

QUESTION 1: "What was the impetus for starting a Village in the first place? What circumstances suggested the need?"

RESPONSE: The growing desire to age in place rather than moving into senior developments was the impetus for the Village Movement in the US. Some were formed as early as 1987 (Ballard Senior Center in Seattle, WA) and 2002 (Beacon Hill Village in Boston, MA).

In 2012, Betty Rossi invited neighbors of Mill Creek Towne to her home to discuss the notion of creating a village in MCT that would enable residents to age in place and have fun social gatherings to foster a strong sense of community. There were enough of us interested in the idea so we began meeting with some regularity to get the ball rolling. I personally had heard of the Ballard Senior Center from a friend in Seattle and wanted to be involved as a way to establish a village and pay it forward for when I may need help with grocery shopping, getting to doctor appointments and needed help in my home.

QUESTION 2: "Where did you turn to for advice with this relatively new concept? And what led to the decision that there would be no dues or fees, unlike most other villages today?"

RESPONSE: Beacon Hill Village documented how they developed their village and provided templates and processes for creating other villages. We also reached out to other villages that had formed in the DC area. Betty Rossi and I met with a board member of the Burning Tree Village to learn about their organization. They had opted to charge for membership so they could hire an administrator to run the village.

The core group that began developing by-laws so we could obtain 501-C3 non-profit status felt a membership fee in our neighborhood might not be well received and we decided to run our organization as volunteers and ask neighbors to donate what they felt was appropriate to support the village. I believe initially we suggested \$25 per household but some folks donated more. We also conducted at least one questionnaire to gather feedback from the community for what they wanted from MCV.

QUESTION 3: "Who acted as the driving force (s) to sell it to others in the community, recruit the volunteers and initiate the Village's formal creation? Do you recall the selling points?"

RESPONSE: Betty Rossi was clearly the driving force in establishing MCV. She was warm, loving and committed to creating an environment for "neighbors to help neighbors" as they aged. We all loved the idea of helping one another. We also wanted to include the young families in the neighborhood so it wasn't just an organization for seniors, but all residents of MCT. We even talked about a baby sitting co-op but that never took off. It's certainly something that could still be added as we have more young families settling here.

I suppose the selling points, were essentially the services we offer today, welcoming new neighbors to the neighborhood, our community newsletter, helping seniors with trips to doctor appointments or getting groceries, our social activities such as the game night, picnic, ice cream social, wine & cheese, and the walk around the town.

QUESTION 4: "Who served on that first Board and what kinds of services and activities did you initiate early on? "Wasn't there early discussions about the need to not only focus on our elderly neighbors but engage the community intergenerationally?"

RESPONSE: The committee that developed the by-laws ended up serving as the initial Board of Directors for the village. They were: Jim Blanton, Sandra Crausman, Barbara Feldman, Derek Harding, Jane Lewis, and WD McAdams. We were aided in developing the by-laws by Hal Halpern an attorney who donated his time and wisdom. Sue Richardson led the social committee, Judith Johnson led the volunteers and coordinated with Senior Connection for our volunteer drivers so we had insurance coverage for driving our neighbors, and Susanne Hardy was our newsletter editor.

Yes, we always strove to include all residents in our neighborhood to foster a strong community spirit among one another.

QUESTION 5: "Was the early experiences of establishing and operating the Village ones that made you hopeful or concerned about its sustainability?"

RESPONSE: We had to do some gentle arm twisting to get folks to sign up for board of director positions, but folks were generally willing to volunteer for committees.

QUESTION 6: "As Founders, what are your thoughts about where Mill Creek Village is today, as we celebrate a decade of community service?"

RESPONSE: I believe we have done an amazing job of fulfilling our mission and goal of serving everyone in our neighborhood. Some of our volunteers have been serving our village for the past 10 years and have the drive and desire to continue volunteering to help neighbors, with their time, effort and donations. I'd also like to give Joe Issacs a shout-out as he has led the board and help get grant money from the county and seek donations from local businesses that want to support MCV so that we have funds in our bank account to help cover expenses that facilitate our social events and annual meeting. We can all be very proud of Mill Creek Village. Here's to the next 10 years of service to our neighborhood!