

Communications Committee Report

April 23, 2015

This has been a good year for the Communication Committee. Our website is taking shape, residents have been reminded of social events, information of things going on outside of Saratoga has been reported, our pets have been properly acknowledged, and inquiries from residents have been forwarded to those who need that information.

This would have been the extent of my report had an item under New Business not been added by a director. I must admit I felt blindsided when I saw it since I had no idea there was a problem with what I have been doing that would require board action.

So I called Dave Guilliams 2 days ago to find out what he wanted to know. After our conversation, I thought I needed to share with the Board some of the information we discussed as well.

As most of you know, I've been handling communications for Saratoga since 2006 and will be starting my 9th year next fall. As mentioned at the annual meeting, it started as a typed page that was hand delivered door-to-door to what it is today.

One of the first things Dave asked was what is the difference between Board Briefs and Board Minutes. Board Briefs are an immediate way to inform residents of what happened at a board meeting before minutes are approved, which often takes a month after a meeting. Also, they are different from minutes inasmuch as they tell what happened in a way similar to a news story.

We have always had Board Briefs --- even when newsletters were published.

To give you the background on the oversight involved with the Board Briefs, it goes like this:

- I usually write them and publish them on our web page.
- Then I let the board president know before I make residents aware so he can provide input on things that might need to be changed.

More often than not they were accepted as published. The only time there was a problem was in December when the president wanted to censor what had been posted. We went back and forth, tweaked them a little, and finally agreed to disagree.

When my husband was elected president of the board I knew right away that I had to have input from more than just the president. So I asked Jan Scott as secretary to look them over, asking her to look for 3 things: accuracy, correctness and objectivity. I wanted them to **accurately** reflect what had happened during the meeting. I wanted them to be **correct** as far as grammar and spelling goes. And I wanted them **not** to show any bias.

During our conversation Dave questioned whether old Board Briefs should be listed on the website once minutes have been approved. My feeling is yes. Board Briefs tell more of a story; minutes explain what happened with little narrative.

The question of whether I needed a co-chair for the web page was also brought up. My response is no. I have a master's degree in technology and had been the Webmaster of a middle school of 1,200 students for 5 years. We are a small community

of 96 units, so the need for collaboration is not necessary like it would be in a school setting or in the corporate world. Our website is rather simple. To have a co-chair would require more time on my part and quite frankly I'm not willing to spend any more time than I already do.

Now it isn't that I entirely work alone. I have someone who helps take pictures and when the community directory is published every other year, I have a committee who works on it with me.

I know there are errors from time-to-time, despite my trying to keep them to a minimum. But keep in mind the last community directory had several mistakes- and there were 3 people working on it.

In closing, I asked Dave why hadn't he called me with these questions rather than putting this item on a board agenda. He said he didn't want to disturb me. I can't think of anything more disturbing than seeing this item on tonight's agenda.

To me, having an item on an agenda under new or old business indicates some action is expected to be taken by the board. Otherwise the matter could be addressed when a report is given.

Like all of you sitting at the table, I'm just a volunteer. I don't get paid and I give up quite a bit of my free time to keep everyone in Saratoga informed. I think I've done a pretty good job.

In return, I think I should be given the courtesy of a phone call or an e-mail if there are any concerns about what I do

rather than finding out there is some issue with my work when I send out an agenda.

Thank you.