



HSVPOA Board Retreat Programs and Operations Director Report

Description

Stephanie Heffer, Director of Programs and Operations reported to the Hot Springs Village Property Owners' Association Board of Directors at the Board Retreat on May 12, 2021.

Stephanie's opening line was, "between Jason Miller, Ricky Middleton, and herself, we have 98 years of service with Hot Springs Village POA. I am in my 31st year. Believe it or not, I used to be the youngest person in the organization and I've grown into one of the olders – the elders."

Programs and Operations

Stephanie is over 92 employees in Operations. Seventy percent of the employees are full-time.

Programs and Operations bring in 2.7 million dollars a year in revenue with expenses being 6.9 million dollars. Many of the divisions such as marketing and the gates are not revenue generators. Trails and other things also do not generate revenue, but "they are part of what makes Hot Springs Village what it is."

Programs and Operations has a \$500,000 capital budget. The biggest number in this category is the pickleball repairs. This is \$120,000. They are well on their way to correcting the pickleball problems.

Programs and Operations encompasses a number of divisions:

- Development
- Compliance
- Permitting
- Inspections
- Gates

(Note: It also appears Stephanie is over Food and Beverage, but she didn't say this at this point, unless I missed it.) She discusses Food and Beverage a little later.

Responsibilities in Programs and Operations

Director Heffer said that they will watch the new home trend and they anticipate seeing a plateau fairly soon. Stephanie has oversight over commercial and residential development.

Stephanie said she spends a lot of time in lot strategy, lot monitoring (what's happening with our properties). She also deals with new homes and permitting for home improvements. Last year through this period, we had 17 new home permits. We are at 51 for 2021. New homes are going up, which is great news. The small permits have declined around 50 percent from 2020.

Compliance

The director said, "security is of the utmost importance to the community. I feel that way as well and the Compliance Division, in particular, I think the work that they do is so critical to the overall lifestyle of Hot Springs Village and maintaining our property values. Really, that is all we are about is making sure that we are following the rules and not letting properties go into disrepair, things like that, that will bring other property values down – which equates to low rent – which equates to lower housing prices... Compliance for me is one of the more important elements of my job. "Compliance is about adherence to policy.

The Compliance Division works closely with the Police Department. Heffer said, "I am thankful to Ricky {Chief Middleton} for his support."

Marketing, Tourism, Real Estate and Discovery are self explanatory

Food and Beverage

We have outsourced the majority of the Food and Beverage operation. We still have Balboa Club, the Coronado Cafe, and Magellan's. These are all very small operations, each having just a few employees.

Explore Group is managing three of our restaurants. There are also two other independents.

Parks and Recreation

This is a big division. "There are a number of cost centers in there that have really very little in terms of employees, but they have expenses and revenue generators, so we track all of that separately," explained Stephanie.

Stephanie said, “it is a balance between managing the amenities that we have and then programming the ones that we want to make sure are active and creating interesting things for our members to do as part of life in the Village.”

Marketing

This topic will be addressed separately later in the Retreat.

Communications

This is what we present via the Digests, press releases, information to the Village Voice and communications in the Advocate Magazine. Stephanie said, “we are constantly looking for ways to improve.”

Discovery Packages/Real Estate Acquisitions/Partner Program

These are very strong. In the Partner Program we have seen 20-30 lot sales so far this year. Internally, we have sold about 35 of our POA owned lots. We have booked around 55 Discovery Packages this year. (This numbers are estimates.)

Standing Committees

Architectural Control Committee

This is a working committee with seven members. The committee members are assigned permits that come through the POA. The committee members go out to the homes and follow up on the permits and come back with recommendations on whether to approve or deny. Stephanie explained, “our job is to approve. We hardly ever deny permits. But if it does happen, we look for ways to find solutions to whatever they want to do. It doesn’t necessarily meet our guidelines, working with the property owners” said Heffer.”

Marketing Committee

The Marketing Committee is under discussion right now. We’re trying to plan for the future there. We’ve had sort of a diminishing number of folks that have been interested. We have a pretty good plan going forward. We will talk about that a little bit later, too.

Recreation Committee

The Parks and Recreation Committee is chaired by Jim Betts. Stephanie said, “this is a standing committee that provides a ton of research, recommendations and advice to us.”

Trails Committee

The Trails Committee is a working committee. Heffer said, “they are physically out there walking, monitoring, picking up trash, reporting problems [on the trails]. They bring shovels and rakes and they are very much part of the team.”

Governmental Affairs Committee

Stephanie Heffer sits on the Governmental Affairs Committee [GAC]. Heffer said, “I think, traditionally in the past that was the General Manager. And John [Paul] may take a more active role in that, going forward. I don’t know. What a great committee! I have learned a lot...They are just so very active in the region. And that is very interesting to see how we impact the region and how the region responds to us.”

Heffer continued, “last week we had Senator Sample in the room with us and Representatives McGrew...We have our board superintendents that sit on that committee. It is just such a wealth of information...Justice of the Peace....I love working with that group.”

“I think probably their main project right now is the Economic Impact Study that will be coming out on the heels of the census – information coming back to us. We’ll be pulling a bunch of information from the office to supply to those guys and gals that...Anyway, what a great committee! Love working with those folks,” said Stephanie.

“Personally, I sit as a representative for Hot Springs Village on our “50 for the Future,” in Hot Springs, the Hot Springs Metro Partnership Board, I am a Board Member on that, as well and a Board Member on the Hot Springs Village Community Foundation. Hopefully, bring information to them and bring information back to the Village from those groups,” stated Heffer.

Capital Projects

Desoto Beach – seawall work

Pickleball resurfacing – “There is a lot of information out there. Some of it true, some not. There is a concern that the subsurface, the concrete pour was bad. That is not the case. We have done a number of technical...Jason, [Temple] do you care to back me on this? We’ve had Terracon Engineering Services out. [Click [here](#) to visit the Terracon Engineering Website.] They did core samples, testing water, testing drainage, testing the vapor barrier. All of those things have tested out. The concrete is good. The concrete is fine.”

“What we have is a layered material on top of those pours that did not perform well in our climate, with our moisture content and our air, the heat, a number of things have created that problem.”

“We, in all of our research, and we’ve been doing it for a couple of years now, don’t have any faith or good expectation of pulling that up and putting another surface on. That would not perform better than what this one has done.”

“What we are doing now and what we are bidding out, will be going out to bid for this week in fact, is the removal of all of that cushion surface on the top of our courts, taking it back down, resetting that concrete pad and then resurfacing it with just a normal tennis court, pickleball court type of a surface.”

“The [Pickleball Club](#) has been involved every step of the way. [Click [here](#) to visit the Pickleball Club website.] Jim Betts, Greg Allen, they are part of the team. They meet with us. They are reviewing the specifications. They have given us vendors to work with and talk to. We feel really good about where we are going and they feel good about it, too. We’re hopeful that we will have a long-term solution very, very soon.”

Waypoint – There is a lot of work going on at Waypoint:

- Landscaping
- Fencing
- Boat dock repairs
- Fishing pier repairs
- Boat slip repairs

Waypoint is set to reopen actually in a few days. [May 15, 2021]

Ponce de Leon Center and the Woodlands

“The EIFS repair is happening now [Click [here](#) to learn about EIFS.] They are patching and correcting the surface cracks and will be repainting. We are going back with a...it’s three colors there now. It is faded and hard to tell what those original colors were, but they were green, peach, and burgundy, actually. You wouldn’t think that, looking at it now. But we have the original colors. It is kind of interesting. We’re going back with three colors, again, but different, blue, gray and tan. They are neutral colors. It will be very pretty, I think. We had the support and recommendation from our [Arts Council](#) in choosing those colors. We feel good about that.”

Bocce Ball

“A project that is not yet started, bocce ball. Their building is very, very old. For those of you who have not been here as long as me, where the bocce and lawn bowling is, that used to be a softball field. I played on there, probably 30 years ago. But the same building was there when it was a softball field – a little storage unit and one little bathroom. It is very old and it will be repaired.

Fitness Center

There are plans for work at the fitness center on the pool and hot tub.

Outdoor Pool

The outdoor pool is set to reopen at the end of the month...We're still under warranty on that project and the company has been very, very good to work with us about any kind of warranty work. We had a few just little hairline cracks, which is to be expected. It's a concrete pool. They came back with just a little bit of patching and that sort of thing. No leaks or anything like that. Just little hairline cracks. When they patched and repainted, the color was off, because it had faded over the course of last year and the chlorine that was in the pool. We asked them to come back. They sandblasted the pool this last week – took all that original paint off – repainted the whole pool. They have corrected all of those deficiencies. We found one valve that has a crack in the plumbing, also under warranty that is being corrected now. But, we are set to open on schedule and we should be good."

John Paul said, "all of that was at their cost."

The warranty is for one year.

Stephanie said, "we need to do a better job of planning for routine repainting and routine...every five to seven years, the Woodlands needs to be..."

Director Omohundro said, "the cracks are going to happen. It's going to be established in the first year. It goes to expansion, contraction, the cracks..."

Obstacles

Funding Obstacle

"I would agree on the obstacles being funding and time...we are under funded and we do have deferred maintenance and we do have deferred projects and we want to do them. All of us have the best intentions and we just simply don't have cash. So many of the projects that you see on your budgets today have been there for years, and years, and years. Really. They just keep getting kicked. Keep getting pushed. Keep getting pushed. We have repairs that need to be done to the tennis courts, for example. The hard courts that are way past due. Those courts are almost dangerous. We did this in the past with the pool before we rebuilt the pool. We went years and years saying we need to do something with this pool. It's in imminent danger of collapse. And it did. It did. We didn't fund it. We kept pushing it out because we didn't have the money.

"I think it's just such an interesting time. I do think we have the leadership in place to make it happen. We've right-sized the top line, I think. John [Paul], to your credit, that seems to be good now. And so we can focus on the work and getting the right people doing the work. We're anxious to head down that path with everybody and get it working."

Time Obstacle

"Time is for sure always a challenge, too. We've reduced the top line, we need to increase the bottom. The workforce needs to come up to par so that we have enough bodies out there getting the work done. You've heard from all of us. We're all short. We're all short-handed. I'm short-handed in our

grounds maintenance crew that do all our flower beds, trails, and parking lot blowing...We are short three people in that division. Part-time folks are getting even harder to find and come by."

Goals

Stephanie agrees with Director Jones on goals and making them smart. Stephanie said, "what we've typically done as an organization is taking our lead from the Board and I know you guys are talking about goals tomorrow. When you get a good set of corporate goals, it really forms the direction that we take our divisions, collectively. We will build our goals, based on your direction. While we have goals and work plans and programs with measurable time frames and that sort of thing, they may change based on what you guys tell us...We'll be excited to get your comments."

Questions on Regional Connections

Director McLeod asked, "What is 'Hot Springs 50' for the future Board? What is that?"

Stephanie said, it is a group of people in Hot Springs that basically look for...I am a brand new Board Member on that. I have been to one meeting and it was Zoom, so I am just getting up to speed myself. It really is more a regional thing. They don't have a lot to do with Hot Springs Village. It is staying connected to the Hot Springs community and what is happening there..."

Property Owner, Marcy Mermel, asked, "Stephanie, we are also a major member of the Hot Springs Chamber, as well..."

Stephanie said, "we are, we are."

Mermel asked, "can you explain why we are so engaged in three or four or even five of the Hot Springs economic development societies?"

Heffer said, "yeah and I would tell you again that this comes from past direction. From past Boards and this Board may have a different feel about it, but the 2016 Economic Impact Study revealed that Hot Springs Village contributes almost \$400 million annually to the local economy. I am talking Benton and Hot Springs, basically. We are a player in that environment. We have a bypass coming to the Highway 5 and 7 junction because of our contribution and our interaction with those groups. So we felt, and I still feel that it is important that we stay connected to those influencers and people on either side of our gates, really. In the Chamber, Kevin Sexton, he sits on the Hot Springs Chamber Board. He participates in the Saline County/Benton Chamber, as well. He comes to us with a wealth of knowledge. He came from the Arkansas Government – Parks and Tourism Economic Development Commission and continues to keep us very connected to those groups, which is also important. We get a lot from Parks and Tourism. Honestly, they..."

Jan Parker asked if we got a tag line from Arkansas Parks and Tourism.

Stephanie said, “we do. We do. They pay booths rental. They did the Ideal Living shows. They submitted 300 plus leads to us, this year from their virtual show that we had to do nothing for – we had to pay nothing for – not to even sit in on. There are just so many different ways that I think we need to be good neighbors, I guess.”

Director Avila said, “it is even bigger than that, too. Because you alluded to earlier that we work with the legislatures, with the state and the federal and so on. At the Governmental Affairs Committee meetings, there have been times when we’ve had to call upon them – after the tornado – the whole FEMA funding that we got was thanks to those relationships that the Governmental Affairs Committee had built. So, it is very important.”

Heffer responded, “our representatives are very responsive to us. We are a voting community and they know it. Right? So they very much want to do and be a partner with us. Broadband is a great example. Governmental Affairs [Committee] has been working so hard, for so many years to get improvements to our Broadband network here. Legislation was just passed, recently, to include Hot Springs Village. They wrote it so that we were included, so that we could, if we wanted to, build a Broadband Improvement District for our community so that we could begin to, even beyond our Saline County/Garland County side, what can we do to help ourselves? How can we start to build funding and be a voice to get the right folks out there.”

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