

DHVA Roof Maintenance Report

Regular inexpensive maintenance, not an unneeded \$2M-\$3M “Roof Replacement”?

Introduction: The Diamond Heights Village Association (DHVA), having suffered roof leaks on *some* of its 14 residential roofs, knowing that our usual Reserve Study calls for all new roofs every 20 years, obtained a useful detailed “Roof Report,” (November 29, 2023), from our longtime (2007 to now) roofing vendor, GoGreen Roofing. Included was their Proposal for a complete “tear-off” demolition and re-installation of a “built-up” bitumen (asphalt) hot tar & gravel “Roof Replacement” (not *repair*) for \$1,930,100, *not* including many very expensive exclusions, extra costs, and the inevitable change orders.

The board ask me to look into this \$2M+ Proposal, research alternatives, and report back. We’re wisely hiring a Construction Manger to advise, plan and oversee our long-term roof maintenance, including obtaining multiple proposals from roofing contractors. “Roof replacement” may/may not be needed. GoGreen’s bid may not win.

History: In the rainy season of January, 2001, as part of a \$6.2M Special Assessment, the board compelled a reluctant Star Roofing to demolish the 14 existing hot tar roofs down to the top floor knothole pine ceiling boards, through which you could see the sky! A thick perimeter was built up to start and then 2 weeks of heavy rains hit, filling each roof’s “lake” and flooding the top floor units. DHVA paid hefty for that water damage. That roof project was much needed, but not that board’s expensive mistakes.

Method: I quickly found two websites and I urge you to compare them both to learn more:

- GoGreen, at <https://www.gogreenroofco.com/>, pushes “Cool Roofs,” sheets and coatings, but nothing about the asphalt hot tar and gravel roofing in their own Proposal and nothing about installing a superior SFR roof.
- Contrast that with the wealth of roofing information at Ohio’s <https://westroofingsystems.com/>, especially:
 - > The pros/cons of Spray Foam Roofing (SFR), a white closed-cell polyurethane foam vs. a built-up’s smelly toxic hot tar & gravel bitumen (asphalt). See also their FAQs, videos, blog, pricing calculator, and reports. More fascinating facts from that site...
 - > A SFR roofing system is good in any climate and over any existing roof! When expertly installed and maintained, it can last more than 50 years (cf. 20 years for hot tar & gravel). Walkways can be added.
 - > A SFR roof saves significant energy and delivers thermal, air and moisture barriers, with the highest R-Value of any insulation material available! Ask for “Pros and Cons of Commercial Roofing Systems.pdf,” that I have.

Analysis: GoGreen’s \$2M “Roof Replacement” Proposal excludes “temporary roof coverings,” carpentry, “roof related lead & sheet metal products, insulation stops, wood nailers” and “structural work, insulation,” as well as “permits, permit procurement, engineering, drawings, plans, plan check fees, processing, and ADA code upgrades,” etc. *Given that every DHVA major project since 2000 has gone more than 50% over the initial approved estimate, expect this one to do the same.* If approved, plan on spending \$3M+, which we don’t have.

Recommendations: Working with a good construction manager, the board should establish a detailed Roof Maintenance Policy to immediately seal any reported leaks and also frequently repair surface damage, along with regularly publishing professional inspection reports. That may be enough to postpone any major roof work while we build back our severely depleted Reserve Fund and avoid a special assessment.

Rather than continuing to sole-source these major projects and services to FirstService Residential’s captive vendors, we should always obtain three or more detailed bids based on professionally written Request For Proposals (RFPs). See <https://www.davis-stirling.com/HOME/B/Bidding-Policy> for what’s needed to instead hire the best of the best!

While I'm life-long environmentalist and had a long career at the US-EPA, I must urge you all to reject outright expensive, half-baked, feel-good proposals, such as attaching solar panels to our roofs, greatly complicating routine maintenance, accounting, governance, management, and fairness to all. As I understand it, the current such proposal is to some way feed solar panel power into the OSC meters of select units, reducing their electrical cost. Not clear on how the majority of units would benefit from this? More importantly, DHVA simply cannot afford this complex idea, not now and not until Reserve Funds are healthy and a detailed coherent plan is presented. Even then, pass a special assessment to fund it, if you can.

Meanwhile, I urge careful scrutiny, frugality and 3 or more bids on every big expense, project or service, while DHVA and its Members attempt to survive the economic maelstrom engulfing us and the world. Thank you.

Terence Groeper

Terence Groeper, DHVA Director-At-Large, continuously from 2021 to 2025.

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