

**VILLAGE OF GROSSE POINTE SHORES, A MICHIGAN CITY
MINUTES OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE MEETING
November 13, 2012**

A meeting of the Ambassador Committee of the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City, was held on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 in the Council Chambers of the Grosse Pointe Shores Municipal Building.

Present:

DJ Boehm, Chair
Madeleine Phillips, Member and Recording Secretary
Chace Wakefield, Member
Kay Felt, Council Liaison
Mark Wollenweber, City Manager

Absent:

Gloria Anton, Member
Alex Lucido, Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The revised minutes of the October 9, 2012 Ambassador Committee Meeting were approved.

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Realtor Conversation Action Items

1. Vacant Homes Update

Due to Alex Lucido's absence, the vacant homes update will be postponed until the next regular meeting.

2. Open House Sign Ordinance

At the October 10th City Council meeting, the open house sign ordinance discussion didn't go well, in spite of Alex Lucido's presentation. Some property owners apologized to Alex Lucido after the meeting, not realizing that they have the right to turn down open house signs on their private property. Real estate agents affirm that the signs bring in people and do help sell homes.

It was reported that Councilman Bruce Bisballe thought he saw an open house sign on Monday, November 12. Chace Wakefield stated that there are realtor open houses during the week; however, the signs are placed only on the property of the home being shown to other realtors.

The Open House Direction Signs will not be on the December agenda, but may be

considered in January. Kay Felt suggested that one, well-constructed summary of the issue to be sent in email form to the Council members. When the meeting does take place in January, others who endorse the use of the signs should attend the meeting to support the ordinance change.

The committee suggested several revisions to Zoning Ordinance Amendment included in the following text:

Section 40-331. Signs:

*(a) (7) “Open House **Direction Signs.** Signs which indicate the **directions to a particular residence that is open for public viewing may be placed on Sundays between 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** Such signs may not exceed seven square feet in size. The signs may be located between the sidewalk and the curb of the street, or, if being placed where no sidewalk exists, no closer than five feet from the street. Such signs must be placed in such a way as to avoid creating a traffic hazard or a nuisance or inconvenience to the neighborhood. Open House **direction signs may be located on private property only with the permission of the property owner.** **Open house direction signs may not be placed on the Lakeshore Road median.** Open house **direction signs** which comply with the requirements of this section may be placed on public property without permission from the City. **Listing realtors whose open house direction signs do not comply with these requirements will be subject to a penalty fine determined by the City.***

3. Schools Update

The Board of Realtors held an open house with the Grosse Pointe Public Schools on Sunday, November 11, 2012, as reported in the *Grosse Pointe News*. The goal is to encourage private and parochial students to register in and attend schools in the public school system.

B. Current Real Estate Market Perspective

Per Chace Wakefield, a total of 195 houses are on the market in all of the Grosse Pointes. This is the lowest inventory in a very long time. Eight hundred homes were for sale at the worst of the real estate sales crisis. Sales in the five Pointes are up 8-10 percent and homes on the “edges” are selling rapidly. The market is beginning to stabilize, and the forecast for next year promises to be better. Detroit real estate has recovered faster than the nation in general.

C. Advertising and Promotion Discussion

1. City Website

DJ Boehm presented a wireframe concept for the City website that included the items that the committee recommended at the October meeting. Suggested additions included taxes and assessment data, wide range of housing affordability,

creative ways to arrange options, price index, and a link to research a range of years and home sales. Mark Wollendweber invited any member of the committee to attend the City website redesign discussion.

***Action Item.** DJ Boehm will attend the City website redesign discussion on November 14th at 10 AM.*

2. Book Update

Mark Wollenweber said that the City plans to pay something to the “*Grosse Pointe Shores*” book’s author. It is presumed that the City will receive book royalties, no matter how modest. However, the author is proposing not to charge the City anything for the work and would accept payment from royalties. The author would do all the copyright paperwork, etc. The City will determine the appropriate arrangement with the author and the publishing company.

City residents should submit pictures and testimonials for the book. Kay Felt has been in contact with the Osius family and received pictures and other memorabilia that will enhance the book.

When we are aware of the book chapter titles, we can encourage photos that are relevant to those chapters.

***Action Item.** Encourage residents and former residents to supply pictures and/or testimonials for the book (All).*

3. Tile

Mark Wollenweber, is still pursuing a local artist for the tile project. Brett Smith may make the mould. In case that artist doesn’t work out, Motawi Tileworks (trained at Pewabic Pottery) may be another option.

***Action Item.** DJ Boehm will give the Motawi Tileworks custom tile contact information to Mark Wollenweber.*

4. Tagline Brainstorming

In no particular order, here are some of the key words suggested by Committee members in the brainstorming session: small town; resort tranquility; big city living, small town feel; charm, exceptional; city life, small town living. The taglines suggested included:

- Love where you live, Live where you love
- Timeless beauty, exceptional charm
- City activity, lakeside tranquility (suggested post-meeting)
- Big city living, small town charm (most popular during the meeting)

Action Item. The committee will revisit the tagline suggestions at the next meeting (All)

5. Other

a. City Pins

The Grosse Pointe Shores logo is too complicated to be fashioned into a pin. The idea to develop paper cubes with our logo was discussed.

b. Collections

The City is collecting canned goods, coats, pet food and towels for the Capuchins and the Michigan Humane Society. Donations boxes are in the City offices.

D. December Meeting

Due to both scheduling conflicts and the busy holiday season, the committee agreed that the December meeting will be cancelled.

DJ Boehm and Kay Felt both thanked the committee members for their hard work and many contributions in 2012.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 A.M.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Ambassador Committee is Tuesday, January 8, 2013, at 10:00 AM in the Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Madeleine Phillips, Member and Recording Secretary