

There has been a considerable amount of misinformation spreading at Causeway regarding our recent Spa (hot tub) issues. The board wants owners to be aware of the current facts regarding our tubs.

Since approximately 2009, each residential-styled tub within our 52 twin home units has been reclassified as a "public pool" by the Minnesota Department of Health. Meaning that each one of these tubs must meet all of the requirements of a public pool (drain configuration, plumbing, flow rates, chemicals, testing, etc.) With Management's help, and our legal counsel Richard Hawke back in 2009, each tub was examined and modified to meet these public pool requirements after those 2009 statute changes, and they have been maintained by Management and inspected by the Minnesota Department of Health successfully during all of the years since. However, this past year, a unit occupant reported seeing "mold" in one of our spa rooms. When a new State inspector came out, he found no evidence of mold, but he began to inspect the spas, as he felt that some of those original 2009 upgrades may no longer be in compliance with new rules for public pools that have progressed over the years since.

Upon completing that inspection, he determined that most of the tubs needed new drain covers, marked with a newer stamp for compliance, and that some of the tubs needed other modifications to be completely in compliance moving forward. He also noted that every tub needed inspection every day, regardless of whether an owner or occupant wished to allow access for those inspections to occur, or not. So, he immediately, ordered the shut down of all of the tubs until new parts could replace the old, and until all of these conditions could be met.

The Board immediately authorized the purchase of approximately \$8000.00 worth of needed parts, and management has since attempted the repairs as required by the State. However, during this shutdown timeframe, plumbing fittings, seals and plumbing lines on many of the tubs have dried and cracked causing serious new leaking, which is a common problem when pool equipment sits closed for any length of time and then is attempted to reopened. Additionally, some of the plumbing repairs required underneath the tubs, have no access for that work to be completed, without completely removing the tub shell from the enclosure that surrounds it. Essentially meaning that the plumbing lines must be cut and disconnected from the tubs, in order to lift the tub from the enclosure and replumb any new or leaking fittings located tight to the outside wall.

Worse, in some cases our pool technicians are finding that it is not just plumbing lines, jet fittings, and drain covers needing attention. They are also finding small cracks and leaks around skimmer baskets and the housing around fittings where there may be failures in the tub shell itself. Meaning a completely new tub would potentially need to be purchased to rectify the problem. The equipment underneath these tubs has been under constant maintenance and replacement for the last 30 years, but the tub shells themselves are originals, and the cost to do those could be in the \$8000 to \$12,000 range depending on what style was chosen.

So, once again, the Association is in a very difficult situation. The Board has authorized management to continue the tub-by-tub modifications with the parts that have already been purchased, and to continue to update the Board on what is found regarding the more seriously damaged tubs. However, we have not modified those orders to buy more parts and/or replace any spas at this time. To do that, we would have to re-evaluate the purpose for the recent special assessment.

Recall, that the Board special assessed the membership after the surveys and requests from the 2021 Annual Meeting. The results of that survey were for commencing new carpet work in the units, as the first priority for those dollars, and then possibly another special assessment this coming year to finish that carpeting work and move on to replacing the remaining living room furniture. However, if the spas all of a sudden became a higher priority, we would have to discontinue the current carpeting work occurring right now, and move in a different direction. So, more surveying of the membership may need to be done, as well as additional evaluation on whether or not the spas are worth the money to keep in our units. It is also possible that we may wish to replace those units with a whirlpool bath-styled unit that would be less expensive and not under the constant review and inspection of the Minnesota Department of Health. The Board discussed several options at our last meeting that were 2-person styled tubs with heaters that might be a better alternative. But regardless of what decision is made, the Board cannot just start spending the carpeting special assessment money on an unknown amount of spa repairs with no end in sight.

Again, this update is so owners understand this spa issue is not some minor maintenance matter that is taking longer than anticipated to correct. This is a major issue, needing major evaluation, on tubs that are over 30 years old, and it is completely possible that owners may help us decide that another direction for these spa units needs to be taken. While this work is occurring, some tubs may be functional, while others may not, and once full evaluation is complete, we will relay those results, so that we can all decide what steps might be best taken for final resolution.