brief description of what is commonly referred to as "branding" and I have highlighted the parts that best apply to a residential community. As a first step, having met with Joe this am, I propose that we all contribute to a list of "attributes" and "promises" that apply to Brand Tollgate. After we all agree on this list, we can then proceed to employing the language in other communications about our community. Here goes:

#### Promise:

- Strong self-management that ensures excellent appearance of the community.
- Populated by a healthy mix of veteran and new residents, all heavily committed to the community.
- Robust tradition and culture of neighbor helping neighbor. All look out for each other.
- Owners who care deeply about the appearance of their homes and the community.
- Vibrant and family friendly.

#### Attributes:

- Strikingly beautiful in serene and heavily arborescent setting.
- Each home different but in keeping with the Williamsburg style.
- Construction of the highest quality.
- Low maintenance, contractor landscaping.
- Just one mile and a pleasant walk to the EFC Metro.
- Easy access to major arteries and to both Reagan and Dulles.
- Steps from a revitalized Falls Church City Center.
- Best schools in the region.

## Branding

**Definition:** *The marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products*

An effective brand strategy gives you a major edge in increasingly competitive markets. But what exactly does "branding" mean? **Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be.**

Are you the innovative maverick in your industry? Or the experienced, reliable one? **Is your product the high-cost, high-quality option, or the low-cost, high-value option? You can't be both, and you can't be all things to all people. Who you are should be based to some extent on who your target customers want and need you to be.**

The foundation of your brand is your logo. Your website, packaging and promotional materials--all of which should integrate your logo--communicate your brand.

Your brand strategy is how, what, where, when and to whom you plan on communicating and delivering on your brand messages. Where you advertise is part of your brand strategy. Your distribution channels are also part of your brand strategy. And what you communicate visually and verbally is part of your brand strategy, too.

Consistent, strategic branding leads to a strong brand equity, which means the added value brought to your company's products or services that allows you to charge more for your brand than what identical, unbranded products command. The most obvious example of this is Coke vs. a generic soda. Because Coca-Cola has built a powerful brand equity, it can charge more for its product--and customers will pay that higher price.

The added value intrinsic to brand equity frequently comes in the form of perceived quality or emotional attachment. For example, Nike associates its products with star athletes, hoping customers will transfer their emotional attachment from the athlete to the product. For Nike, it's not just the shoe's features that sell the shoe.

Defining your brand is like a journey of business self-discovery. It can be difficult, time-consuming and uncomfortable. It requires, at the very least, that you answer the questions below:

- What is your company's mission?
- What are the benefits and features of your products or services?
- What do your customers and prospects already think of your company?
- What qualities do you want them to associate with your company?

Do your research. Learn the needs, habits and desires of your current and prospective customers. And don't rely on what you think they think. Know what they think.

Once you've defined your brand, how do you get the word out? Here are a few simple, time-tested tips:

- **Get a great logo.** Place it everywhere.
- **Write down your brand messaging.** What are the key messages you want to communicate about your brand? Every employee should be aware of your brand attributes.
- **Integrate your brand.** Branding extends to every aspect of your business--how you answer your phones, what you or your salespeople wear on sales calls, your e-mail signature, everything.
- **Create a "voice" for your company that reflects your brand.** This voice should be applied to all written communication and incorporated in the visual imagery of all materials, online and off. Is your brand friendly? Be conversational. Is it ritzy? Be more formal. You get the gist.

- **Develop a tagline.** Write a memorable, meaningful and concise statement that captures the essence of your brand.
- **Design templates and create brand standards for your marketing materials.** Use the same color scheme, logo placement, look and feel throughout. You don't need to be fancy, just consistent.
- **Be true to your brand.** Customers won't return to you--or refer you to someone else--if you don't deliver on your brand promise.
- **Be consistent.** This tip involves all the above and is the most important tip on this list. If you can't do this, your attempts at establishing a brand will fail.

## APPENDIX II

### Tollgate Association – Architecture Committee Meeting

Date/Time/Location: Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10am at #114 (Sauner residence)

Attendees: Jim Dau (homeowner of #115) and Architecture Committee members (Tony D’Ermes, Mark Kaye, Marie Murray, Theresa Romer, and Garry Sauner)

Purpose: To revisit the two exterior work requests from #115; namely: 1) remove the window shutters and 2) install two new vent covers for the dryer and bathroom exhaust fan on the front of their home.

Bottom Line Upfront: The Committee unanimously agreed the window shutters must remain on #115. One pair of raised panel shutters (plastic or wood) closely matching the color of the present shutters should be put up around the kitchen window at homeowner expense. Second, the Committee will allow the homeowners at #115 to install the new vent covers (Heartland 21000 dryer vent closures) only on the ground level as long as they are painted to match the color of the brick on #115. The Association’s architectural guidelines will be updated to reflect this style of vent covers are not appropriate for use elsewhere on the front façade of homes and will not be permitted more than 36 inches from the ground.

Discussion: After brief and cordial introductions Jim Dau was given an opportunity to give his perspective on the window shutters and vent covers. He first talked about the window shutters. Jim stated his preference is to keep the window shutters; however, replacing all of them is cost prohibitive. The size of each shutter is 16 1/2” wide, 67” tall, and 1” deep. He can acquire plastic and wooden shutters on Amazon.com but they are expensive and finding shutters that match exactly may be difficult. Mark Kaye recommended he contact Grainger on Gallows Road in Merrifield, as that company is an industrial supplier. Jim then opined that even if new shutters could be found relatively inexpensively, there would be a problem of matching the color to the paint color of the existing shutters. Marie asked Jim if he still had the broken shutter. Garry indicated if he kept the damaged shutter that blew off he could take it to Potomac Design and Paint on Lee Highway in Arlington, as that establishment can match new paint to the faded color of their shutters. Both Marie and Garry mentioned that the Martin Senour Williamsburg exterior paints as specified in the Association’s By Laws and Covenants are no longer being produced by Martin Senour, but are now available from Benjamin Moore. They pointed out (as the Association’s architecture guidelines state) any manufacturer’s exterior paint may be used so long as the color hue matches the Martin Senour Williamsburg exterior colors for trim and siding and the color is approved in advance by the Architecture Committee prior to application. Tony emphasized the importance of maintaining the architectural integrity and Williamsburg appearance of the neighborhood by citing previous examples of roof, front door, and other replacements.

Jim next addressed the issue of the vent covers. He emphasized the need to replace the dryer and bathroom exhaust fan vents because they are leaky, allowing cold or hot ambient air (depending on season of the year) and ants/other insects into the house. This is problematic, not efficient, and wastes energy. As a consequence he is noticing a wide variation in temperature between the floors of his home. The proposed vent covers should mitigate these difficulties somewhat and conserve energy. Jim also mentioned the trash cans placed in the front and the large bush planted next to the brick stairway should help to conceal the larger sized vent covers. Marie politely expressed to Jim that relying on the trash cans for screening was not a help to their request, citing the Association's policy regarding storage of trash cans. She added that this was briefly discussed at the Association's April Board meeting and that homeowners are not supposed to store their garbage and recycling receptacles in the front of their properties. Those articles should not be visible from the street and should be stored in either one's garage or courtyard out of sight.

Garry thanked Jim for attending and sharing his views with the Committee and asked him to please be excused so the Committee might be able to freely deliberate in executive session. The Committee then reviewed the homeowner's April 2<sup>nd</sup> explanatory e-mail and began sharing information first about shutters. Marie shared her observations about the nine homes in Tollgate that are similar in style to the Dau residence (Marie had briefly shared this information with the Board at the April meeting). Of those nine homes, three #s 112, 115 and 131 have only two windows on the upper level. The other homes of this style have either three or four windows on the upper floor. The houses with only two windows, including the Dau's, have more exposed brick and were purposefully designed to have and were built with shutters. The Dau's home and #131 also have a small window on the main level that has a decorative raised wood panel beneath the window. The shutters on this window help to frame this window/panel and balance this with the other window on this level. Marie recently met with Mr. Paul Barkley, the original architect of Tollgate, and he confirmed that the inclusion of shutters on certain homes in Tollgate was deliberate, and considered significant to the appearance of the individual home as well as the adjoining homes. The Committee then looked at a photo shop picture of #115 (see attached). The after caption depicts how the removal of shutters magnifies the appearance of the open space between the two top windows and makes the panel below the kitchen window to prominently stand out. Garry said he went to Home Depot and it stocks black plastic shutters with raised wood grain panels costing \$55 per pair in various widths and lengths. One may special order these shutters in larger sizes at a higher cost. Smoot Lumber on 6295 Edsall Road # 20 in Alexandria also has wooden shutters in various sizes. He mentioned Potomac Design and Paint on 5701 Lee Highway in Arlington strongly recommends using a bonding primer before applying paint to plastic shutters. This retailer carries Benjamin Moore exterior paint and can blend the bonding primer and surface coat to match the color of the shutters at #115. It was also mentioned that it might be possible to have a handyman who does woodworking make a shutter. For architectural integrity and aesthetic reasons, all Committee members agreed that #115 must retain its shutters. If an individual shutter cannot be found, a pair of new shutters that match the



existing shutters as closely as possible should be installed around the kitchen window and would not be an onerous expense to the homeowners. This should be accomplished this Spring or Summer.

The remaining discussion focused on consideration of the vent covers. Garry said he had hoped the Committee could see one of the new vent covers and reiterated the proposed product's dimensions are 13"x7.4"x6.6" (approximately the height, width and depth of a shoebox). He mentioned the new vent closures are larger than the traditional rectangular type vent cover with flap installed on the front façades of Tollgate homes. He showed Committee members three vent covers acquired from a home improvement store that are smaller in size and would keep rodents out. Unfortunately none of these products are very energy efficient. Marie indicated there is a vent cover in the back of #118 that may be similar in appearance to what Jim Dau is requesting and suggested looking at it. Committee members went to #118 and saw the similar vent and afterwards the Committee walked to #115. They saw the trash cans and existing vent covers. Garry held up a box over the dryer vent cover while other members looked from the driveway. It was determined the new vent covers would be not too unsightly so long as they are painted the same color as the brick on #115 and a planting is maintained as screening.

After conducting further research the Committee also unanimously decided the new vent covers are not suitable for elevations above ground level on the front of homes and recommended the architectural guidelines be modified accordingly. Front vents are currently found at houses #s 104,112, 113, 115, 123, 129, 131, and 133. Measurements were taken of the height of the ground floor vents. The vents for seven of those houses were between 8 - 27 inches from the ground. #123 had a different vent placement and had two vents at about 48 inches. These vents are in an indent next to the steps behind a very large holly.

Most of these homes have a kitchen vent on the front about 10-12 feet from the ground. In addition, the homes at # 100 and 101 have a kitchen vent on the "back" projection that is immediately next to the front of #102 and #103, respectively. These vents are not on the front of those two houses, but face the front of #102 and 103. The Heartland style vent would not be attractive or appropriate for any of these vents. Limiting the Heartland style vents to no higher than 36 inches from the ground should not present a problem. If the owners of # 123 ever want to make a change, the Committee could reasonably "grandfather" them in.

Finally, Garry mentioned he would keep the Board apprised and verbally inform Jim and NewshaDau of the Committee's decisions.