

ASSOCIATION and METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

Joint Long Range Planning Committee Zoom Work Session

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Agenda

Chairpersons: HGA – David Kennedy Co-Chair; HGMD – TBD

Staff: Jon Rea (CEO)

- 1) Call meeting to order
- 2) Unfinished Business:
 - Report Format Template and Review of Vetted Long Range Planning Topics
 - Community Wide Fire Safety Plan: New (2nd) Draft by David Beck
- 3) New Business: Preparation of Reports to Board(s)
 - Prepare 1-2 Page Introduction: Sid Vollema 2nd Draft
 - Define Format
 - Set Date for Presentation to Board
- 4) Residents wishing to speak on non-agenda items
- 5) Adjournment

Residents wishing to speak on agenda items will be given the opportunity at the time the item is discussed.

DRAFT 2: 01/10/23)

JOINT LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: FIRE SAFETY: The potential for a fire to cause life altering health issues, death, a disruption to the peaceful enjoyment of property, or emotional distress associated with the subsequent demands fiscally and legally all, in and of themselves, are important reasons to ensure that a comprehensive fire prevention, response, and education system be, is not only in place, but regularly discussed and practiced. The Joint Long Range Planning Committee recommends that the Boards consider a full-scale review of the current plan regarding fire suppression equipment, alarms, communications, policy, education, and evacuation rehearsal practice with appropriate enhancements made to improve the safety of residents.

Definition: Heather Gardens is a community with a variety of architectural structures and specialized spaces that each present their own unique fire safety challenges. The commercial kitchen presents challenges different from those present in the maintenance shop. Multi-story buildings present challenges different from those found in patio or town homes. Buildings built in the 1970's do not have the added safety of modern fire suppression systems. For every space, the challenge is unique. A comprehensive plan must address all challenges.

Heather Gardens residents vary greatly in ambulatory capabilities, cognitive acuity, and memory function. Fire safety plans must be written for not only the most robust in our community but particularly for those who are coping with declines that alter their ability to understand, recall, and comply with safety protocols.

The Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee is charged with developing policies and practices for adoption by the Boards addressing the safety and welfare of residents and guests and the protection of all property. Comprehensive emergency preparedness plans to assist residents in the event of a disabling incident or natural disaster are part of the charge given this committee. The Committee has addressed these issues, and on paper, there is a plan. But having a plan on paper, in and of itself is not sufficient, useful, and truly comprehensive. The JLTPC has entertained reports, that in respect to the plan on file, resident awareness is lacking, resident education and training is lacking, and certain residents are physically lacking in their capacity to respond? There are multiple versions of fire safety instructions, often contradicting themselves, and no practice in place to ensure that residents have a copy of the current plan in hand, are fully aware of how and when to respond, and have no training in accord with the plan. Failure to have full implementation of the plan, compromises the integrity of the plan, and compromise the potential benefit of the plan, and creates avoidable risk to person and property.

Education is a key component to any fire safety plan or any other type of safety plan, i.e., active shooters, bomb threats, gas leak, weather related disaster. As offered, there is mention of the fire evacuation plan in the "Orientation Program" benefiting those who attend. The Resident Orientation Handbook does dedicate a full page to the subject and recommends posting the information in a conspicuous location. Yet, the information itself is unclear, possibly contradictory, incomplete, and therefore potentially confusing: something undesirable at the time of an actual fire. Paraphrasing.

“Report a fire: call 911”. If there is smoke or fire in your unit: “get out safely”, “activate the alarm if (if applicable)”.

“When the Alarm Sounds (**Remain in your unit**)”. “If you don’t smell smoke or see fire (stay put).” “Use the end stairwells if possible”. “Fire Department and security personnel will assist handicapped residents evacuate accordingly.”

So, do you go or stay? “Use the end stairwells: Don’t use the center stairwell as that is reserved for firefighters.” If you must evacuate, who will instruct you to do so? Who will direct you to a safe egress? Security will assist with “handicapped” evacuations, but nowhere does it indicate how and when security is notified. Who helps with other residents? Who decides to evacuate? Who gives the “all clear”?

How does this apply to the club house? Maintenance building? Golf shop? Town homes? Patio homes?

One page in the middle of the handbook may not be sufficient. One mention at orientation does not seem to be sufficient education. The directions in the handbook seem to be pointed to the multi-story buildings. As such the adequacy of the publication and training are questionable. Is the fire training at orientation something that will remember one year, five years, or twenty years after moving in? There is a more comprehensive plan with detail in the security office. How do residents become familiar with the full plan? How can there be a timely response by security when residents are not instructed to contract security in case of fire?

In general, having a plan is not the same as operationalizing the plan. In an emergency, such as a fire, it is education and the repetition of action steps to be taken that increases the likelihood of a safe result. The Boards are encouraged to enhance the fire suppression systems in all buildings, and take more complete steps to operationalize plans, update publications and encourage the rehearsal of best practices.

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The JLTPC recognizes that the Boards and committees, having been charged with the safety of residents and guests, have put a consistent and ongoing effort to address safety concerns. Our review has determined that there appear to be areas that need to be addressed or revisited to enhance the safety of the community as it relates to fire safety.

The current system of resident education needs reconsideration. The written information is not clear, is lacking in detail, is potentially contradictory, fails to include instruction as to when to contract security and relies on the assumption that someone else called the fire department. It employs a one and done educational approach that is, if a resident attends orientation.

The lack of fire suppression equipment in multi-story buildings is of concern and a plan to improve/install such equipment should be considered.

The current plan lacks a discernable multi-tiered system for ensuring the fire department and security are notified in a timely manner: the residents roll in this must be made clear. Redundancy is key, as time is essential.

The system currently in place lacks any requirement for buildings to regularly review and practice fire related practices. Given the frequent changes in the population across the residences it is not likely that all residents will be well versed in proper fire safety practices if not regularly made aware of what are the best practices regarding fire emergencies. There is no easily identifiable means to self-identify as a person who is “handicapped” and requires evacuation assistance. Nor is there clear direction for action should a person have a change in health status, permanent or temporary, on how to let the fire department or security know that evacuation assistance will be needed.

Highly developed emergency preparedness, including fire prevention and safety potentially reduces risk and may have a positive impact on insurance rates for the Boards and ownership.

There may be additional areas where consideration be given to prevention and response type items. Should all kitchen remodels include the installation of fire suppression hoods? Should all units be required to have ABC type fire extinguishers? Should there be a training session on how to properly use fire extinguishers?

PROJECT STRUCTURE

The JLTPC recognizes that multiple committees can make a positive impact on fire safety in respect to safety, communications, and education and that enhancement of the current plan may require the working across committees to achieve a truly comprehensive plan and impactful system of education and training.

Phase I: Establish the lead committee to update and enhance the comprehensive fire safety plan.

- a. conduct an internal review process to fully identify strengths and weaknesses of the current plan.
- b. determine what plans are already in place or under consideration for improvement to the current plan.
- c. Create a work prioritized work plan based on findings.

Phase II: As appropriate consult with outside authorities and experts to address needs.

- a. Aurora fire department.
- b. insurance carrier
- c. others as appropriate

Phase III. Establishment of new education and training programs for residents and staff.

- a. regular review of policy and best practices ensuring elements are applicable to all residential and common spaces
- b. implement practice fire response exercises for residents.

- c. create methods for reminding residents of policy and practice.
- d. establish a system for the identification of those who need evacuation assistance.

Phase IV: Establish a plan for timely review and updates of fires safety plans.

- a. broadly distribute the plan
- b. annually report the completion of the offering and completions of training

Conclusion

Of the many threats to the peaceful enjoyment of the residences and amenities to be had at Heather Gardens and through the Heather Gardens Municipal District, perhaps none is more frightening and devastating than fire. Though fire cannot be absolutely prevented, a proper safety plan that takes advantage of mechanical means to reduce the impact of fire, state of the art preventive measures, and well developed, taught, and practiced response pattern can potentially limit the tragic impact of fire. The questions raised leading to this recommendation did not question the existence of a plan, or the thoughtful work that supports the plan, but rather, it raised questions asking if the plan is sufficiently comprehensive, does what is reasonable and prudent in educating residents, and incorporates all possible mechanical devices to help achieve the goal of reducing the risk of a catastrophic fire related event. To this end, our sense is that there is more that can be done. Some expensive, some quite inexpensive, and all worthy of consideration to create an even safer Heather Gardens community.

Joint Long Range Planning Committee Recommendation

To: *{Heather Gardens Association (HGA) Board and/or Heather Gardens Metropolitan (HGMD) District Board}*

From: Joint Long Range Planning Committee (JLRPC)

Date: *{Date}*

Subject: Long Range Planning Project approval request.

Recommendation:

The JLRP Committee recommends the *{Heather Gardens Association Board and/or the HGMD Board}* to:

- 1- Approve the *{Project, Program, Task}* (See Attachment)
- 2- *{Assign project to an existing committee, set-up a dedicated project team, and assign a project lead}*
- 3- *{Assign a project sponsor from the Board(s)}*
- 4- *{etc.}*

In the Attachment you can find the details of: The *{Project, Program, Task}*, our assessment, and our project management recommendations.

In case the Board(s) needs additional information, please describe what needs to be clarified and return this recommendation back to the JLRPC. The Committee will provide the requested information and resend the recommendation and ask the Board to reconsider.

In case the Board(s) disapproves our recommendation we respectfully request for the reason(s) why, in order to document the decision regarding the *{Project, Program, Task}* for future reference.

For your information, you can find below a summary of our work cycle and the Vision and Mission of the JLRP Committee.

The JLRPC Work Cycle:

This *{Project, Program, Task}* was identified by the JLRPC as relevant to the long range planning concerns of the *{Heather Gardens Association} {and Heather Gardens Metropolitan District}*.

The JLRPC came to this conclusion after applying a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Analysis and subsequently assessing/rating the *{Project, Program, Task}* by using the *{Filter name}* Filter.

The JLRPC Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision:

To be the most desirable senior living community in the greater Metro area. To provide safe, affordable, high quality and diverse housing alternatives with inclusive activities and amenities to support an active

lifestyle. Heather Gardens strives to be a financially sound community with a superb management and support infrastructure.

Mission:

It is the purpose of Heather Gardens Home Owners Association and the Heather Gardens Metropolitan District in concert with the residents to provide a safe, structurally, and financially sound, beautiful, caring, and compassionate home environment for the owners and residents of the community. It is the duty of the two mutually dependent organizations to provide first class amenities, recreational opportunities, staff and management to sustain the inherent value of the community.