

# **BPRA Committee Reports and Updates for the August 2023 BPRA Board of Trustees Meeting**

*These updates are distributed to the BPRA Board prior to the monthly meetings and included with the minutes.*

## **1) Pool & Recreational Facilities Committee (Jay Staggs, Chair):**

The baby pool pump was replaced.

The wireless network did a great job during the recent divisional swim meet. There were no issues with connecting to the network nor were there any reported slow downs.

Cameras are doing a great job and have come in handy when something may need to be reviewed. The volunteer IT team is doing outstanding work!

Throughout the season there have been issues with kids removing the shower heads. This has been addressed and seems to be abated by signage and frequent monitoring.

There has also been some feedback on the guards throughout the season. While there have been a few complaints, most of the feedback has been very positive on how great the guards and managers are doing. Any complaints that have been received have been addressed with Georgetown Aquatics as well as the managers directly. Additionally, the managers are having regular meetings with the guards for training and feedback.

We still need an estimate for sealing the cracks on the parking lot.

## **2) Entertainment and Recreation Committee (Chris Swan, Chair):**

### **a. Summer Entertainment Series (revised)**

The 2023 summer music concert on 7/23, Sunday afternoon, with The Motor Driven Band, from 4 pm to 6 pm, was very successful, with lots of dancers and happy toe-tappers.

The summer movies (including the adult movies) have been well attended, even the movie held in the pavilion during the rain. A new method was used in the pavilion to set-up the screen, which enabled more folks to attend. The next movie will be The Fabelmans, on Saturday evening, 8/1, at dusk, either on the hill behind the pavilion, or if it rains, under the pavilion.

### **b. Fourth of July Celebration (revised)**

Prizes were given out to the top three July 4th decorated vehicles in the car parade. This will be the last year for the car parade. Current plans are to focus on the walking/stroller/biking parade, with the Scouts flag ceremony before it.

### **c. BlocktoberFest 2023 (revised)**

The date for the BlocktoberFest 2023 is October 14, with a rain date of October 15. The event will be from 3 pm to 6 pm, and will be held on Rippling Brook Drive, between the Matthew

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Henson Trail and Bel Pre Elementary School. This is a block party, with the funding and support provided by our Scout Troop, the BPRA, and the Strathmore Bel Pre Civic Association. The party will have music, games for the kids, food, soft drinks and bring your own beverages (byob). It is an opportunity to get together with neighbors and friends, enjoy each other's company, have some fun and be out in the nice fall weather.

### **d. Trunk or Treat (revised)**

The 2023 Trunk or Treat Celebration is Saturday, October 28, 5 pm to 7 pm, to be held in the pool parking lot. A spin from the traditional Halloween trick or treating, Trunk or Treat brings together community members and neighborhood kids. Just come to the pool parking lot, open and decorate your vehicle's trunk for Halloween, and supply lots of treats, to be collected by the kids.

### **e. Village Activities for the Summer (new)**

- Game Night and Village Meeting, 7/13, 6:30 pm
- Pickleball on Mondays, 5 pm to 6:30 pm, starting July 3. Cookie (Maria) Stagnitto led the sessions in July, the group will continue in August without her.
- Zumba on Tuesdays, 7/18 and 7/25, 6:45 pm to 7:45 pm. The classes may continue in August, to be determined.
- Village Meeting, 8/10, 7:30 pm
- Game Night, during the last week of August
- Bird Walk, Matthew Henson trail, July and August, registration required.
- Brookside Gardens walk in July, registration required.
- Strathmore Bel Pre Social at the Lone Oak Brewery, 7/17, for Special Olympics
- Strathmore Bel Pre Group at the Lone Oak Brewery, 7/20, for a Comedy Show

### **3) Neighborhood Dispute Resolution Committee (Patrick Welteroth):**

Nothing new to report as of 07/17/2023.

### **4) Finance Committee (Dave Pullen):**

#### **a. Bookkeeper (no change)**

Now that the bulk of 2023 Assessment Collections has been realized, I am re-focusing on finding a long-term solution for bookkeeping services, and have reached out to Arrow Bookkeeping, a Silver Spring-based company, to see if they are taking on new clients. If others have recommended providers, please let me know!

#### **b. Assessment Collections**

2023 Assessment payments have been received from 97.7% of homeowners as of July 25 – reducing the number of 2023 delinquents to 28 (of which, 13 owe the entire amount – currently \$430.02), including 12 accounts at SCHILD. The third, and final, “delinquency demand” letter is

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scheduled for early September. Delinquent accounts as of 10/1 are automatically referred to SCHILD for collection.

### **c. Overdue Collections/Schild Law Group**

Per Board vote at the July meeting, I have signed and delivered authorization to SCHILD for it to file suit against certain long-term delinquent accounts.

### **d. Assessment Assistance Committee (no change)**

One claim was filed with the Committee; it was denied, as the request (to be excused from the Assessment altogether) is outside the Committee's scope of authority.

### **e. Change in BPRA Fiscal Year and "Short Year" Tax Return (no change)**

Larry Vaught completed our 2023 Federal tax return and following review by Purdy and Pullen, it was filed electronically by the May 15 deadline.

### **f. 2023 Guest Pass Purchases (no change)**

Collection of guest fees paid at entry to the pool are recorded by the desk attendant on duty at the time. The MOD advises the Treasurer daily whether gross receipts from that day are sufficient to warrant a trip to the pool and removal of cash receipts to a safer location so as to minimize the risk of becoming a target for after-hour burglary attempts. Guest fees are "non-Assessment revenue."

### **g. Audit Coordinator (Mark Foraker)**

No updates since the October meeting.

### **h. Finance Committee (Dave Pullen) (no change)**

The Committee plans to coordinate with the Governing Docs Committee to review the applicability of new, legislated, procedures intended to "protect" homeowners from deprivation of their rights without "due process." This may affect procedures for how we assess late fees, etc. as well as our existing procedures for suspending members' access to the Pool Property, whether due to delinquent payments *or* "behavioral" issues on the Pool Property.

## **5) Governing Documents Committee (Elliot Chabot, Chair):**

### **a. HOA document requests (updated)**

Requests for HOA documents, etc. handled by the Chair of the Governing Documents Committee (July 2023):

1. 2615 Bainbridge Lane - how to join BPRA (opt-in home)
2. 3509 Beret Lane - HOA documents
3. 3225 Beret Lane - fence covenants
4. 13823 Blair Stone Lane - HOA documents

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5. 13823 Blair Stone Lane - status of account
6. 2608 Bluhaven Court - HOA documents
7. 13329 Foxhall Drive - how to join BPRA (home that is a few blocks outside of Strathmore Bel Pre)
8. 2709 Hewitt Avenue - chicken covenants
9. 2709 Hewitt Avenue - status of account
10. 13412 Rippling Brook Drive - how to join BPRA (opt-in home)

### **b. Accessory Dwelling Unit** (no changes)

At its March 7, 2023, meeting, the Board considered a request from the owner of 3212 Beret Lane for approval to renovate and expand their garage in order to convert it into a suite for the owner's mother. The expansion of the garage would be on the back side of his house. The renovation would include adding a kitchen. The homeowner would not charge their mother rent. The Board approved the request, proved that the homeowner agreed to sign a document (that BPRA will prepare) to be recorded in the County Land Records, committing the homeowner and all future owners of the property to only using the the expansion/renovation for members of the homeowner's family and not charging any rent for its use. The Board also directed the Governing Documents Committee to propose a policy to the Board on how to similarly handle any future requests of this type. The Committee will try to have a proposal drafted before the Board's May 2 meeting. Work is also underway on preparing the document for 3212 Beret Lane.

**Background:** Normally, in the case of such a request from a home subject to land use covenants, we would tell the homeowner that (1) "the primary purpose of the BPRA is to operate and maintain the community's swimming pool and other recreational facilities" [BPRA Plan of Organization § 100], (2) that we do not have a pre-approval process and (3) the homeowner should talk with their neighbors before proceeding because it's the neighborly thing to do and because anyone in Section 21 could sue him in Montgomery County Circuit Court to enforce the covenants. The properties in Section 21 have land use covenants, that among other things, provide that:

- § 1(e) - No dwelling or any part thereof shall be used for any purpose except as a private dwelling for one family or as a professional office of a physician, dentist, [etc.] . . .
- § 1(a) - . . . No building shall be erected, altered, placed, or permitted to remain on any lot other than one detached single-family dwelling . . .
- § 1(b) - An attached addition to the dwelling may be erected but only on the condition that it shall not project beyond the front wall of the dwelling or structure as originally erected by the Company . . .
- § 2 - No building, structure, dwelling, garage, carport or breezeway shall be erected, nor shall any alteration or addition to or repainting of the exterior thereof be made, unless it shall conform in architecture, material and color to the dwelling as originally constructed by the Company [i.e., by Levitt & Sons].

The difference here was that the Montgomery County Council adopted an ordinance a few years ago that requires that before the County will issue a permit for an Accessory Dwelling Unit, the

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local homeowners' association must approve it. Without the HOA approval, the County will not issue the appropriate permits and licenses. This appears to be the only instance where the County requires HOA approval before licenses and permits will be issued. The statute is Montgomery County Code §29-19(b)(1)(C) and can be found at [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/montgomerycounty/latest/montgomeryco\\_md/0-0-0-137028](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/montgomerycounty/latest/montgomeryco_md/0-0-0-137028).

The request from 3212 Beret Lane is the first time the BPRA has received a request from a homeowner to approve an Accessory Dwelling Unit. (The County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs website (<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA-Licensing/Class3/List>) indicates that a ADU license has been issued for 13410 Norden Drive and is pending for 13407 Norden Drive. These properties are both in Section 18 of Strathmore at Bel Pre. SBP Section 18 does not have any land use covenants, so those properties are in compliance with the covenants as long as they pay their annual dues.)

### **c. Banking and Investment Policies (no changes)**

At its March 7, 2023, meeting, the Board adopted interim policies on banking and investments. The Board asked the Committee to review the adopted policies and, if appropriate, make recommendations for updates to the policies.

At the April 11, 2023, Board meeting the suggestion was made that there be an Investment Committee and that consideration be given to limiting who can serve on the committee. At its May 2, 2023, meeting, the Board voted to establish an interim investment committee comprising the four officers of the Board.

The Governing Documents Committee will consider these proposals as part of its review of the Investment Policy or as part of the next update of the Plan of Organization - whichever one comes first.

### **d. Annual Dues Collection Policy updates (no changes)**

At the April 11, 2023, Board meeting, it was suggested that the Committee consider recommending rules to deal with habitual non-payers. Possible approach: if a homeowner has already been referred to the BPRA's attorney for collection, and the homeowner fails to pay the next year's annual dues by April 1, automatically refer the additional indebtedness to the attorney for collection.

Additional changes to consider:

- Add a provision to the Collections Policy, directing the Treasurer to notify the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs of any homeowner who is more than 30 days in arrears. Section 29-19(e) of the Montgomery County Code

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prohibits the County from issuing a rental license for a property more than 30 days in arrears of their HOA dues; and also allows the HOA to charge up to \$25 for certification.

- The Maryland Homeowners Association Act § 11B-112.1 allows an HOA to impose late fee of up to “one-tenth of the total amount of any delinquent assessment or installment, . . ., provided the charge may not be imposed more than once for the same delinquent payment and may be imposed only if the delinquency has continued for at least 15 calendar days.”
  - If the homeowner was up-to-date on payments for prior years, but made only a partial payment for this year, clarify that the 10% late fee only applies to the balance owed.
  - If the homeowner was not up-to-date, the BPRA’s Collections Policy provides that any payments are first applied to the oldest debt. Clarify if this should apply to calculating late fees (e.g., if the homeowner owned \$275 from last year and this year pay \$375 to cover the current year’s \$375 annual fee, should the homeowner have to pay an additional late fee of \$30?).

### **e. Plan of Organization updates (updated)**

Items to be considered in the next update of the BPRA Plan of Organization:

- Make the New Neighbor Welcome Committee into a permanent committee.
- Provide for an Investment Committee as a permanent committee. Should there be restrictions on who can be a member?
- The Montgomery County Council recently amended Chapter 10B of the Montgomery County Code (the Common Ownership Communities ordinance). These amendments may call for revisions to BPRA Plan of Organization
  - **§ 321(f)** (Additional Duties of the Treasurer),
  - **§ 330(d)-(e)** (Administrative Assistant),
  - **§ 401(h)** (Elections), and
  - **§ 405(h)** (COVID Era Elections)

in order for the Plan of Organization to be remain consistent with the County Code.

Regardless of whether the BPRA amends the Plan of Organization or not, the BPRA is still obligated to follow the County Code. The amendments to the County Code have an effective date of July 3, 2023.

- Sometime after June 4, 2023, the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities appears to have withdrawn its letters of March 6 and April 2, 2020, that gave special authorization to HOAs to hold meetings electronically. BPRA Plan of Organization § 405 originally relied on the authority granted by those 2 letters – though, the subsequently enacted § 11B-113.6 of the Maryland Homeowners Association Act provides similar authority. Are any revisions needed to BPRA Plan of Organization § 405?
- It has been suggested that the rules governing general membership meetings and committee meetings could be made more consistent.

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- Membership - currently:
  - BPRA members - every person (or legal entity) who is on the deed for a property within BPRA is a member of the BPRA. [BPRA Pool & Assessment Covenants of March 13, 1968, Article III, § 1]
  - Committees - for most of the committees, every person who both (1) is a BPRA member (or who lives in a property within BPRA) and (2) has notified the chair of the committee that they would like to be a member of the committee, is a member of that committee. [BPRA Plan of Organization § 110(c)]
- Voting rights - currently:
  - General Membership - one vote per lot owned. [BPRA Pool & Assessment Covenants of March 13, 1968, Article III, § 2]
  - Committee - each committee member has one vote. [BPRA Plan of Organization § 110(c)(1)]
- Notice requirements - currently:
  - General Membership meetings - 30 days written notice for the annual meeting; 15 days written notice for any special meetings. [BPRA By-Laws, Article VIII, § 3]
  - Committee meetings - 48 hours e-mail notice to all committee members (also must be posted 48 hours ahead on the StrathmoreBelPre.Org website). [BPRA Plan of Organization § 110(i)]
- Quorum requirements - currently:
  - General Membership meetings - owners of 10% of the lots within BPRA (if there is no quorum, then (with proper notice) a meeting can be held 48 hours later with just the owners of 5% of the lots within BPRA). However, with notice published 15 days in advance in a newspaper published in Montgomery County, the quorum is all of the BPRA members who attend the meeting. [BPRA By-Laws, Article VIII, § 5; and Maryland Corporations and Associations Code, § 5-206]
  - Committee meetings - All of the committee members present at a meeting where the notice requirements were met constitute a quorum. [BPRA Plan of Organization § 110(k)]

### **f. Recreational Facilities Policy updates (updated)**

Items to be considered in the next update of the Recreational Facilities Policy:

- Revise **§ 216** (Summer Entertainment Series and Summer Community Affairs Forum Series) to implement the Board's April 5, 2022, decision that guest fees be waived for anyone while attending Summer Entertainment Series events. Possibly also include Summer Community Affairs Forum Series events.
  - What should happen when a member of the community invites the general public as their guests (as more or less happened with the July 23, 2023, concert)?
  - Clarify whether **§ 208** (Guest Lists) should apply.

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- In **§ 606** (Attendance Limits) - replace “Fifty Plus Club” with “Over 60 Club”
- Section 607 (Guest List) uses the word “guest” two different ways. To avoid ambiguity, replace “expected guest list” with “expected attendees list”.
- In **§ 609** (Fees) - replace “Fifty Plus Club” with “Over 60 Club”
- For review after the end of the 2023 season as a possible permanent policy change: On June 6, 2023, the Board approved extending **§ 207A** (Guest Fees - Scout Lifesaving Badge Tests) to cover some additional Scout activities at the pool during the 2023 season.
- For review after the end of the 2023 season as a possible permanent policy change: On June 6, 2023, the Board approved a request from the SPB Village Group to extend these privileges for their events for the summer of 2023:
  - waiver of pavilion deposit
  - waiver of guest fees for non-BPRA members
  - allow SBP Community Members and other Village affiliated participants that are not BPRA members to attend the event without being the guest of a specific BPRA member. Guest attendees would not have pool privileges.

### **g. Documents Retention Policy** (no changes)

The Governing Documents Committee last worked on the Documents Retention Policy on July 29, 2021. The Committee has agreed on minimum retention dates for documents (by category) and come to at least preliminary agreement on how each type of document should be stored and in what format. The Committee will resume work on drafting this policy when time permits.

### **h. Covenant enforcement** (no changes)

The next big project for the Committee will be drafting the Land Use Covenant Enforcement Policy. Issues to be examined include:

- Pool and Assessments Covenants vs. Land Use Covenants
- Funding covenant enforcement
- Cost of enforcement litigation
- Fairness in use of BPRA resources
- What is the level of community support for expanded covenant enforcement?
- Is traditional HOA enforcement of land use covenants adversarial?
- What is the enforcement tradition in our community?
- How does BPRA's tax status impact covenant enforcement?
- Practicality of enforcement
- Property values and covenant enforcement
- Right of individual members to enforce by law suit
- Right of neighborhoods to amend the land use covenants
- Comparison of the Land Use Covenants in different Sections within Strathmore at Bel Pre and what is the overlap between the land use covenants and current county, state, and federal laws



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- In the 2021 session of the State Legislature, the Legislature placed restrictions on the authority of HOAs to regulate:
  - Composting - Maryland Homeowners Association Act § 11B-111.9
  - Electric vehicle charging equipment – Maryland Homeowners Association Act § 11B-111.8
  - Low-impact landscaping - Maryland Real Property Code § 2-125
  - Portable basketball apparatus - Maryland Real Property Code § 2-124
- Other county, state, and federal laws specifically limit HOAs authority to regulate:
  - Antennas - FCC Over-the-Air Reception Devices Rule (47 C.F.R. § 1.4000)
  - Clotheslines - Maryland Real Property Code § 14-130
  - Facilities for individuals with disabilities and group homes – Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. § 3601, et seq.); and Fair Housing Act Regulations (24 C.F.R. part 100)
  - Family day care homes and no-impact home-based businesses – Maryland Homeowners Association Act § 11B-111.1
  - Political signs - Maryland Homeowners Association Act § 11B-111.2
  - Roof materials - Montgomery County Fire Safety Code § 22-98
  - Solar panels and other renewable energy devices – Maryland Real Property Code § 2-119(b); and Montgomery County Code § 40-3A
  - U.S. flag - Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005 (4 U.S.C. § 5 nt., Pub. L. 109-243, 12 Stat. 572); and Maryland Real Property Code § 14-128
- Did Levitt & Sons intend that the BPRA enforce the Land Use Covenants?
- Who are the successors to Levitt & Sons?
- What should be BPRA's role in Land Use Covenant enforcement?
- How should the BPRA respond to individual requests for BPRA enforcement or for certification of compliance?
  - General rules
  - Complaints concerning discrimination by race, color, religion, sex, etc.
  - Accessory dwelling unit licenses
  - Duplexes and other multi-family construction

### **i. Opt-In Homes and Other New Memberships (updated)**

When time permits, the Committee will attempt to codify and update the policy that the Board adopted May 2, 2017, on how homes within Strathmore Bel Pre that are not currently within the BPRA can join the BPRA. Also, the committee will look at what the process should be for homes that are just outside of Strathmore Bel Pre, but want to join (e.g., the Layhill Village homes on Village Lane, **Heritage Lane**, and Rippling Brook Drive; and the Georgian Forest homes on Verona Court).

- 2604 to 2709 Village Lane (11 homes)
- 14100 to 14128 Heritage Lane (13 homes)
- 14100 to 14217 Rippling Brook Drive (23 homes)
- 3100 to 3117 Verona Court (8 homes)

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In July of 2023, we received a membership inquiry from the owner of 13329 Foxhall Drive, which is about 2 blocks south of Strathmore at Bel Pre Section 16.

### **j. Special Projects (updated)**

- Continued identifying the section number for each street address within the BPRA – this month added:
  - Broomall Court
  - Village Lane

Initially, this is being used to update the “Streets within SBP” webpage.

Once all the homes in SBP have been done, the list can be used to greatly simplify the process of responding to HOA document package requests.

- History project - we now have a nearly complete set of copies of the BPRA minutes from:
  - September 19, 1966 (the first meeting of the Board of Directors) to January 22, 1976
  - January 27, 1978 to April 30, 1986
  - October 22, 1990 to December 6, 1993
  - February 22, 1999 to December 20, 2004
  - August 22, 2005 to the present (missing Board minutes for 8/2/16, 9/10/16, 3/18, 4/18 monthly meeting, and 4/18 property walk-through; and annual meetings for 2016-19)

Some of the copies of the BPRA minutes are missing attachments that are referenced in the main text of those minutes.

The Strathmore Bel Pre Civic Association has an almost complete set of *The Bugle* (the only major gap is July 1969 to April 1970). The Civic Association also has a reasonably complete set of SBPCA Board minutes from the late 1980s to the present.

The long-term plan is to post all of the BPRA and SBPCA minutes and all of the issues of *The Bugle* on the StathmoreBelPre.Org website.

### **6) Nominating Committee Report (Mark Foraker, Chair):**

An update will be given at the August Board Meeting. KP

### **7) Long Term Planning Committee (Karen Purdy, Chair):**

No change since January 2023.

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### **8) Grounds and Landscaping Report (Ted Bechtol, Chair):**

The Volunteer Garden group made a service visit on July 13 at 10:30am to do some light weeding, dead-heading spent flowers, pruning and watering as necessary to keep the landscape plantings looking good, especially prior to the last few swim meets for the season. There was substantial pine debris from the thunderstorm of Friday July 28th with one medium sized ash tree broken off at about 10', located on the property line NW of the Volleyball Court.

### **9) Tennis & Pickleball Courts Committee**

Mid-Atlantic Asphalt Company completed annual cleaning of the courts in late June, together with repairs both to the failed product areas from last year's installation, plus remediation of any new crack lines. No invoice for services has been received from the company, which suggests all work will in fact be covered by our warranty with any extraneous expense absorbed by the company.

### **10) Administrative Assistant's Report:**

This position is vacant. No report is being produced. kp

### **11) Pavilion Scheduler/Pool Pass Coordinator/Tennis Court Keys Distributor:**

Jim Eaton is responsible for tennis/pickleball court key distribution.

Carmen Wong is Pavilion Scheduler. She has agreed to continue in 2023. Pavilion and facility use requests that need Board approval will be discussed at the meeting.

Karen Purdy has been taking care of eSoft Planner issues.

### **12) MapMaster Report (Paul Spelman):**

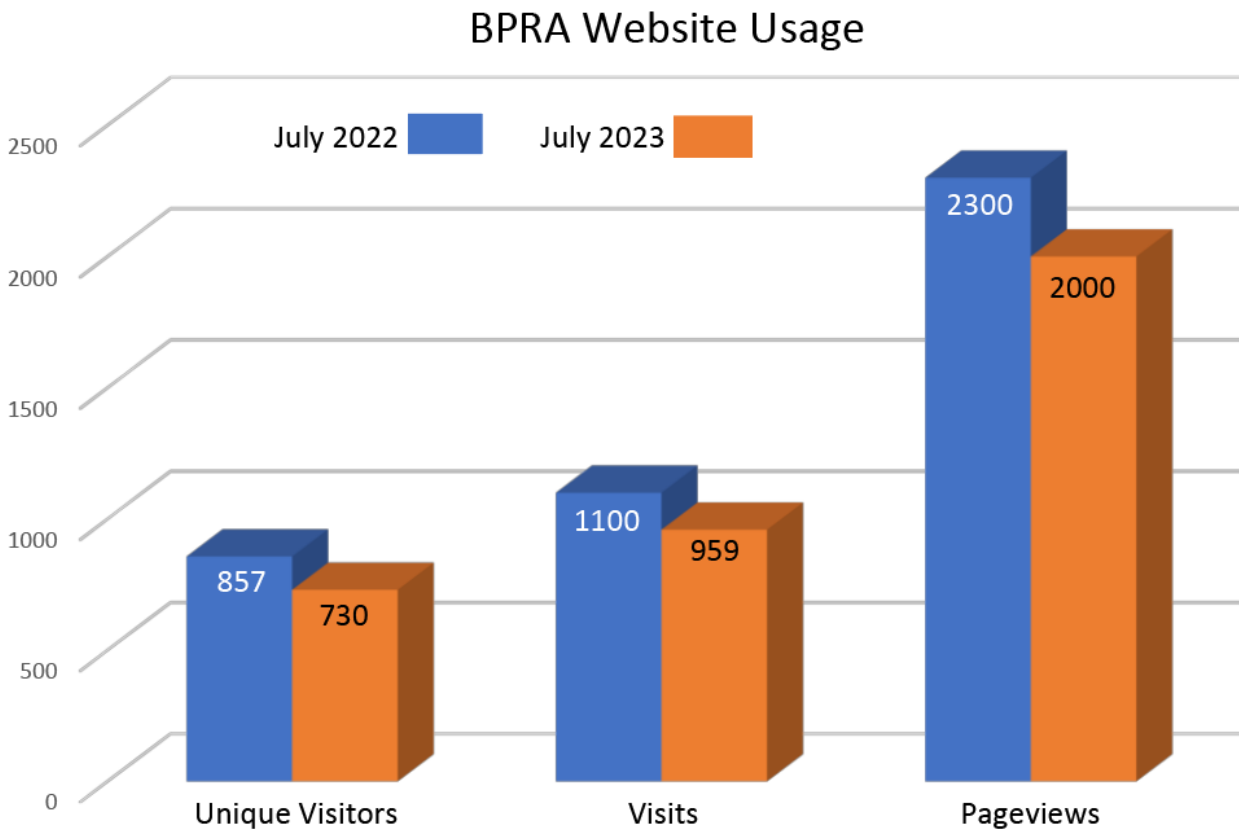
No change since January 2023.

### **13) New Member Recruitment Report (Dave Pullen)**

Barrie School has advised us it no longer seeks BPRA membership for 2355 Deckman Lane, at least at this time. 13912 Rippling Brook has not yet responded to an invitation for a "trial season" at the pool. Before the Annual Meeting, I propose that the Board discuss whether a more aggressive, organized "membership drive" be undertaken to grow the number of BPRA member- properties, and with what limitations (if any).

## BPRC Committee Reports and Updates for the August 2023 BPRC Board of Trustees Meeting

### 14) Web Master Report (Billy Ruppert):



Visits by Device	July 2022	June 2023
Desktop	500	336
Mobile	596	612
Tablet	12	11