

An informal meeting of the Bavarian Retreat Association (BRA) members convened at 1:00 pm on December 13, 2019 at the Lewis County fire station with sign-in sheets and two financial reports available – a Balance Sheet and a Profit and Loss statement. President Peggy McNamara greeted and welcomed attendees and described the purpose of the meeting: to begin discussion of the association water system, i.e. current realities and potential issues going forward.

Peggy introduced Mark Mazeski and Scott Pollock from the WA State Department of Health. Mark has worked with multiple associations having to go through similar and expensive fixes to their water systems, and he presented the State's efforts to comply with federal regulations to ensure quality water and to help homeowners mitigate costs. The State is encouraging associations to coordinate to become more efficient and less costly while ensuring high quality water and a dependable supply.

Following is a brief recap on the system's history as known and its current condition.

BRA's water system was installed prior to 1970 and has been loyally maintained by volunteer owners who have not only mended the well house and pump but have restored or repaired existing pipes as needed. There is overall appreciation for the time and effort these members have contributed even as many do not know the extent of that labor.

As confirmed by the guest presenters, age and conditions over the years have taken their toll on the water system. The well is not as reliable as it once was (used to be 74' deep; now is 59' deep), the infrastructure continues to degrade, and the quality of the water is compromised (arsenic is half again as high as recommended; manganese, a chemical that formerly was recognized as nothing more than a stain, is now recognized as having an impact on neurological functions and is higher than it should be).

Because the association is designated as a transient non-community (TNC) water system (less than 25 permanent residents), there are less stringent requirements than for those that are not, e.g. Paradise Estates that has many more permanent residents and the water system is more highly governed than a TNC designated system. BRA can continue operating its water system as it has - depending on volunteers and perhaps needing to resort to professionals, but time is against the association and property owners will inevitably face enormous costs.

A comparison was made. Until a few years ago mandatory submission of test water samples were taken by volunteers to Morton. When that became unfeasible a Paradise Estates professional was hired because he was already doing the same task for them and it would be fiscally responsible to hire him. BRA currently pays \$500 per month or \$6,000 per year for that service. If that service was paid to a company the charge would more likely be \$500 per week or about \$26,000 per year.

Mark introduced Scott who presented two brief scenarios: one that places the responsibility for any maintenance and upgrades squarely on the BRA owners, and a second that allows for State assistance in addressing the issues. If the association continues as it has, and if the water quality degrades further (likely) or the distribution system, well

and/or pump, any of which may be further compromised, the cost will likely be several hundred thousand dollars to address and would be unmanageable for an association the size of BRA. Examples are:

- \$20 – 30 K to treat for arsenic
- \$300K to \$700K to upgrade the distribution system, i.e. aging pipes
- \$10,000 or more to upgrade the well that is degrading over time
- \$\$\$ to install an automatic system to regulate water pressure each time there is a power outage; currently the generator needs to be powered manually by someone visiting the pump house to monitor the water pressure
- provide for a mandatory meter on the well
- a plan to keep the system operational

The second scenario suggests that the water management of BRA could merge with Paradise Estates. The Bavarian Retreat Property Owners Association would remain an independent POA and work with Paradise Estates for water. Paradise Estates has already upgraded its water system (2003) and is open to this consolidation. If BRA were to pursue this scenario the cost savings could be enormous. The following was stated:

- Grants are available for a feasibility study (c. 30K) and could be initiated in August 2020.
- A water plan would be developed in the midst of that feasibility study. The Paradise Estates plan was shown as an example.
- If BRA decides to move forward with consolidation for water management, and applies for loans, there is currently State funding available. That funding exists to encourage systems to consolidate. The State may forgive up to 50% of consolidation costs if we go that route. It will also offer low interest loans and as we get closer to that point, we will look at options available.
- If the project is accepted and Paradise Estates agrees to consolidation, it would include: water treatment, total infrastructure upgrade, connection to Paradise Estates' water system, water meters on individual lots, mandatory water testing, and backup systems coordinated with Paradise Estates that may include the BRA well.
- The process will take 2-4 years to complete.

The second scenario is encouraged by the State because of its desire to reduce the number of water systems it must oversee. Therefore, money has been set aside to help small associations mitigate the costs involved to provide safe and accessible water.

In conclusion: If BRA determines at the end of the feasibility study that the potential outcomes do not merit the cost, it can withdraw and not commit to the application for State funding.

President Peggy concluded the meeting with the understanding that association members in good standing will have an opportunity to vote on next steps at its annual meeting in the Spring. The date and location will be established and announced in a timely manner.

Submitted by Lori Gard, Dec. 14, 2019