

**MEADOWS AT SHAWNEE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES**

January 10, 2018

Directors present: Michael Boyle, Kate Leith, Daniel Marabello, Dave Markowitz,
Ellen Miller, Bob Shinholt, Linda Steiner and Richard Vehlow

Meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. at 1 Windy Drive, Milford, Delaware.

President Michael Boyle opened the meeting by wishing all Board Directors and their families a Happy New Year.

He then asked board members to review and approve the Minutes from the last board meeting held on October 4, 2017. A motion was made by Kate Leith to approve the Minutes and seconded by Dave Markowitz. All were in favor and none opposed. The minutes will be posted on the HOA website.

Mike also asked members to approve the Minutes from the annual meeting held on June 14, 2017. A motion was made by Bob Shinholt to approve and seconded by Dick Vehlow. All members were in favor and none opposed. The minutes will be posted on the HOA website.

Report of the Officers:

Mike Boyle, President, reported that overall since the last board meeting in October 2017, there hasn't been much activity in the development aside from some parking violations and an ongoing issue with one-member resident which will be addressed in the Secretary's report.

On May 3, 2017, HOA Board Members - Mike Boyle, Dan Marabello, Dave Markowitz, Ellen Miller, Linda Steiner and Bob Shinholt, attended a 3-hour Fair Housing 101 Training Session conducted by the Division of Human Relations (DHR). Mike finally received the Training Certificates from the DHR and handed them out to the above-mentioned members at the meeting.

The HOA became a member of the Community Associations Institute (CAI) in February 2017. The CAI is an organization dedicated to building better communities and they provide information, education and resources to the homeowner volunteers who govern communities. The annual membership fee is \$135.00 and the renewal is due in February. After discussing the benefits of the membership, it was decided by the Board to renew for another year.

Mike receives daily emails from CAI and as a member you can ask questions regarding your HOA. In November, he received the Fall/Winter Edition of the magazine *The Beacon* which is published by the Chesapeake Region Chapter. Mike printed a few articles of interest from the magazine and handed out copies to the Board to be read. One printout addressed effective HOA board communication and tips for board members. The second printout had a list of documents

and assets that should be turned over to an HOA by a developer. The first item on the list was “Deeds to the common areas”. Mike said he will email HOA attorney, Seth Thompson, regarding the deeds to the common areas here in the Meadows at Shawnee. Dan said that the Plat Map drawing of the community shows the common areas and the sewer lines. Bob said it also shows Kirby Road, the two ponds and the front and rear entrances. Mike said the county owns 14 feet of the front of each property. Kate Leith said that there is an easement in the rear of her property as well as other properties that back up to Route 1. The rear 10 feet belongs to DELDOT and property owners maintain that part of the land but do not own it.

Mike asked board members if they would be interested in getting copies of emails he receives from CAI and if so, he would forward those that would be of interest to our community. Most of the communities that belong to CAI are large and have managing agents. Dave Markowitz asked if the HOA can get legal advice from CAI.

Mike also reported that on December 6, 2017, the HOA hosted a meeting with Mayor Bryan Shupe which was held at the Milford Parks & Recreation Headquarters Building. Approximately 25-30 people attended the meeting from the Meadows at Shawnee plus a few other residents from various parts of the city. His talk encompassed many of the city’s ongoing initiatives and long-range goals. The Chief of Police, Kenneth Brown, also attended the meeting. He said there were 35 police officers on the force and he is looking to hire more. There will be more foot patrols and bike patrols in the downtown area. He also spoke about the use of speed detectors on SE 2nd Street and Seabury Avenue.

Mike reminded board members that we have to begin thinking about the 2018 Annual Meeting as there are only 3 more board meetings before the annual meeting. This year’s meeting will be held on June 14, 2018.

Dan Marabello, Treasurer, reported on the HOA’s financial status as of today’s date as follows:

- Balance Sheet – Current balance in the checking account is \$9,720.64 and all bills have been paid. The total amount in the eight (8) CD’s is \$ 65,231.31 and that figure includes interest as of December 31, 2017. Total other current assets of \$390.65 were for 3 years of unpaid assessments collected as a result of a Sheriff Sale on a foreclosed property. Total assets equal **\$74,952.60.**
- Profit & Loss - The assessment fee income collected as of January 10, 2018 is \$23,210.00. To date, 178 homeowners have paid their Fiscal Year 2018 annual dues of \$130.00 and one partial payment of \$70.00 has been paid. As a result of a recent sheriff sale, \$390.00 was collected from one property that was 3 years in arrears. Total income equals \$23,600.00. Total paid for expenses to date is \$9,260.21 for the following items: collection related costs, administrative expenses, annual meeting expense, *grounds maintenance, insurance and professional fees. Other income was received in the sum of \$75.41 for late payment interest and interest from CD’s totaled \$565.45. Federal Income Tax paid was \$276.00. Net income equals **\$14,704.65.** The sum of \$6,650.00 will be deposited into a ninth CD as a reserve for the Retention Ponds.

*The sum of \$5,587.78 spent on grounds maintenance includes 4 months of lawn cutting in the common areas from July through October 2017 at \$775.00 per cutting; removal of 4 trees and grinding of stumps in the big pond at cost of \$1,881.00; replacing Rip/Rap fabric and restacking rocks in the small pond at a cost of \$395.00; clean up of yard waste on Kirby Road at a cost of \$85.00; \$50.00 gift card for use of homeowner's water spigot for watering plants at the front entrance; and maintenance of trees at front entrance, rocks and fertilizer.

- Aging Summary – A list of homeowners who have not paid their annual dues were listed on the Aging Summary. As of latest count, there are 2 homeowners who have not paid this year's assessment fee which was due by July 24, 2017. Liens have been filed against both properties. There are 2 homeowners who owe multiple years of dues. Liens have been filed against both properties and judgments against both homeowners. One homeowner has made 2 partial payments and the remainder of the dues will be collected before the end of the fiscal year. One homeowner owes fines for a violation of the deed restrictions.

Mike brought up the subject of possibly raising the annual fee by \$10.00. This raise may be necessary to cover increases in the cost of insurance and for ponds maintenance.

Mike would like to re-examine installing lighting at the front entrance to illuminate the two "Meadows at Shawnee" signs on each wall. Kate Leith said she will check with the City of Milford Electric Dept. about running a line for the lighting.

Ellen Miller said that a light is also needed at the corner of Rehoboth Blvd. and Kirby Road. At night, it is very difficult to see when making the turn onto Kirby Road. There currently is a light post about 45 feet from the corner. Kate said she would check with the city about repositioning that light post.

Dave Markowitz made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and it was seconded by Dick Vehlow.

Linda Steiner, Secretary, reported on the following administrative matters:

- Two (2) architectural requests approvals were hand delivered to homeowners in December 2017. Bob Shinholt will talk about the specifics of these requests in his report.
- Five (5) "Welcome Packages" were hand delivered during the months of October, November and December 2017 to new homeowners at 4 Briar Court, 14 West Bullrush Drive, 15 Meadow Lark Drive, 4 East Thrush Drive and 3 Lenape Lane.
- On October 10, 2017, a letter was sent to one homeowner regarding a release of an assessment lien.
- On October 23, 2017, postcards were mailed out to all homeowners regarding the notice of tree removals in the big pond.
- On November 18, 2017, postcards were mailed out to all residents informing them of Mayor Shupe's meeting on December 6, 2017 at the Milford Parks & Recreation Building.

- On November 20, 2017, a notice letter was mailed to a homeowner regarding complaints of a barking dog.
- On December 19, 2017, two (2) violation letters were mailed regarding a basketball hoop and prohibited vehicles.
- On December 21, 2017, a Statement of Claim against an Estate was mailed to the Register of Wills regarding fines accrued for a violation of the restrictions involving a property in the development.
- On January 8, 2018, filed the yearly Form 50 with the Chief Magistrate's office so the HOA can file complaints in the Justice of the Peace Court if necessary.
- On January 8, 2018, filed the Year-End report with the Division of Human Relations office in Wilmington, DE. This was in compliance with the Conciliation Agreement signed in December 2016 regarding a reasonable accommodation for a homeowner under the Fair Housing Act.

A motion was made by Kate Leith to approve the Secretary's report and seconded by Bob Shinholt.

Report of the Committees:

Bob Shinholt, Architectural Review Chairman, reported on two (2) architectural requests that were received in November 2017 and approved as follows:

11/21/17 -- 14 Meadow Lark Drive, request to install aluminum ramp, approved 12/4/17
 11/27/17 – 8 W. Thrush Drive, request to install solar panels, approved 11/27/17

Bob reported that he currently has 4 homeowners on his Architectural Committee: Tom Chilton, Bob Rodenberg, Mike Boyle and Dick Vehlow.

A motion was made by Linda Steiner to approve the Architectural Committee report and seconded by Kate Leith.

Kate Leith, Grounds Committee Chairperson, reported that on November 14, 2017, Sussex Tree, Inc. removed four (4) trees around the edge of the big storm water retention pond and the stumps were grinded down. These removals were done at a cost of \$1,881.00 and a copy of the Invoice was given to Secretary Linda Steiner for the record.

Kate emailed Jennifer M. Anderson, Electric Operations Manager at the City of Milford Electric Department about trees in the common area along Kirby Road that are under the power lines. She informed Ms. Anderson that the HOA would not object to the trees being removed if they are interfering with the power lines. Kate was informed that the City will trim the trees that are under the power line but, they do not remove trees unless they are dead and resting on the power lines or, there is a danger of pulling the lines down. Since the trees are not dead and there is no risk of lines being pulled down, the trees will remain and be trimmed as needed by the City. A copy of the email exchange was given to Linda Steiner for the record.

Kate reported that the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service has released their 2018 grant application. The Meadows at Shawnee HOA would be an eligible group to apply if we choose. Tree planting is one of the grant areas and the HOA common land would be considered eligible areas. Applications are due by **March 2, 2018**. As we would be first time applicants, it is suggested that a site visit be set up with the Forest Service prior to submission. Kesha Braunskill is the Urban Forestry Coordinator.

Bob Shinholt asked about the best type of trees to plant around the ponds. Kate showed Bob a list of recommended trees for new planting. She suggested that the HOA ask residents that surround the Big Pond to help pick out the trees.

Kate had a copy of the Delaware Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant Requirements. Grant requests must be a minimum of \$500 and cannot exceed \$5,000. The two project categories are tree planting or tree management. No materials or work may be purchased or performed until a contract is signed with the Delaware Forest Service. The deadline date for projects to be completed is **November 16, 2018**. The grant is a reimbursement grant and reimbursement will occur after project completion and proof of paid invoices and matching funds are provided. Matching funds must be equal to or greater than the grant money requested. Match must take place during the grant cycle which runs from October 1, 2017 to November 16, 2018. The volunteer labor rate for 2018 is \$23.56 per hour. Types of in-kind services or volunteer time would be digging, watering, tree planting.

Lou's Lawn Service has provided an estimate of \$2,045.00 for bush hogging the pond areas, spraying and cleaning the rock areas. Kate will request another estimate minus the spraying since Lou is not a certified applicator. Kate will email Jessica Watson from DNREC to get the names of recommended licensed applicators in Delaware.

Dan Marabello inquired about Lou's license and insurance. Kate said she will obtain a copy of the business license for Lou's Lawn Service and the insurance binder for HOA records.

Dan made a motion to approve the Grounds Committee Report and it was seconded by Ellen Miller.

Dave Markowitz, Neighborhood Watch Chairman, reported that there have been no incidents in the development since the October 4, 2017 meeting. He asked Linda Steiner to inform Jim Mandelblatt of his new email address so he can receive emails from homeowners who email the Neighborhood Watch from the HOA website. Gloria Markowitz has updated the list of volunteers who serve on the Neighborhood Watch Committee. Dave stated that more volunteers are needed on the neighborhood watch. Kate asked if the volunteers go through some kind of safety training when they join. Dave reported that when the Neighborhood Watch was first formed, he and the initial volunteers attended a training meeting at the Milford Police Department. When a new person joins the committee, Dave goes over the rules and information from the Milford Police Department with them. Bob Shinholt suggested that volunteers should sign off on procedures after they have been trained.

A motion was made to approve the Neighborhood Watch report and it was seconded.

Old Business:

Mike reported that for right now, there will be no action taken with regard to changes to the By-Laws and Declaration of Restrictions.

Available grant funding for neighborhood improvements was addressed by Kate Leith in her report.

It was decided by the Board to have the Spring cleanup on **Saturday, April 7, 2018** with a rain date of Saturday, April 14, 2018. Mike suggested that four (4) signs be purchased that can be posted at the front and rear entrances to notify residents of the dates for the Fall and Spring cleanups. In addition, two (2) "Caution – Cleanup Crew Ahead" signs should be purchased so they can be posted on Rehoboth Blvd. and Kirby Road when crews are cleaning up on the shoulders of each roadway. It was agreed to by the Board to purchase 4 signs to post for the community cleanups and 2 "caution" signs to display during the cleanup.

New Business:

Mike Boyle would like to get a Winter/Spring Newsletter out to the development. He asked Board members to think about some suggestions for topics. Possible topics could be an article on spring planting, the upcoming Spring cleanup, the annual meeting, rules for planting around utility boxes and other items of interest.

In addition to having lighting installed at the front entrance, Mike would like to also look into adding "Meadows at Shawnee" signs at the rear entrance and a few trees for beautification.

Mike reported that he checked with the HOA's attorney about limiting the number of home rentals in the development and he was informed that the HOA cannot limit rentals. Dan asked how many homes were currently being rented. Linda Steiner will check the Master List of homeowners and get back to him with the number.

The subject of increasing the dues by \$10.00 for the next fiscal year came up for discussion among board members. Dick Vehlow felt that it should be increased so the HOA can start to build up a reserve fund to cover increases in expenses. Kate Leith mentioned that maintenance of the ponds can be unexpected and an ongoing expense. Upcoming pond cleanup will cost about \$2,000.00.

The annual meeting this year will be held on **Thursday, June 14, 2018** at 7:00 PM at the Milford Senior Center located at 111 Park Avenue, Milford, DE. Dan Marabello stated that he had already reserved the space at the Senior Center for the above date and time. The cost of the rental for the meeting is \$200.00.

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, **March 14, 2018** at 7:00 PM. The place for the meeting will be determined at a later date.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Submitted by:
Linda Steiner, Secretary