

Greetings CMR residents,

As I resign as the Roads Committee chairman, I want to share some things with you. I know that I have many good friends here in Cedar Mesa, but there are also more than a few new residents who have no idea who I am, or what is going on.

I got involved with the CMR Roads Committee in 2016, soon after beginning work on our property here. I took over as the committee chair some time in 2018, and have served to the best of my ability since then. Committee members have always considered our obligation to the residents as providing the best condition roads possible with the budget we have available. I have said repeatedly that my loyalty is to the roads, not to any CMR Board of Directors president or member, and I feel that I have been true to that statement all along.

The Road Committee has been responsible for the planning and maintenance of 10 miles of roadway in Cedar Mesa. While most of us only drive a couple miles at the most to the highway, we must realize that Cedar Mesa has enough roads to stretch from our entrance to City Market in Cortez. It is also worth noting that not only the roadway needs care, but the ditches as well, and roads have ditches on both sides. That means 20 miles of ditch must be scrutinized after rain events, and areas with drainage issues addressed. This is all being done by a handful of residents who volunteer to help out.

I likely don't need to give an economics lesson before talking about inflation, but it is important to recognize that inflation constantly reduces the amount we can do with our budget, which is based on dues collected and set by a dollar amount. At present, our \$550 annual dues amounts to less "value" than the \$450 we collected in 2014. Google "inflation calculator" to investigate this reality yourselves if you like. It's fairly eye opening.

In 2018, we asked the residents for a \$100 increase in dues, with a detailed explanation of how that money would directly benefit the roads and their maintenance. This measure garnered only slightly more than 50% support from participating residents, with 47 voting in favor and 40 in opposition. Because a dues increase requires 50% of members (70 votes) to approve it, it did not pass.

To combat the ever-reducing amount of maintenance that our budget will support, committee members and CMR have picked up some pieces of equipment since that time. In 2018, I bought and installed a grader blade under my dump truck. I paid for this equipment out of my own pocket, assuming it would also be useful for snow removal. I often used it to spot grade on my way to or from the gravel pit as I was building our driveway. At other times I used the dump truck to pick up a load of roadbase for CMR, and then used the scraper to lay it out. I graded entire sections of road with it when there were no other options and the weather provided opportunity, but quickly realized that it was not ideal for this kind of work. It was a very handy tool for doing quick repairs to short sections of road before problems could get bigger. I did not get paid for using this tool, but I used it because it made my task of keeping the roads in better condition easier.

With the support of the many residents who attended a stakeholder meeting in 2019, and with approval from the Board at the time, the Roads Committee purchased some equipment early in 2020 to help us do more work ourselves. This equipment is the CMR owned water truck and the CMR owned road grader. These pieces of equipment allowed two things: First, they reduced our reliance on contractors. Second, they allowed us to take advantage of precipitation or wet times of the year to make improvements, rather than trying to make them when the roads were dry. These changes allowed our

volunteers to do more work on weekends, or when their schedule allowed, rather than having to take off time to work with a contractor on the contractor's schedule. They also resulted in improved road conditions through increased opportunity to do preventative maintenance.

I and others fit in this work when we had time, and we used whatever equipment we personally owned in combination with CMR's equipment to get it done. I am not retired, nor are many of the committee members. We put in a LOT of hours over the years and contrary to rumors, we have never been paid for doing roadwork.

For new residents, it's easy to complain about a section of washboard here and there, or that the road is a little bumpy overall. I submit to those residents that the roads today are tremendously better than they were just five or six years ago. My first summer in CMR saw Road 35 as dusty loose washboard most of the time from the entrance to the bottom of the big hill, a 2.3 mile distance. All summer long, dust hung in the valley and along the road and choked out our views, as well as our neighbors. In the winter months, the roads were often muddy and rutted due to snow melt.

I take pride in the fact that the Roads Committee has been able to steadily improve the condition of our roads over the last seven years while our budget has not increased, and our contractor and dust treatment costs have gone up steadily. We have accomplished this by doing more ourselves, and by leveraging the expertise of Cedar Mesa residents when possible. We have corrected serious deficiencies in our roadways, and created a road network that stays in generally good condition year round.

Unfortunately, under the direction of our latest Board President, Allen Giannakopoulos, this volunteer work has been directly and indirectly discouraged through the many safety or liability concerns he has instilled in the Board. I have been prohibited from using my dump truck at all, even though I used it sparingly as a way to affect quick repairs, not to grade entire sections of road. In meetings with the President, I have been informed that the Roads Committee has been "backwards" for too long. His take is that the Committee should not be doing constant assessments and appropriate maintenance, rather we should be doing the maintenance the Board commands us to do.

That might make sense if we had Board members with a background in road maintenance, and a Roads Committee composed only of shovel operators. In reality, what we have is the other way around... Our committee members have 130+ years of "professional" road maintenance experience outside CMR and 40+ cumulative years of experience dealing with CMR roads issues exclusively. This is not to say the roads are perfect, but that we do the best we can with the budget and equipment we have and are allowed to use.

In recent months, the President has made it clear to us that disbanding the Roads Committee is his ultimate goal. He believes we should be paying contractors to do 100% of our roadwork. He is presently obtaining quotes to develop a budget to realize that goal, and to do a "better" job than we have been able to do under our current budget. We as a Committee actually support the effort of showing the residents what it would cost to do work without volunteers. Our experience also tells us that doing so will be several times more expensive for residents if the current state of the roads is to be kept or improved. A dues increase to support his budget will still require support from a majority of residents, which we believe is as unlikely now as it was in 2018 when we asked for only a minor increase. Allen's plan, which has been clearly spoken to a few of us is to coerce residents into supporting such a measure

by allowing the main roads to degrade so that residents will eventually feel compelled to support a SIGNIFICANT dues increase.

To aid in his plan to eliminate the Roads Committee and have a "Safety and Scheduling Committee" handle all road work coordination, he has pushed for more and more impediments to us actually doing volunteer road work, and more ways to find fault with us when we fail to meet all of his demands. The autonomy of the Roads Committee is the only thing he doesn't have absolute control over at this time, and I can assure the residents that he has been working hard to gain control! Instead of helping us continue to do a good job volunteering to do roadwork while he tries to get support for an increased budget, he has worked against us in every way possible.

He has most recently convinced the Board that we are "unsafe" and putting the HOA at risk of significant liability when we do roadwork, and added more demands for notices via email (which the Board recognized nobody really reads at the very meeting they voted to require it!) and traffic control plans for EVERY task that we might do with no exceptions, in similar fashion to what CDOT does on major highways. Interestingly, ALL of his concerns lead to Allen having ultimate say over everything that goes on, in this case by being the approver of any traffic control plans we submit.

I discovered recently that he is working with a few contractors to have them come and evaluate the maintenance opportunities on our roadway. That is something that we as a committee do constantly, and we could certainly share a detailed report with the Board if requested. Unfortunately, Allen will not ask any resident about things he doesn't already know. His recent effort to have the Board vote to sell the grader is a shining example of how he seeks information from outside our community, then tries to use that information against us even when it has no relevance to what we do, or how we operate.

At this time, I think it best to grant him his wish to have full control of road maintenance. I have resigned as Road Committee Chairman as of the Sept 14, 2022 Road Committee meeting. I can no longer justify the loss of sleep, and the amount of time that I spend fighting to continue to do this work.

At the same meeting, the Roads Committee Members have unanimously decided to indefinitely suspend Committee activities. It simply does not make sense for us to continue to struggle against a Board that does not value our efforts enough to even try to help. I believe that we all want good roads, but the amount of work now required to do any amount of roadwork places enough additional burden on us as volunteers that we can no longer justify fighting for the right to volunteer. Though we know that most residents appreciate what we do, when those same residents are apathetic to the actions of the Board in making our work more difficult, and coloring our committee as irresponsible or negligent, those residents are just as responsible as the Board Members themselves in discouraging our efforts. The last "special meeting" had only two residents in attendance who were not Board or committee members, or spouses of those groups. This lack of support when it actually matters is unacceptable to us as Road Committee members and volunteers.

If the Board and members decide in the future that maintaining our roads in a financially responsible way is preferred, many of us will likely resume volunteer maintenance activities, but only if we are allowed to volunteer without hassle, and when we have the time, not at a time dictated by announcements and overbearing conditions set by the Board. This likely means the removal of Allen as President, and preferably from the Board entirely.


We are truly disappointed that Allen could not support our volunteer effort while looking for what he considered a more appropriate way to do maintenance entirely with contractors. Rather he found ways to constantly berate us while placing more and more impediments in our way and making our volunteer work require more work overall to affect any direct road maintenance. He has done this while claiming that he wants to reduce volunteer efforts. He has eliminated two Board meetings a year so Board Members don't have to give up "so much" of their time while drastically increasing the time the roads committee must spend doing administrative tasks so that we can then spend time doing the actual work.

At one time the Roads Committee had discussed having ALL residents of CMR be members of the Committee, and in some sense, we still think that is correct. The excuse that "I pay my dues, so I shouldn't have to be involved" is wrong. We understand that some people are unable to do some activities, but being involved is as easy as sending a letter to the Board, or attending a meeting, or making a phone call. In our opinion, every property owner in CMR has the responsibility to assist with the maintenance of the roads in whatever way they can. The alternative is that residents opt to pay more and have less work done by volunteers. That would be acceptable as well, but it has not been the case to date.



Chris Hinds
Former CMR Roads Committee Chairman

As stated above, all Roads Committee Members are, at his time, discontinuing active participation until such time as there is a change in the executive leadership of the HOA and the membership elects a Board of Directors that supports our volunteer efforts.


Diane Cherbak 

Chris Hinds 

Kim Lanyon 

John Lett 

Gretchen Magwitz 

Stan Mattingly 

Phil Mayor 

Rob Moy 

Dave Oswald 

Terry Wheeler 

Cathy Wyant 