



THUNDERBIRD PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION



Photo by George Evans

Winter 2023 ISSUE

PO BOX 1263 , Robbinsville, NC 28771

OFFICERS (2022 – 2023)

President.....Bette LoBue (727-519-3902)

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Vice President...Bill Piel (305-238-7836)

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Secretary.....Carolyn Piel (828-479-9010)

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Treasurer.....Beth Carlton (828-479-3664)

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SANTEETLAH TOWN COUNCIL

Connie Gross, Mayor

Ralph Mitchell, Vice Mayor

Tina Emerson, Chief Finance Officer

Diana Simon, Councilwoman

Jim Hager, Councilman

NOTICE TO READERS:

Please note the correct address
for TPOA is:

TPOA

P.O. Box 1263

Robbinsville, NC 28771

This is the only address at
which membership renewals
and election ballots will be re-
ceived and considered valid.
Thank you again for your sup-
port!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now that the new year is settling in, it is time to reflect on TPOA's accomplishments during the past twelve months and offer a peek into the awesome new direction we are taking in the new fiscal year this spring!



I am most pleased with the fresh stream of new volunteers who have stepped forward to serve on one or more committees or who were nominated for the incoming TPOA Executive Board, infusing TPOA with fresh ideas and goals as we move our organization forward.

I want to personally applaud the continuing work of the Focus Committee and their suggestions for better communication techniques and more effective use of the technical tools that are now available to us. Heartfelt thanks also go out to the Planning Committee for planning and executing two outstanding social events, helping with in-person and zoom meeting setups, and arranging for interesting speakers.

TPOA's five-pronged mission is to keep residents informed, protect the beauty of our community, retain property values, enhance community relationships, and create opportunities for members to connect and exchange resources. (All while promoting fun at the lake!)

Here's what TPOA has accomplished this year with your support:

*Kept residents informed of developments within the Town of Lake Santeetlah, including a call by a majority of council members to eliminate all zoning. TPOA members responded, providing input to TOLS to preserve zoning by sending letters and emails, and sharing their comments at a public meeting.

*Helped to preserve the beauty of the community through litter pickups, a lake cleanup project, and the spearheading of a fundraiser for the front entrance project. Several members actively participated in planting and other aspects of this community effort.

*Promoted positive community relations in Graham County through our annual Green Elephant Fundraiser, which provided donations to several charities serving children and adults.

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TPOA Board and committee members are looking ahead to 2023 plans, which include strengthening the effectiveness of our association and utilizing new, online methods to connect and inform members. TPOA has planned a smooth transition from our experienced officers to new candidates with leadership experience. To that effect, the nominating committee has recommended a slate that includes current and new officers, committed to strengthening TPOA.

We urge you to join with us by sending in your annual membership dues and remembering to vote. Be sure to include your contact information and ballot. Your vote and personal information will be kept confidential. We appreciate and value your support. Here's to a successful 2023!

Sincerely,

Bette LaBue

Planning Committee Report

Frances Connor

The TPOA Planning Committee is hunkered down this Winter, dreaming of our warmer weather get togethers. We will kick off the summer with a Welcome Back Party in early June, with food and drink provided to all! This has proven to be a fun way to get caught up with old and new friends, and to make plans for the summer on our beautiful lake. Several ideas are being considered for other events for 2023, and we would welcome any suggestions. Everyone who attended enjoyed our band party, and we would love to repeat this event if possible. Please direct any ideas to the committee either by phone, email or through the TPOA Board! Best to all for 2023!

[Committee: Frances Connor, Rebecca Block, Keith Predmore, Mary Roemer]

Focus Committee

Greg Connor and Susan Robinson

The Focus Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the TPOA Executive Board. Its mission is to ensure that TPOA remains a vibrant association that informs members, builds community, and protects property values and natural surroundings. The group is made up of homeowners from around the mountain: short- and long-term, part- and full-time residents. A key objective is to increase TPOA's capacity to deliver timely, relevant, and viable information to members.

This year we conducted analyses of TPOA's strengths and weaknesses (known as a SWOT analysis). We found great opportunities to better serve our members using updated on-line tools. These include ways to enable members to join or renew membership on-line, update information, and share resources. This year, pending support from the new executive board, we will select the most cost-effective and easy-to-use resources to enhance TPOA's service to its members.

To strengthen TPOA's leadership, we also looked at what's called "succession planning" in the corporate world; that is, making sure new talent is brought on board without disruption to the organization. To that end, we recruited persons with experience running neighborhood organizations to join with existing long-serving officers to complete the slate of recommended officers. We are confident this slate of officers will work well together to modernize and strengthen our association.

We have enjoyed camaraderie while researching ways to best serve our members and modernize TPOA. Watch for new developments over the coming months and ways for you to share your thoughts.

This is one of the best times ever to join TPOA or to renew! Membership support is critical to keep these positive developments going! Wishing you and your family a wonderful 2023.

Adopt-a-Highway

Beth Carlton

The shady, tree-lined approach to our Town entrance from Route 129 is kept litter free throughout the warmer months by faithful volunteers from TPOA. As a part of the NCDOT Adopt-A-Highway program for over 30 years, we have met monthly to collect trash that accumulates along this approach road and on Route 129 between Thunderbird Mountain Road and the Lake Santeetlah Community Center. All you need to participate are gloves, insect repellent and a desire to present your Town in the best light possible. The group heads out at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday mornings

[Adopt-a-highway continued from page 2]

after the monthly general membership meetings, taking approximately an hour to clean up the roadsides. It is excellent exercise in the company of like-minded neighbors, and you never know what interesting items you might discover while helping to keep our roadways beautiful!

Green Elephant

Beth Carlton

The Green Elephant Fund is TPOA's way of giving back to the Graham County community for the opportunity of sharing the beauty of Lake Santeetlah each year. Our members generously donate over \$5,000 annually to be divided among programs at the schools, volunteer fire departments, the Humane Society, food distribution programs, and the public library. In August the Executive Board recommends prospective recipients, and members approve the donations to be made throughout the county. It is a wonderful way to show our appreciation. Thank you for your support!

Mayor's Corner

Connie Gross



As you know, the Town Council attempted to have its regularly scheduled meeting on December 8, 2022. Due to illness of staff and council members, we had to move the meeting to the following week. Per our Government handbook, without a vote to reschedule we must move on to the next scheduled town meeting date which would have been January 12, 2023, at 5:30 pm. As it turned out, this meeting had to be cancelled as well, due to the lack of a quorum. Each meeting takes time to plan and organize, including the sending of emails and scanning supporting documentation. There is a lot of work put in by our office staff for each meeting.

Along with daily town business, the Town Council is in the final process required to use the state Covid funds (APRA), and we must vote on these resolutions to complete the next required steps. In addition, it is almost budget planning time.

Because of the major water leak in December, I met with Graham County Fire Chief Eller about the concerns for fire protection. Now in the event that our fire hydrants cannot perform, dispatch will be notified. I have been checking into the SCADA system which would allow our technician to read the water level at the tank from anywhere and being alerted if a leak occurs.

Our town technician has successfully completed approximately 24 hours of training for the North Carolina Water Distribution Level 1 system. Our water system is a level 2 operation and Scott plans to attend as soon as training becomes available. Kim and Emily have also attended approximately 50 hours of training so far.

We are getting closer to implementing the new Edmunds financial computer program. One of my goals is to have an efficient all-around user-friendly water billing system and maintain our own payroll, saving time and money. Further, I hope to improve our town website to include videos of council meetings.

This past year was all about infrastructure. Some of the town tax dollars were spent to improve roads, re-roof town hall, buy a new financial computer program, upgrade the water-reading system and repair and replace a pump. I am equally pleased with the recognition we received for participating in County and Robbinsville events. It takes many hands to make a town run. I appreciate everyone's help.

Sincerely,

Connie Gross

