

October 23, 2023

Tolomato Owners' Newsletter

Tolomato SIG - Elections Newsletter Insert

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Meet the Candidates

In what will become a new Tolomato Island tradition, neighbors were invited to meet the candidates, a social event where not only did the candidates meet potential supporters, but owners had an opportunity renew old friendships, and to meet newcomers to the community and neighbors just a few doors away. In an impromptu session, the candidates, Steve Anderson, John Bagwell, George Bigham, Lynn Brenton, and Heather Rowe were invited to answer questions from folks attending. There were no scripts, no "governing documents" to leaf



through, just real people standing in front of their peers, answering real questions. As questions moved more toward complaints, one owner said (paraphrased): "We know what has happened; we need a change in leadership. We should focus on moving forward." Taking his good advice, folks moved back to what we do best, socializing, and getting to know each other.

Change is already taking place – an open, respectful, and productive gathering, where candidates answered questions and discussed their approaches. None have a problem representing the whole community or would kowtow to some group. It was a nice event, that will be repeated.

The need for "directed" proxies.

Owners who cannot attend the annual meeting have in the past been given the opportunity to give their legal ability to vote (a proxy) to another party (also called a proxy). The proxy forms provided have been a general proxy, which simply grants the person given the proxy the authority to do as he or she wishes. They are not

obliged to vote for anyone and can in various ways vote against qualified candidates by, for example, voting for someone less qualified. In other words, proxies can be abused.

We favor directed proxies, which list the candidates' names. The principal (the person issuing the proxy) can then direct the other party to vote only for their choices. A directed proxy acts more like an absentee ballot, with the principal actively participating in the election.

- While we will support who we consider the best candidates to represent all Tolomato Owners, we think all candidates should be listed on a "directed proxy" form.
- The Covenants require that proxies be submitted to the TIPOA Secretary before the annual meeting. To prevent abuse, proxies should remain sealed until after voting.
- While we tend to think of a group of candidates with a common platform as a "slate", they are actually running against each other. Candidates for office, or any nominated from the floor, should not hold proxies. That is, they should not have the ability to skew an election.
- Prior to the election we will name several persons who will and have acted in the best interests of ALL association members, that you can name to execute your proxy as you direct.

OMG!! Fake News – The cure; ask the candidates questions.

We aren't in the rumor mongering business, but the apparent opposition certainly is. We can't believe what is being spread to denigrate capable candidates. We have a fix – Go to the Tolomato Owner's web site www.tolomatoowners.org and directly ask the candidates questions. They will respond. Here are 4 examples, that nobody should believe!

Fake News 1 – If "those candidates" are elected they will drain the pond and add another big swimming pool. This Board supports the pond.

Truth - Both are absurd. This Board has done nothing for the pond. The Pond Committee takes care of the pond and is best left alone and properly funded. Nobody is talking about a big swimming pool, except detractors.

Fake News 2 – Steve has 3 lots and will build a 6800 sq. ft. McMansion, with a helicopter pad.

Truth - Laughable!! Steve Anderson does own 3 lots, which McIntosh County has combined. He wants to build in the middle of 2 of them, which will save trees, and create more open space. He is a supporter of combining lots. His preliminary plans submitted to the ARB are for a 2-story home with 3800 sq. ft. Here are some facts:

- There are 16 homes on Tolomato Island over 3800 sq ft. including the homes of two members of the current ARB. Seven of the 16 are over 4500 square ft, according to county records.
- 1 current member of the ARB owns 8 lots, two ARB members own 3 lots.
- The President of the Board of Directors owns 3 lots, two Board members own 2 lots.

Fake News 3 – Steve is suing the TIPOA regarding combining lots. There is a good chance he will win. If he does, every owner will have to write him a check!!

Truth - Steve has been denied the opportunity to build on his combined lot by the Board and ARB. Steve has not yet filed suit. If he does file suit, he does have a good chance of winning. Any awarded costs or compensation will be paid by Insurance. If there is malfeasance proven against the Board officers or the ARB, they will be writing checks, as insurance will not indemnify them. And, if Steve does file suit, he will recuse himself, to avoid any conflict of interest. Steve the other endorsed candidates will represent all owners with absolute integrity.

Fake News 4 – If you are building a home, you cannot be unbiased.

Truth - Board members should never be in a position where there is any appearance of a conflict of interest. Building a house doesn't preclude service to the community. The current Treasurer who had contracted to build a home was allowed to sit in on discussions involving her contractor. That was a perceived conflict of interest.

You can't make an omelet unless you crack a few eggs – continued from past Newsletter.

“Problems need exposure. They need scrutiny and your thoughts. Together, as an open community, we'll debunk those myths and deal with any bull.”

Cracked Egg #4 - “The resumes are too long; nobody will read them.”

Consultants convinced business for a time that executive candidates who couldn't summarize their experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs remember those?) in less than a page shouldn't be hired. What is true for the real ability (in sales) to make “elevator pitches”, didn't always translate to hiring, so some businesses wound up with new executives that were challenged just trying to find the restroom. Resumes may also seem too long if you know the candidate. But, what about all the owners who don't know the candidates? Should they be denied the opportunity to learn about candidates that will affect their personal life?

The candidate resumes we provided are of reasonable length, providing a bit of information about the person, his/her goals, their experience. We encourage you to read them and ask questions of the candidates on the Tolomato Owners web site. www.tolomatoowners.org

Cracked Egg # 5 – “Please be sure to send emails intended for the Board of Directors to board@tolomato.org”

The email address above, goes only to the President of the Board of Directors who may not share the email with all the other Board members. If you send something to the Board of Directors, it is a good idea to copy them individually (Susan Fardy, Cliff Sowell, Judy Flatt, George Bigham). Similarly email from the Board may not be from all board members, nor are all members given a chance to view, never mind edit or change the material sent to you.

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Tolomato Owners' Newsletter

Preserving Our Valued Assets

Tolomato is a beautiful place. We see that every day. And it will always be beautiful if history is any indication. William Carnochan must have found it beautiful after he arrived in Savannah in 1812 from Jamaica. As one of his endeavors, he chose *The Thicket* to support his sugar cane and rum distillery business.

And we are lucky to be caretakers of our prehistoric assets (First Nation burial mounds) and historic assets, the tabby ruins, and the slave graveyard.



Rum was advertised for sale in a Savannah newspaper as early as 1817. However, a devastating hurricane – one that saw the water level rise 10-12' in our neighborhood – put an end to the distillery business.

Much has happened, and much can be said about our ruins, perhaps the most significant being that this was the first rum distillery in the state of Georgia.



But what do we do to preserve these ruins?

The Historical Preservation Committee has greatly pondered that question and has come up with a phased approach.

Removing biomass and trees that could damage the ruins has been an on-going activity. After soliciting advice from three arborists, at no cost to the Community, a plan was put in place to address their concerns.

We then were fortunate enough to find Brittian Flowers of True Cut Saw Works, LLC in Townsend. He has been carefully and cost-efficiently tending to our tree removal needs. Hold onto that name for a second.

The next critical step would be to replace the missing lintels over the windows and doorway to prevent the tabby "headers" from caving in on themselves.



From our preliminary analysis, we have counted 33 areas that need attention: 11 failing critically, 10 failing soon, and 12 to be monitored closely.

Working with Brittian and his very capable crew over the years, we have shared the history of the ruins with them and have seen them appreciate the ruins for what they are and noticed their growing interest in their preservation. As we shared our early plans for replacing the lintels, Brittian eagerly raised his hand and committed to supplying the oak dimensional lumber

we would need to support the openings in the remaining tabby walls to keep them from collapsing. He didn't even need to be asked. He was simply showing his commitment to what he recognized as an important effort. And for that we thank him.



Can the Committee perform this work? To ensure that we weren't approaching this naively and biting off more than we could chew, we visited the Strain Building downtown and spoke with Fred Ecker, the former owner and current Project Manager for Landmark Preservation in Savannah, the firm performing the restoration and adaptive reuse of the building.

It didn't take Fred long to become as excited about our preservation efforts – a credit to his professionalism

and dedication to the field – and he agreed to walk around the ruins with us and provide his assessment. He agreed with our approach and noted that it was well within our capabilities. PHEW!

Please reach out to the Committee if you are inspired to get involved with this next phase of our ruin's stabilization efforts. Is it a worthwhile venture? Look at a picture of the distillery building from 1934 and one from 2020. See what you think.



Editorial Panel (EP) – We thank the Historical Preservation Committee and particularly Phil Sikora and Doug Burger for this article. It demonstrates what empowered volunteers can accomplish. Stay tuned.