

Manager's Report

July 26, 2016 (Meeting held on August 9)

By Rob Williams, VillaRosso Manager

rob@villarosso.net

Items Touched On in the Last Meeting

- Discussion with regards to the proper format for the meeting minutes. Previously there was an attempt to include various talking points discussed at the meeting in the official minutes. These notations were intended to record the informal expressions by those in attendance on a variety of topics. To keep the minutes succinct and to the point, and because they are the official record of the business conducted by the Association, it was decided by the manager to move these informal notes to the manager's report. This format for the minutes as transcribed by the manager is the generally accepted arrangement adopted by corporations and various governmental bodies, and is considered good form by those who oversee the governance of homeowner's associations.
- A complaint about inadequate air circulation through a certain unit possibly allowing stale air from another unit into the bathroom vents. The manager explored the possibility of some kind of blockage or breach in the ductwork and investigated with the homeowner but could find none. A clogged screen on an associated exhaust fan on the roof was discovered and has been subsequently cleaned by the manager. There was also a discussion of the importance to maintain open access for air to flow under the front door of the unit to promote the designed circulation of air within the unit.
- The lock for the roof access door has been rekeyed to exclude those with unauthorized access to the roof. Some vendors that need access to the roof have been given a new key for their use.
- The soffit at the front entry has been patched. Painting of the soffit has been scheduled.
- Comcast – no check had yet arrived from Comcast regarding the Service Agreement by the time of the last meeting. The manager did call the contact with Comcast who is researching the issue as the check should have been released a while ago.
- Residents written response to the new Codes for Community Living should be kept up to date.
- The DTC people shoveled the snow from the walks and blocked the driveway access at the last snow storm. Need to make them aware that they need to take more care when moving snow off the walkways.
- A question regarding extra hours billed by the management company and why any extra hours are allowed at all. The extra hours in question related to time spent by the manager outside normal business hours. The time was relative to supervision of work connected to clogged

plumbing and to the malfunctioning garage door on the weekend, and in one instance when a new resident's move-in went well beyond the normal cutoff time. (That cost was reimbursed by the resident). The point was made that the management contract was not set up on an hourly basis. As a result manager will invoice future such items as a service call.

- A source for a logo mat for the front door has been found and will be put on order to replace the one damaged by workman for unit 702. The cost will be reimbursed by the homeowner who were responsible for the damage.
- Emergency lights – Charles has ordered new emergency lights so we have a supply on hand to replace those that are found to be non-functioning.
- Remove unused/abandoned lockboxes from the bar on the wall outside P2 garage door. Mention in the next newsletter. People should identify their lockbox by a certain date or have it cut off.
- A question was raised about the unit keys maintained in the office for emergency access as required in the Declaration. During the power jetting process access to all units was necessary. This afforded an opportunity to verify all keys maintained in the office were valid. Residents that were found to not have a valid emergency key for the office did supply one except for three homeowners who have refused to do so.
- It was suggested that the Manager's Reports be made available on the website.

New Higher Performance Filters in the MAU

As explained in an article in the [July Newsletter](#), I replaced the ordinary filters in this unit with high-efficiency filters capable of removing much smaller particles from the air, including bacteria, finely ground air pollutants, and smoke. Generally speaking, particles that cause an odor are blocked with this level of filtration. This can only improve the quality of life inside the building since just about everybody has to breathe the air.

The filters I installed are rated "Merv 13," replacing the old "Merv 8's" that have been used routinely in the past.

I wondered why this was never done before and was a little concerned that I might be missing something that would somehow cause a major problem in the system if I were to be so bold as to go ahead with it. So I did my homework and researched the topic



Figure 1 -- Rooftop Make-Up Air Unit (MAU). Air is drawn from the square structures on the right. It is filtered then cooled or heated and delivered to the hallways on all floors through ductwork in the ceilings.

as much as I could. I even purchased my own manometer to measure the pressure differential in the filter section of the unit. Finally, I replaced the filters on July 5 and as it turned out there was no reason for concern. Airflow was just fine even with the more restrictive filters in place, and just checking with my nose as I walked around the building and then out onto the roof, there is a noticeable difference in odor present on the roof that wasn't noticeable inside the building. So I feel the experiment was a complete success.

I have posted more information on the topic of the filters and the air handling within the building in general. You can find it on the Manager's page of the website villarosso.net. Or you can just click [here](#).

Power Burner

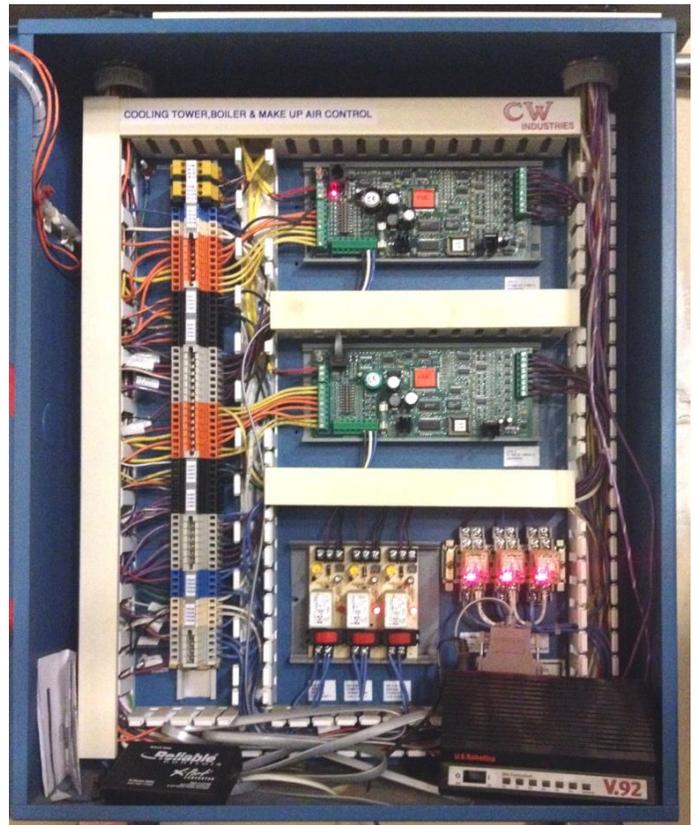
Frost Line Mechanical has overcome some obstacles in their quest to make repairs to the power burner "swirler." Part numbers in the literature didn't match what was on the unit installed. Schematic drawings on how the unit was assembled were also inaccurate. But a reputable firm has been found who will be able to supply the broken part. We are looking for installation of the new unit in August. With new components in place we should experience a greater degree of safety plus better fuel efficiency which hopefully means a lower the gas bill.



Figure 2 - The cylindrical section of the power burner that is inserted into the boiler. The end that is designed to induce the complete combustion of fuel is completely burned away.

CW Industries Control System

This panel coordinates the boiler, the cooling tower and the make-up air unit as well as various pumps and valves related to the proper operation of the HVAC system. Back in the day there was remote monitoring available to outside technicians (the small plastic boxes at the bottom). This means someone could log-on and see in real time how the various components were functioning. Presumably, adjustments to the programming could also be done remotely. For whatever reason this capability was abandoned (maybe because of the long outdated dial-up technology used). This was my initial motivation in contacting the manufacturer of this system, CW Industries. (I wanted to be able to log-on myself). There were also a number of other issues related to this system that I felt should be addressed. I enumerated them in an email to this company, asking for an estimate for the cost to provide these modification or upgrades:



- System appears to be set up for remote automation. What will it take to get that working.
- Tweaking of settings and programming to save energy. the boiler runs full-on all summer long and I think that's a huge waste. I plan to turn the boiler off manually in the summer but in transition periods (Spring and Fall) the system should be smart enough to run the boiler only when it is needed. (There are other energy saving fine tuning that can be applied, I've been told, for example...
- Take control of the boiler away from the boiler itself. This will allow monitoring of the temperature of the outside air and building circulation to adjust set points on the boiler to match with demand and environmental factors. Right now the boiler runs a rather dumb on-full-blast/full-off sequence.
- Check the programming for logic errors. I think there are periods when it is trying to do two opposite things at the same time and the boiler's safety trips – then it is off line until someone goes up to the roof and turns it back on. This has been an on-going problem for many years.
- I want to upgrade the filters in the MAU and would like to install a differential pressure sensor in the air stream to alert when a filter change is actually needed by measurement rather than with a random schedule, and it would be great if it had remote monitoring capability as well.
- Water during the cooling mode in the MAU does not turn off in a timely manner, ultimately running onto the roof like a hose with the valve left open. This also causes the filters to get overly soggy and droopy, and eventually they fall out of their holders to the bottom of the unit.
- Finally I want to know if CW Industries is our go-to people for service with reasonable response time if the system goes down and we need service.

After over 20 phone contacts over the last three months to this company I could get exactly zero of the above issues answered except for the last one. For whatever reason, I don't think these people are

actually capable of doing anything to this system at all, including upgrading or programming or servicing in any way. This means the only option is to buy a completely new system. Doing this before it breaks down would be beneficial as there would be time to make an informed decision, rather than go into emergency mode when there is a sudden failure and be forced to take whatever we can get in a hurry.

New Internet Sprinkler Timers

Last season the old-fashioned clock-type sprinkler timer died and needed to be replaced. Quotes from the landscape company used last year (GroundMasters) came in at \$1,200 for a similar unit and \$3,500 for an internet capable version but involved other fees which nearly doubled that cost. Ultimately I installed a professional grade internet capable unit at a cost to VillaRosso of \$600.00. This included a network connection to the controller outside on the east end of the building. That network connection turned out to be more trouble than I expected. I ran the wire myself and even drilled through the concrete foundation which turned out to be 12 inches thick. But the system is now in place and works like a charm. Adjustments to the programming is virtually effortless on the computer in the office or anywhere. It is nice to have the capability to modify the sprinkler programming when needed, such as when a thunderstorm comes by. I just open my computer or pick up my iPhone and a few taps on the screen and it's done. I'm hoping the more wise and efficient use of water will impact VillaRosso's water bill in a very positive way.

Taking Over Design Mechanical PM Duties

We declined to renew the annual contract for preventative maintenance of the HVAC system. VR was paying \$4,450.00 annually for this service but essentially all that was really happening was replacing filters in the MAU twice a year and installing fan belts once a year. Actual cost for the filters they were using for the MAU is about \$150 (that's retail). There is really no need to change fan belts every year except to sell VR some rather expensive fan belts every year. I will take over the filter and fan belt changing duties. The upgraded Merv 13 filters cost about \$250 each time. Fan belts will be changed when they fail. Some of those fan belts I will easily last 10 years. Other things they were doing on the "PM" contract really are not so difficult such as "checking proper operation" of things, something they did when they are on site about every other month. I provide this service as well, however I do it virtually every day as I walk through the building and the equipment on the roof.