

Talisman update report from Brian Ellis

*As provided for the Jan. 31, 2015, annual meeting
of the Beaver Valley Ratepayers Association,
reprinted courtesy of the BVRA*

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the former Talisman Property. Let me start by announcing the new name. After much consultation and analysis, the new name of the hotel will be:

Talisman Mountain Springs Inn

The Inn will have a comfortable feel surrounded by the natural beauty of the Beaver Valley. The “Inn” denotes the fact that we are a place to stay and relax in an upscale, yet unpretentious setting. The “Springs” is merely an acknowledgement that we have a bountiful supply of springs and rivers on the property. The “Mountain” states our geography on the Talisman “mountain” and the Talisman Mountain [Drive] address.

The Talisman name was the most contentious issue. It conjures up a lot of memories, both good and some not so good, due to the recent closure. After exhaustive research, it is clear that the Talisman name is well known and popular throughout the region, particularly in the GTA. History is something to embrace and the heritage of the Talisman property is tied closely to the development and history of the Beaver Valley since the early 1960's. The name displays renewal while holding fast to its heritage.

The renovation at Talisman, while reflecting renewal, embraces much of its initial charm. As you are aware, the new Talisman will no longer be a ski destination and, with plenty of skiing in the area, we certainly can serve as a first class accommodation for those who are participating in the sport locally.

The Main Lodge building (Building 1) currently is undergoing a substantial face-lift. The building initially was constructed in 1960. This was a very good year to be born (55 on Feb. 1st) but not a great year for construction that meets our current energy wise conditions. The average insulation in Building 1 was around an R7 rating. Over the years, many additions and adjustments have been made to Talisman but upgrading behind the walls was not a priority. To us, improving the insulation is vitally important from both an environmental footprint point of view and as a cost of utility and building preservation point of view. A building that is not well insulated is extremely expensive to heat and cool and leaves the structure vulnerable to mould, rot and other decay related issues. Insulating Building 1 has been our priority, and as such the new exterior will bump up the overall insulation value to over R22 sealing the building and preserving it for another generation. Additional improvements to the living environment will be upgrading all exterior windows and doors. This will improve energy efficiency and add to the new aesthetic design. We also are upgrading the decking and balcony materials including new handrails.

Further to this, we had extensive underground work done specifically to protect Building 1 from water penetration which has for many years affected it to the point of threatening the integrity of some of the structure. The new extensive drainage plan with damp-proofing and grading has been completed, engineer certified and it will protect the building from another water attack for many years.

Both of these programs add protection to Building 1, bringing the carbon footprint into a reasonable level and make the building prime for doing ongoing business.

The interiors are undergoing a significant upgrade. The rooms were completely torn out including all of the bathrooms. They will be reconstructed to a 5-star hotel standard with new furnishing, spa-like bathrooms and elegant surrounding finishes. We are very excited to see these come together over the Winter/Spring. The convention rooms are getting a face-lift and the large room on the 2nd level above the restaurant will become a more upscale ballroom with extensive renovations planned. The Lower Level room (which I affectionately refer to as our indoor pool due to the flooding) has been completely cleaned up and secured from future flooding issues.

Building 3 will be the home of the new Talisman Hot Springs Spa. This building will have a restaurant (2nd to the main dining room in Building 1) dedicated to the spa patrons. It includes a number of treatment rooms, a quiet lounge area, yoga studio, class room, change rooms and Business Offices. There will be a local artist studio where artisan work will be sold so that visitors may take a special memory of the Beaver Valley home with them. The exterior, at the front of the building facing Old Baldy, will be the new outdoor hot springs which will be natural spring water, heated primarily with a geothermal system. The large pools will include an extensive waterfall with a grotto behind the falls, a plunge pool (also spring fed), large steam room and sauna, lounging areas and private alcoves with smaller hot tubs for quiet conversation. The Spa is planned to begin construction in spring/summer of this year. It is a very exciting endeavour as it will be open all year as a major attraction to the Beaver Valley.

Building 2 as noted earlier is undergoing extensive renovations to the rooms and some exterior updates as we move through the renovation process.

The Golf Course is planned to be open late this spring. Beyond this, other work includes tennis courts to rehabilitate, ponds and landscaping to update and renovate and who knows what else we may discover!

The support from the community is the oxygen that we need to move forward with such a daunting adventure. The new Talisman Mountain Springs Inn and the associated Golf Course and Spa will all be a huge addition to the community, adding amenities for local residents and visitors and creating employment opportunities for many residents of Grey Highlands and surrounding communities.

We look forward to announcing our firmed up opening date and to inviting you to spend some time (and money) with us, soaking up the ambiance of the new Inn, Spa and Golf Course, all within your beautiful neighbourhood in the Beaver Valley.



New exterior colour