

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

**November 20, 2024**

Members in attendance: Tom Chilton, Bob Sheats, Dan Marabello, Linda Steiner, Mike Boyle, Jacob Feist, Bob Shinholt, and Taylor Shunk

Place of Meeting: 21 Meadow Lark Drive

**Opening Statement:**

President, Tom Chilton, opened the meeting at 7:04 PM. As President of the Board, Tom requested that there be minimal discussion other than the business at hand. There is a lot to discuss to complete the review of “Old Business”, as well extensive discussion under “New Business” as noted in the agenda.

**REPORT OF THE OFFICERS:**

President Chilton reported on the following accomplishments since the last Board meeting held on September 11, 2024:

1. An agreement was signed with Whiteford, Taylor, and Preston LLC to represent the MAS on legal matters with billing to be invoiced on an hourly basis. The Administrative Board met with Chad Toms, an attorney with the company, and felt very comfortable with the company’s knowledge of HOA’s administration needs.

2. On August 13, 2024, a letter was addressed to Senators Tom Carper and Christopher Coons and Congresswoman Lisa Blunt-Rochester requesting exemption of Community Associations from the Corporate Transparency Act. Unfortunately, it doesn’t appear that an exemption will be granted in time for the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline and substantial fines will be assessed for those who do not comply.

3. With the help of Mike and Linda, an updated and final draft of the MAS “Enforcement Procedures, with Schedule of Fines, for Violations of the Meadows at Shawnee Homeowners Association’s By-Laws and its Declaration of Restrictive Covenants” was completed. This will require a vote as noted in the “Old Business” section below.

4. On August 19, 2024, a letter was sent, signed by all Board Members, to the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Committee to resist the Zoning change for a property located East of Route 1 from AR-1 (Agricultural/Residential District) to C-4 (Planned Commercial District).

5. The Board continues to monitor those homeowners who are violating the restrictions. Thanks to Bob Sheats and Jacob Feist for documenting the violations and thanks to Linda Steiner for sending the courtesy letters and invoices.

Tom asked if everyone had read the Minutes from the last board meeting held on September 11, 2024 and requested a motion to approve them. Mike Boyle made a motion to approve the Minutes as written and Bob Shinholt seconded the motion. The approved Minutes will be posted on the HOA website.

-- **Vice President, Bob Sheats**, reported on current restriction violations as follows:

Since the last board meeting held on September 11, 2024 and today's date, Bob observed various violations of the restrictions at 17 different properties in the community. The violations consisted of prohibited vehicles parked on the lot, resident vehicles parked on the lawn, and trash receptacles in full view from the street. These violations were reported to Tom Chilton and Jacob Feist who maintains a Violation Log for each month.

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

**Cash Position as of November 20, 2024:**

**Assets:**

PNC checking account as of today is **\$15,914.93** (\*See bank reconciliation below).

The total in the three (3) Artisans' Bank CDs as of 10/31/2024 is \$111,539.71.

Total cash in bank: **\$127,454.64**

**\*Cash – PNC Bank – 11/20/2024**

PNC balance per bank: \$15,940.93

Less two (2) outstanding checks: \$26.00

Adjusted bank balance - 11/20/2024: \$15,914.93

Balance per books - 11/20/2024: \$15,914.93

**Notes:**

- 1) Projected CD interest for November 2024 is \$310.00;
- 2) Estimated Accounts Receivable from two homeowners is \$375.00;
- 3) Listed cumulative interest to 10/31/2024 received via telephone from banker Florence at Artisans' Bank.

-- **Secretary Linda Steiner** reported on the following administrative matters:

**Violation letters:**

Between the period of 9/14/2024 to 10/30/2024, seventeen (17) violation letters were mailed out to homeowners for the following restriction violations: trash receptacles (13); prohibited vehicles (3); and overnight street parking (1).

**Other matters:**

9/14/2024 - Preparation of Release of Lien and filing in Recorder of Deeds, Georgetown, DE.

10/6/2024 – Three (3) postings on the HOA website.

11/19/2024 – Filed the Beneficial Ownership Information Reports (BOIR) with the US Treasury Department for all eight (8) members of the Board of Directors.

**Update on RE listings and home sales:**

There are currently four (4) homes for sale in the development: two (2) on East Thrush Drive; one (1) on West Thrush Drive and one (1) on Big Pond Drive.

Mike Boyle made a motion to accept the four (4) Officers’ reports as reported and Bob Shinholt seconded the motion. All board members were in favor and none opposed.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES:**

**Architectural Committee:**

**Chairman Tom Chilton** reported on four (4) Architectural Review Requests that were received and approved by his committee during the months of September, October and November as follows:

09/25/2024 – 16 West Bullrush Drive – Installation of Timberline Solar Roofing System

10/17/2024 – 13 West Bullrush Drive - Installation of front siding

10/18/2024 – 13 West Bullrush Drive - Installation of fence

11/08/2024 – 9 Big Pond Drive – Installation of new windows

**Grounds Committee:**

**Chairwoman Taylor Shunk** reported that Tom Chilton hung the new “Deed-Restricted” signs at the front and back entrances in September. During the fall, the shrubs at the front entrance will have to be trimmed and the dead plants removed.

Taylor started working on the Fall 2024 Newsletter in the beginning of September and she included reports from the 4 officers of the Board of Directors, from the three (3) committees, many items of interest for the residents of the community, plus a long list of Fall and Winter events happening during the months of October, November and December. The 14-page Newsletter was completed by October 5, 2024 and it was posted on the HOA website. Taylor also posted the Newsletter on Facebook and the NextDoor site.

The Fall Cleanup was held on Saturday, November 2, 2024 and following are the names of the board members and residents that participated in the cleanup: In the front – Tom Chilton, Taylor Shunk, Bob Sheats, Bob Shinholt. In the back – Bob Rodenberg, Mike Boyle, Charles and Jennifer Jackson, Francisco Chacez and his son Samuel.

## **Neighborhood Watch Committee**

Due to **Chairman Dave Markowitz's** absence from tonight's meeting, Linda Steiner reported on the Neighborhood Watch on Dave's behalf. The following incidents occurred in the development during the months of September, October and November 2024:

9/28/2024 – Briar Court, Fraud - Theft/False pretense

10/3/2024 – Windy Drive, Vehicle Break-in/Theft

10/3/2024 – Big Pond Drive, Vehicle Break-in/Theft

11/7/2024 – East Bullrush Drive, Automobile accident/damage to home and cars

Mike Boyle made a motion to accept the three (3) Committee reports and it was seconded by Bob Sheats. All members were in favor.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Approval of Policy Number 2024-001: Effective Date November 20, 2024 "Enforcement Procedures, with Schedule of Fines, for Violations of the Meadows at Shawnee Homeowners Association's By-Laws and its Declaration of Restrictive Covenants." Tom asked for a motion to approve the aforementioned Policy Number 2024-001 with an effective date of November 20, 2024. Linda made a motion to accept the updated policy and Mike Boyle seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the new policy will be posted on the HOA website.

2. The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) became effective on January 1, 2024. The filing of the Beneficial Ownership Information Reports (BOIR) for all eight (8) members of the Board was completed on November 19, 2024. Linda handed out copies of the individual reports to each Board member so they could retain a copy for their personal files. Any time a Board member is changed, those changes need to be reported to the Treasury Department.

3. Since July, Jacob has been logging all violations on spreadsheets that are reported to him by email from Bob Sheats and Tom Chilton. At the end of each month, he emails the completed spreadsheets to Tom, Bob Sheats and Linda Steiner. Tom then determines who should receive violation letters. During October, there were seven (7) homeowners who violated various restrictions and in November, there five (5) homeowners who violated restrictions. Letters were sent to all homeowners.

4. The update on real estate listings and home sales was reported by Linda Steiner in her Secretary's Report on Page 3.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Violations Committee - Tom would like to recommend setting up a "Violations Committee" that would be responsible to determine if a property owner is to be fined or a lien placed on the property for consistently violating restrictions. The committee will be made up of a violation record keeper, the president, vice president and secretary of the Board. Tom prepared a Summary of Procedures for enforcing violations which follows the Enforcement Procedures Policy No.

2024-001, approved on today's date, November 20, 2024. The new policy will be posted on the HOA website.

2. Dues Collection - Tom would like to start a new policy on the collection of annual dues as follows:

- a. Annual dues are to be paid in full by July 31.
- b. If dues are NOT received and postmarked by July 31, a letter will be sent to the property owner adding 6% interest to the amount due as well as a \$10.00 administrative fee. There will also be notification that a Lien will be placed on the property on a specific date the first week in September. No second letters will be sent.

3. Payment Portal - Jacob reported on the proposed payment portal to be set up on the HOA website. The two options he has researched are Helcim and Stripe. He spoke with Jim Mandelblatt and he said the payment portal would be easy to add. Jacob needs more information from Dan in order to finish setting up an account for the portal.

4. Community Associations Institute (CAI) Workshop - On October 25, 2024, Tom Chilton, Dan Marabello, Linda Steiner and Mike Boyle attended a day-long Workshop hosted by the CAI in Dover, DE. There were a series of presentations by Christopher J. Curtin, who is the Delaware Deputy Attorney General and Common Interest Community Ombudsman. After attending the workshop, Mike had some suggestions as follows:

- Mr. Curtin made reference to a bill his office has proposed to the State Legislature regarding HOA's. One provision proposed would require common interest communities to conduct periodic (3 or 5 years) Reserve Studies. Mike recommends the HOA set aside funds to have a study conducted in the MAS in FY-2026.
- Dan Marabello has suggested that the HOA is overdue for an Audit. He recommends we gather cost estimates and factor it into the FY-2026 budget.
- It is time to reevaluate our insurance policies to determine that the HOA has sufficient coverage.
- Mike recommended the Board finalize and set a Buy-In rate of \$150.00 for new lot/home sales at this meeting with a January 1, 2025 effective date.
- There is a discrepancy in the By-Laws and the Declaration of Restrictions with regard to the interest rate for delinquent assessments. The By-Laws state a rate of 6% and the Restrictions state a rate of 12%. Mike suggested that the error in the Declaration should be corrected and the document filed in the Recorder of Deeds office in Georgetown.

5. Hiring a property management company - Tom began a discussion of the possibility of hiring a management company for the HOA in the future due to the lack of volunteers and the ages of the present Board members. Taylor Shunk has contacted two (2) property management companies in Delaware and obtained proposals from both companies. The first company was **Premier Community Association Management (PCAM)** with offices in Lewes, DE and Middletown, DE. The other company was **Investment Property Services (IPS)** with offices in Newport, DE and Lewes, DE. Copies of the proposals were distributed to the Board members and it was suggested that meetings be set up with both companies to discuss their services and fees. The HOA would prepare property owners of the potential of hiring a company and the estimated costs involved.

6. Holiday Decorating Contest - There was a discussion among the Board if the Holiday Decorating Contest should be held again this year. Due to budgetary reasons, it was decided by a majority that the contest would not be held this December.

7. Audit - Tom made a recommendation that the HOA get estimates for a CPA to audit the yearly financial account and the monies held in reserve. Dan will get estimates from local firms. Dan budgets for \$6,650 to be deposited in reserves for future repairs of the two ponds. Mike Boyle said that this money should be held for expenses this year for the Reserve Study on the ponds and an Audit.

8. Defining Commercial Trucks – Mike Boyle has been working on getting a definition of a commercial truck. The HOA would not replace the “Prohibited Vehicles” restriction in the Declaration of Restrictions, but should have a clear definition of the word “commercial” which can be included in the minutes.

9. Maintenance Clause - There was a discussion among the Board to propose a new amendment to the Declaration of Restrictions to include a maintenance clause. This could be voted on at our next Annual Meeting in June 2025. Dan will check the City of Milford Municipal Codes for laws on property maintenance also.

Dan reported that his HOA laptop that was purchased in 2015 has a broken connection and he is unable to use it. Bob Shinholt made a motion to approve the sum of \$1,800.00 for the purchase of a new HOA computer. It was seconded by Linda Steiner and all members were in favor.

Linda Steiner received an email from Gloria Markowitz with a copy of two (2) “Thanksgiving” cards she and Dave received from an anonymous homeowner. Inside the cards were notes thanking all the Neighborhood Watch volunteers for their service.

A motion was made by Bob Shinholt to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Linda Steiner. The meeting ended at 9:07 PM

Respectfully submitted by:  
Linda Steiner, Secretary