

A Vision for Vint Hill Manor

(As of February 10, 2007)

On rare occasions a group has the chance to create a new community. We 100 homes at Vint Hill Manor now have the opportunity to define the nature of the community in which we will spend the next phase of our lives. This document is intended to prompt a creative process.

Below are some thoughts to start the process. If the community is to become something special we need to establish our collective vision. Please read the thoughts that follow with a mind as to what we can become beyond what the covenants require.

The “Official Functions”

The Home Owners Association (HOA) documents spell out the official duties and responsibilities of the HOA. When one reads through the articles of the covenants one sees that the purpose of the covenant is 1) the maintenance of the common areas 2) the management of services like trash pick up, 3) approval of external home changes, and 4) “to take other acts or actions which would promote the health, safety or welfare of the owners and residents.” (Page 6, article III). The covenants spell out the role of the HOA on the “official” duties associated with the first three purposes. We have hired a management firm and contractors to handle the housekeeping functions. While these are important, the actions that truly define our community, however, will be those associated with promotion of the health, safety or welfare of the community. In doing so we become “a village.”

Becoming “A Village”

In recent weeks several residents have commented that here at Vint Hill they know more than their immediate neighbors. In their old neighborhoods they did not know anyone beyond the family next door. Everyone was busy with careers and raising families. Here it is common to hear how one neighbor has been helping out another neighbor. It would appear that this community is looking for more than they experienced in their old neighborhoods.

Over the next decade the need for senior care will increase significantly while the resources available from government will decrease. As a group we need to be smarter about how our future will unfold.

It would be accurate to say that the goal of the senior village should be to sustain quality independent living. We are looking to live in our homes as long as we can ---partly because we watch out for each other.

The Price of Our Houses

At some point we will all put our houses up for sale. Because Vint Hill Manor is an age 55+ community the buyers pool is limited and our competition easy to identify. The age 55+ communities around us are marketing their homes as “active living” for seniors that provide many appealing life style benefits. For example, the Heritage Hunt community in Gainesville won the 2005 national “Community Humanitarian Association of the Year” award from the Community Association Institute (CAI) for its many activities that benefit the larger community. These communities boast of clubhouses, golf courses, swimming pools, exercise facilities, clubs and activities and travel opportunities. A way to maximize the appeal of our community is to provide many of these benefits but at significantly lower costs.

The best way to maximize the value of our homes is to establish a community that is so appealing, to the current homeowners and to future homeowners, that buyers will select a Vint Hill home before one at another age 55+ community. We can position ourselves between the communities with high assessments and great benefits, and the non-age restricted homes with no dues but no benefits.

If our community becomes perceived as a desirable place to live,---i.e. significant benefits with low assessments--- our homes will sell faster and for better prices.

An Unofficial Function & the Social Glue: The September Club

The September Club, formed and functioning since the early stages of the development, serves as the social element of the community. The club sponsors regular social events that allow the community members to know each other as friends. Card playing, bible study, Christmas events and community dinners are already popular. Other activities could be added with the goal of having every resident participating in some social activity. The social participation in the community is the glue that will hold together the village. Friends will help out friends. The club has its own officers and an independent treasury. The club is an independent organization that already provides great community building impact. We are lucky to have this valuable organization and we appreciate the efforts of this group.

The HOA Committees: A List Of Possibilities

In addition to the “official” functions of the HOA, and the purely “unofficial” social functions of the September Club, we envision several work groups that would focus on the health, safety and welfare needs.

Community volunteers would contribute to the work groups. Participants’ fees would mostly cover the costs. The HOA could provide small “seed funds” to help facilitate activities to the benefit of the members. The work groups would have considerable latitude, and minimum meetings.

As work groups study their respective areas of focus they would make recommendations to the Board Of Directors (BOD) for programs, write short articles for newsletters, host guest speakers and arrange tours.

1. The Programs Work Group

The main focus would be to provide low cost/no cost educational and informational programs or activities. An initial list of work groups might include:

- Safety/Security
- Medical/Health/Wellness
- Environmental
- Community Relations

The members of the community bring great diversity of experience to the community. Community members with previous job experience can bring much talent to these work groups. The following is a preliminary list of possible work groups with some functions that have been proposed.

A. The Safety /Security Workgroup

The committee monitors the safety and security of the community. Potential programs might include:

- Establishing liaison with the New Baltimore Volunteer Fire Department
- Establishing liaison with the Fauquier County Sheriff department
- Sponsoring AARP driver training classes
- Providing a bumper sticker to identify residents' cars
- Sponsoring "House Watch"

New Baltimore Volunteer Fire Department

As a group, the community could adopt the New Baltimore Volunteer Fire Department as our sponsoring non-profit organization. The EMTs of this volunteer fire department have already made a number of trips to our homes when we called 911. Consideration should be given to exploring and supporting any fund raising efforts of this department, which services our community.

Sheriff's Department: The security work group could get information on crime trends being committed in the local area. The work group could publish data on the kinds of crimes that could occur in the community and any trends. If a serious threat is identified, the workgroup could issue a bulletin with prevention tips. Several members of the community have had careers in law enforcement and would be excellent at this function.

Driver Training: In Virginia the state law requires all auto insurance companies to give a discount to any over age 55 driver who attends a drive training class. The AARP

provides such classes for the cost of the books. The class must be repeated every three years to keep the insurance discount. Discounts are as high as \$300.

Reducing Fire Department Response Time: The house numbers over our doors cannot be seen at night. This could slow up the response time of an emergency vehicle at night. Painting of reflective house numbers on the curbs could save minutes in helping emergency vehicles respond.

“House Watch”: When a community member plans to be absent from their home for overnight or longer they would register with “House Watch” who would assign members to watch over their homes. “House Watch” would maintain an emergency point of contact for all homes in case the owners cannot be contacted.

B. Medical/Health/Wellness Workgroup

The medical/health workgroup sponsors classes and activities such as:

- Sponsor adult CPR & first aid training
- Sponsor exercise groups (bike riders, mall walkers, weight lifters, water aerobics)
- Arrange for flu shots
- Sponsor infant CPR & first aid for baby sitting grandparents
- Assist in medical legal documents like medical power of attorney
- Sponsor medical support groups for medical problems such as diabetes
- Sponsor wellness seminars
- Assist with medical directives, health care powers of attorney

C. Environmental Workgroup

The workgroup focuses on issues associated with energy conservation, environmental clean up and similar “green” activities. Activities could include:

- Litter pick up day
- Spring clean up days
- Provide information on recycling for newsletter and website
- Information on tax credits for energy improvements
- Information on environmentally sound lawn care.
- Inspect the wooded areas and watercourses for problems and report to the responsible parties.

D. Community Relations

The workgroup would represent the community to the area around us.

- Attend the Vint Hill Conservancy meetings, or serve as a voting member of the “Conservancy” board
- Attend Vint Hill Economic Development Authority (VHEDA) meetings

- Attend county Board of Supervisors meetings
- Attend other county boards and commission meetings
- Serve on the New Baltimore Service District planning group
- Arrange for elected public officials to speak at open meetings with residents
- Coordinate activities with the Vint Hill Homeowners Association
- Write short information summaries for publication in the community newsletters and websites.

2. Communications Committee

The communications committee keeps the members informed of 1) HOA business, 2) educational and informational opportunities.

Possible activities might include:

- Newsletter
- Directory of Association Members
- Photo directory with Photos of Members
- Website
- Monthly speaker forum

Quarterly Guest Speaker Forum

The forum will provide monthly expert guest speakers or field trips. The forum would inform the community on relevant issues. While a communication function, the speaker forum would be conducted jointly with the work groups. Possible topics could include reverse mortgages, nursing home insurance, wills, trusts, medical advance directives, and medical power of attorney. Tours might include local assisted living /nursing home facilities, or Fauquier hospital

Community Web Site: Operate and maintain a HOA web site to keep all informed about community issues.

3. Community Member Support Committee

The HOA charter documents provide for the HOA to provide for services to the members that are appropriate to an age restricted community. The services of this committee may be premature for the current group of members. Nonetheless in the future a member support committee might provide services above the core services but less than an assisted living community.

Short-term services to assist ill or short-term infirmed such as:

- Provide transportation to medical or non medical appointments
- Help with household chores
- Assist with errands

- Pay friendly visits to isolated seniors
- Make daily/regular phone checks of housebound residents
- Provide information and assistance in obtaining services from county, and state or non-profit agencies
- Community chaplains

Association members would donate time to support other members with short-term needs. A volunteer would coordinate these activities.

The number of nursing home beds in the county has been decreasing while the demand is about to increase. The Vint Hill Economic Development Authority goal of providing a site on Vint Hill for a nursing home facility is hampered by a reluctance to sell land to a non-profit that would not contribute to the county tax base.

Assisted Living beds are currently costing \$3,000 or more per month. If we can help a neighbor live one year longer in their home we can save them \$36,000.

“House Care”: A work group to watch the maintenance and repair trends. The group could research equipment and vendors and negotiate volume discounts for items like water treatment systems, air filters, and such.

In the future the association may contract for services for the homeowners. On page 9 article IV states that in addition to the expected services and common area maintenance the association can “(vi) ... so elect the services indicative of a senior housing community such as maintain yards, snow removal of sidewalks and drives, exterior paint, gutter cleaning and special recreational or social activities.” This allows the members to grow the association to meet broader needs than routine maintenance and services. For example, community spirited members have already negotiated the purchase of discounted water treatment equipment, porch hand railings, and insect treatment for the community.

Community Chaplain

- Provide outreach programs
- Church rides for non drivers

The Technical Watch Group for Telephone, Cable, and Cell Phone

- Prepare information sheet on best rates and reception

What Others Are Doing

Other age 55+ communities have been evolving new models for a senior community. Information can be found at the following websites. Review these web sites to see what other communities are doing.

1. Beacon Hill Village A December 2005 AARP Bulletin discussed Beacon Hill Village, an innovative program providing services to over age 55 individuals in Boston. See www.beaconhillvillage.org. Other communities have established special senior communities with services intended to keep individuals in their home instead of assisted living.

2. Community Association Institute Contact the institute for training and publications. Go to the web site to see what the national trends are in HOA services.

3. Near-by HOAs Have a member contact near-by HOAs and report back on the rules and programs of the near-by HOA to identify good ideas. See the enclosed following article about Heritage Hunt.

The Start of a Vision

The above vision is but a starting place. It is intended to initiate a process of discussion and evaluation.

On page 9, article IV. states that in addition to the expected services and common area maintenance, the association can “(vi) if the association shall so elect the services indicative of a senior housing community such as maintain yards, snow removal of sidewalks and drives, exterior paint, gutter cleaning and special recreational or social activities.”

What “special needs or social activities” do we want to fill for ourselves as a group?

Of course, if we are to achieve an enhanced community, individuals must participate. The actual programs to be offered will be directly proportional to the willingness of community members to offer up time and talent for the common good of the community.

If you have good ideas or can contribute to any of the workgroups please indicate so on the enclosed questionnaire or e-mail or drop a note to the BOD programs coordinator. Together we have a vast collective experience, and much individual knowledge about what works.

Interest and Talent Survey

The Board of Directors has attached a survey asking community members about their interests and talents. The input will be used to help develop HOA financial Plan and the 2008 HOA budget and to identify individuals who can contribute to the community.

BULL RUN OBSERVER

By Nancy Johnson

March 2006

Heritage Hunt winner of Humanitarian Association of the Year Award

Heritage Hunt community won the Humanitarian Association of the Year award from the Community Association Institute (CAI) for its many activities that benefit the larger community outside its gates. The award was presented to Heritage Hunt Homeowners Association director Joe DeBell at CIA's D.C. conference February 18.

Every fall a volunteer fair showcases opportunities for residents to share talents, interests, and skills for the benefit of the community-at-large. Heritage Hunt volunteers can be found at the Prince William Hospital in the county libraries, at Hospice, in service groups such as Lions, helping the Red Cross, and working at Habitat for Humanity.

Volunteers knitted and quilted 1400 blankets for "Project Linus," nursing homes, and women's shelters. They have sponsored drives for "Toys for Tots" and food for SERVE and ACTS. The Men's Chorus performs at community events in retirement homes and nursing homes. Heritage Hunt clubs raise money for many local charities with an annual house tour and sales of a cookbook and a Heritage Hunt calendar. This year the sold-out calendar features a spoof, inspired by the movie "Calendar Girls."

Thousands of dollars have been raised for the cancer research and the Cancer Center in Gainesville through walks, casino nights, an annual Mother's day tea, and charity golf events. Over the past five years, the Heritage Hunt Charity Golf Classic, supported by more than 60 volunteers has donated \$320,000 to cancer organizations.