



Spring 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is very important for all residents, new and old, to know why the Raft Island Improvement Association (RIIA) was established. Per the By-Laws the RIIA was created, *“To foster and promote recreational and cultural activities among the residents of Kuhn’s Raft Island, Pierce County; to provide for the improvement and beautification of said Raft Island; to own and operate for the use and benefit of the residents of said Raft Island, a playground, recreational areas, and private beaches, and to maintain the private dedicated roads of Raft Island, access roads, and bridge.”* There is no better time than now to invest in your community common spaces through volunteerism. I am a huge proponent of all-island work parties which serve to *promote recreational and cultural activities among the residents* and allow neighbors to meet one another. More work parties are planned for 2024, including the annual vegetation trimming. If you have not had an opportunity to participate, it is not too late. Look for further communication on the non-sanctioned Raft Island Community Connection FaceBook page and island-wide emails.

We are finally starting to make tangible progress on the tennis court repair/replacement project. In May 2023, a special assessment was voted on and approved by the community. Upon the recent recommendations and advice of knowledgeable contactors that have inspected the court, it was determined that the need for court repairs has turned into a need for court replacement. Spending money on repairs that ultimately would not fix structural

issues thus would not be the best use of community funds. With that in mind, at the January 2024 meeting, the RIIA Board approved the use of additional monies with a cap set of \$60K for the total project costs. All of these facts were shared at the March 2 town hall meeting at the park. At the upcoming Board meeting on March 18, 2024 we will once again vote to move forward with the timeline and contractors suggested by the Tennis Court Committee. Thank you to Committee Chair, Matt Nixon, for stepping up and moving us through this process. His background in construction and experience working with contractors has been exceptional moving forward on an efficient path.

I continue to reiterate that volunteers are always needed and highly encouraged. Resident involvement makes a strong, invested community. If you would like to help, please consider joining the Budget Committee (which is meeting on March 11, 2024, to discuss the upcoming fiscal year budget), Bridge Committee, Nominating Committee, Recreational Properties Committee, Roads Committee and Security & Safety Committee. Additionally, we are seeking Board nominations this year for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two (2) Trustee positions. The election will be held in May 2024. If you are interested in any of the above positions/committees, please reach out to our island manager. My goal is to create a Board that is not just present at monthly meetings as placeholders but willing to actively participate in community life.



(President continued)

In closing, when my family moved to Raft Island in 2013, we were upset by the state of neglect within our island common areas. We would take our young sons to South Beach and find boards missing from the floor of the old wooden play structure, we were not able to sit at the picnic tables because of missing seat slabs with exposed metal and the float had seen better days. When taking them to the Tennis Court Park they could look at but not use the old wooden teeter-totter because it had not been maintained since the year it was installed and the accompanying broken wooden swing set had been dumped in the woods next the court. I became discouraged so I got involved to fix what was broken . . . literally. Being closely integrated in one's community can cause grievances with neighbors who disapprove of improvements that they may not deem necessary for repair. Please do not let that discourage you from getting involved. As long as there are "things to fix," I will do my best to see to it that the island improves and encourage others to get involved and help.

RIIA President Matt Hurley

MANAGER

Hello Raft Island Residents,

I hope this message finds you healthy and happy. I would like to express my gratitude to the Board/Owners of Raft Island for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Manager. Together, we have achieved so much. Since I began in December 2020, we have successfully collected over \$69,000 in past due assessments and legal fees, significantly reducing the association's delinquency balance. Thank you for your support and collaboration.

Here are some important & helpful tips: **Parking Passes:** Each property owner is allowed a maximum of two permits per lot owned. If you have lost a permit, replacements can be purchased for \$5 each and the lost permit will be inactivated. Damaged or worn out permits will be swapped out for no charge,

but you must bring in the old permit with you. Additional passes must be paid by check (no cash) at the time of pickup. If you are a new owner in need of parking passes, please contact our office at 253-985-3812 to make arrangements for pickup. Remember to permanently mount your parking pass if parked in common areas. **South Beach Keys:** Each lot, current in dues, is allowed one (1) SB key only. Replacement key will be charged \$25. Please make sure your account is current, if you are not sure please contact us at

office@hoacommunitysolutions.com.

ACH Payments: Have you heard about the option to schedule automatic payments online at www.hoacommunitysolutions.com? For specific account details, please reach out to office@hoacommunitysolutions.com. If you opt to mail in a check, please allow for a 10-day delivery window. Remember, assessments are due on the 1st of each month, with a late fee applied after the 11th.

Blast Emails: We regularly email important community updates. If you are not receiving our emails, please contact us to confirm your email address. In the past, we have noticed that some email security settings may block our emails or send them to the spam folder, particularly for CenturyTel and Comcast email addresses. If you have not been receiving our emails, please review your security settings and ensure emails from our address are allowed. Our industry has a high email volume. Please allow a 2-business day response time to email. If your request is an emergency and cannot wait, please call 253-985-3812 #1 to speak with the front desk attendant. Thank you.

carolyn@hoacommunitysolutions.com

Carolyn Tucker-Community Manager



BJH

RAFT ISLAND TREASURER

The audit of RIIA's financial statements was concluded in January by Newman Certified Public Accountant PC with no noteworthy findings. They also prepared our tax return which was signed by the President and filed with the IRS. The tax due was \$6492.

So far, we remain within budget for this fiscal year. The bridge insurance was about \$500 more than budgeted but the liability insurance was about \$500 less. After many years pursuing legal action against 2 significantly delinquent accounts, we obtained full payment on all dues, legal fees, interest, penalties, etc. There are several people who haven't paid the \$150 special assessment for the tennis court which was passed at the annual meeting. For those of you still owing, please remit payment. If you have any question about what you may owe, please contact the island manager.

Over the last several years we have had to dip into our savings for such things as the slide at south beach, a flooding situation, and this year the ditching. Our money market account is down to \$35,760. Prior boards have recommended that we keep at least one year's worth of operating expenses in savings. Without the bridge loan expense, this would be over \$100,000.

Thank you to Charlotte Crain, Matt Hurley, Jeff Leas, Jaime Marin, Matt Nixon, Tina Shoemaker, Glenn Stewart, Rich Swenson and Katherine Walsh for volunteering to be on the budget committee.

Anne Scea – Treasurer

RIIA INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

The Investment Committee meets quarterly and provides recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the Bridge Replacement Fund (BRF), specified General Fund (GF) monies, and the USDA Reserve (a requirement of the 2014 bridge reconstruction financing). Current members are: Monica Butler (#101), Cliff Quisenberry (#119), and Mike Hirko (#113). If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact me at 253-686-5288.

Bridge Replacement Fund (BRF)

At the end of last quarter (December 31, 2023), the total market value of this fund was \$570,437 with a cost basis of \$454,069. This includes a total of \$348,174 in two Vanguard Life Strategy funds (symbols VSCGX and VASGX) to meet USDA Reserve requirements to be held 30 years (2044). The USDA Reserve requirement also calls for a \$2,466 monthly deposit for 10 years (2024) and was \$76,914 ahead of that requirement. Neither of these funds have been held for ten years yet.

The remaining \$222,263 continues to be invested in Vanguard stock and bond mutual funds. The allocation percentage goals for these funds was 26% Bonds (VBTLX), 30% Large Capitalization Stocks (VFIAX), 23% Medium and Small Capitalization Stocks (VEXAX), and 21% International Stocks (VWIGX). The 10 year Average Annual Return (AAR) for these specific funds was 7.97%.

General Fund (GF)

At the end of last quarter (December 31, 2023) the General Fund investments totaled \$208,344. This amount is invested in two mutual funds; Vanguard Balanced Index Admiral Shares (VBIAX) and Vanguard Wellesley Income Admiral Shares (VWIAX). These two mutual funds have a cost basis of \$153,053. The 10 year Average Annual Return (AAR) for these funds was 6.80%. The Board established five year timeframe for this investment matures in October, 2024.

All funds are held by the Vanguard Group.

At the February meeting the Board approved the recommended revision of the RIIA Investment Policy. You are encouraged to review the revised policy which is on the island website. The Board also approved that all future capital gains and dividends from non-USDA funds be directed to a new money market fund to be accumulated and invested when appropriate in a new Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) yet to be established. Lastly, the Board directed that all required remaining USDA deposits (\$2,466/mo.) be deposited in the more conservative fund (VSCGX).

Mike Hirko-Chair

RIIA Secretary

As Secretary of the Board my duties include preparing the agenda and taking the minutes for the board meetings. To access either the agenda or the minutes please go to the raftisland.org webpage and pull down the menu in the upper left-hand corner. If you'd like to address the Board or add something to the Agenda you may contact me directly at ventoampio@yahoo.com.

Hope to see you at the meetings!

Katherine Walsh, Secretary



Editor's note: You may know Katherine as the Island "Dog Whisperer." She is also known as KdeK by her photos.

SECURITY

As Security Chair, I want to share some tools that can be utilized to report and learn about crime, parking issues, speeding and suspicious incidents that have occurred on the island. First, I use our unsanctioned Raft Island Community Connection Facebook group page to report and respond to reports of crime or suspicious incidents. This is my primary means for disseminating security concerns to the community acquired from residents and/or law enforcement contacts, while at the same time monitoring suspicious incidents. Second, island resident Glenn Stewart, a newly minted member of

the Security Committee has created an additional form of communication via the unsanctioned Unified App. See below for further information.

Camera System -

The island recently entered a two-year contract with FLOCK safety security cameras. FLOCK technology provides state-of-the-art license plate recognition systems using solar power. This will streamline the island's ability to record and identify potential suspect vehicles. Hopefully, the camera will be installed this month. Here is a link to FLOCK Safety - <https://www.flocksafety.com/>.

Although we currently have a license plate camera, FLOCK records the plate, deciphers the letters and enhances the picture of the plate. This makes plates searchable remotely while at the same time providing the make, model and color of the vehicle, effectively streamlining the search process. For instance, if a neighbor observes a suspicious vehicle or is the victim of a crime and contacts me with brief details, the information can be found in a manner of minutes. Every query is automatically documented with a reason for the search required ensuring random video is not being viewed without a legitimate reason.

According to FLOCK – Here's why license plate recognition matters:

- *According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, upwards of 70% of crime involves using a vehicle.*
- *In most cases, a license plate number is the number-one piece of evidence law enforcement can use to make an arrest.*
- *Stolen vehicles are often used to commit additional crimes. Alerting police when a stolen vehicle or known suspect enters a community can prevent crime before it happens.*

FLOCK can integrate with local law enforcement to identify vehicles involved in crimes from retail theft to amber alerts. When the camera identifies a wanted license plate, the camera will notify the authorities automatically, with no action needed by the camera owner.

(Security continued)

Law enforcement officials that participate in the program through partnerships with their agencies are immediately alerted of hits on stolen plates via work cell phone or on their in-car computer. For example, if the camera located on Raft Island recognizes a stolen plate, law enforcement will be notified immediately via the system. We are the second HOA within Gig Harbor to use this technology. Law enforcement agencies currently utilizing this technology in Pierce County include Lakewood, Eatonville and Puyallup, while others are currently exploring its benefits.

Residents can opt-out of the program, which will enable the camera to skip recording of your plate. Residents also can add their plate to the system, which will identify them as a resident so their vehicle can be skipped during a search for a suspect vehicle. I will use the Raft Island Community Connection Facebook group page to provide security information found using FLOCK should it be necessary.

Parking Problems -

A few years back, resident Gene Barkin created a QR code for parking violations at island common spaces. It is attached to the newsletter and will also be posted on parking signs. The QR code creates a prewritten language requesting further vehicle details via text message. This text is forwarded to parking enforcement volunteers. Pictures may also be attached to the text messages. It has been utilized on many occasions to help successfully resolve parking problems.



Speeding –

The spring and summer months are quickly approaching. Please remember to slow down as we share our island roads with many pedestrians. I recently secured a free, used digital speed warning sign. For the cost of a couple of larger rechargeable batteries, charger and a volunteer-built wood encasement for the sign, it will be a huge asset to the community. Do not fear, as it is not recording

you and will not be sending tickets. However, it may serve as a wake-up call to many of us as to how fast we actually travel. My goal is to have it up and running by next month.

Unified App – written/submitted by Glenn Stewart

“After almost one year of planning, development, and testing, the release of a Neighborhood Watch App for the exclusive use of Raft Island residents. The App, known as “Unified Community,” is free to download from both the Apple App Store and Google Play.”

What is Unified Community?: Unified Community is a mobile device App that allows users to post, in real-time, any incidents that are of interest or concern to Raft Island residents. If you have further questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Administrator: Glenn Stewart,

raftislandwatcher@gmail.com.

If you would like more timely information, please join the **Raft Island Community Connections** FaceBook page where information is shared immediately.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Raftislandcommunityconnection>

M. Hurley – Security

*Gig Harbor Police Department
Pierce County Sheriff’s Department
Key Peninsula Crime Watch
PNW Stolen Cars*



BRIDGE UPDATE

This spring we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the “new” bridge. At this milestone, it is appropriate to recognize the value of the bridge to our daily lives and to our collective safety and security. The bridge is the only universal means (24x7x365) of island access for residents and first responders. It also serves as the conveyance for utilities (gas, electric, telephone and cable). It is also likely that completion of the new bridge enhanced property values and it is therefore critical that we have a robust maintenance and long-term replacement plan to protect what is arguably the most valuable community asset.

In support of this goal, the Board and the Bridge and Investment Committees coordinate bridge inspection, maintenance, and long-range planning efforts. During the most recent inspection (Summer 2023) no significant structural issues were noted by the engineer, however corrosion was observed on the steel piling (Photo’s 1 & 2). This was particularly evident on the piping next to the south beach. Please note that some corrosion is expected, and the steel is purposefully “oversized” for the load requirements. While there is no need to take immediate action, the Bridge Committee is examining the cost effectiveness of options to proactively address this corrosion.

It has also come to our attention that some members and/or their children may have been throwing rocks at the bridge piling. While we believe this has been all in fun and that no one meant harm, this may hasten corrosion, so we remind all members to refrain from throwing rocks or other objects at the bridge pilings.

Corrosion of the bridge rail has also been noted. This is not a structural concern, but a volunteer work group is being considered to complete this work. Thanks to Andy Flood for taking the lead on this project. If you are interested in volunteering for this project, please let me know.

Regular updates of all maintenance and planning activities will be shared with the membership at upcoming board meetings and in the regular newsletters. In the meantime, feel free to contact me through Carolyn at HOA Solutions, or by email (ecs160r@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns. Special thanks to Dave Walsh who has agreed to join the Bridge Committee. If you would like to get more involved, please take one step forward 😊.



Photo 1 – Engineer completing Bridge Inspection.



Photo 2. Piling at north end of bridge.

Ted Smith, Bridge Chair

RIIA ROADS

It's been 8 years since the island roads were repaved. Overall the roads are in good condition. We had BMA Excavations clean out the ditches, catch basins, and install spall and gravel in many problem areas. A crew will be coming out to run cameras down our culverts to inspect and report on the condition. Volunteer groups continue to save the island money, by removing dangerous and dead trees around our roadways. This spring, I will organize a volunteer group to restripe speed humps and lane dividers. Additionally we will be replacing broken and missing reflectors.

In the long term, we do have multiple spots on the roads that are failing and will need to be replaced eventually. I am working to obtain estimates so the board and membership is aware of the estimated cost. In the short term many of these problem areas can be repaired. Drainage continues to be an issue; however we are making great progress. I am working with the board and other volunteers to address many concerns raised over the past few months.

Speeding and reckless driving are an ongoing problem. There is a reason our speed limit is 20 on the bridge and 15 on our roads. Our roadways are narrow and have many blind spots. Additionally many residents, including children and pets, use our roadways every day. Please slow down.

Thank you to all the residents that maintain roads around your personal residence. If you are able, please leaf blow the community roads around your property. This not only increases the longevity of the roads, but also saves on maintenance cost and makes the island look great! The same goes for the ditches. Please refrain from blowing or raking leaves or other debris into the ditches. This will help to reduce additional costly maintenance. If you experience or notice any road or drainage issues and/or want to volunteer, please reach out to the HOA manager or email me mvnixon@gmail.com. The work parties are fun, productive, a great way to meet your neighbors, and build our community!

Matt Nixon - Roads Committee Chair

PARKS & RECREATION

As we bid farewell to a long winter and welcome the signs of spring, which dawns on March 19th, I want to acknowledge the role each of you plays in the smooth operation of our park. This winter, we were fortunate to avoid the king tides that had previously affected Puget Sound and South Beach. However, we did face some wind storms that had an impact on our kayaks. While no damage was reported, it was your keen observation and action that ensured the boats were returned to their racks and secured. Even the few that were not initially put back were quickly claimed and removed after being brought to the island's attention. Your proactive approach to reporting issues is crucial to maintaining the integrity of our parks.

Anticipating the possibilities and the upcoming rejuvenation of our tennis court, it's exciting to imagine the potential it holds for future use. It is a great piece of real estate that is not being used for anything other than growing blackberries. One of the ideas that has been discussed is to create a gathering place for family picnics, complete with an outdoor cedar pavilion featuring a kitchen and a fireplace. This could be a fantastic addition to our park, one that we believe would be heavily utilized by our members.

While I was down the Oregon coast in February, I captured this photo near Lincoln City, which serves as a glimpse into what our park could potentially look like.



The second image I took from the internet. All this is in the future, and there would be a lot of discussion to move forward on such a project, but I can't help but feel excited about dream building. The potential for our park is limitless, and I'm thrilled to be a part of this journey with all of you.

Mike Neil - Parks

Island Officers and Trustees

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Parks and Recreation Committee

Mike Neil, Chair (#2)

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M. Hurley, Chair (#182)
Mike Neil, Chair (#2)

Roads Committee

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Please email BJ any photos or news articles you would like considered for our Island publication



Raft Island, Washington

www.raftisland.org

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