

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

**September 12, 2018**

Directors present: Bob Shinholt, Dan Marabello, Linda Steiner, Dick Vehlow, Kate Leith,  
Mike Boyle and Ellen Miller

Absent: Dave Markowitz

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. at 4 West Bullrush Drive, Milford, DE. President Bob Shinholt opened the meeting and stated that he would like to discuss this year's collection of the annual dues and new strategies for next year. This topic will be discussed later on in the meeting under "New Business".

**Report of the Officers:**

**Bob Shinholt, President**, asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting held on July 11, 2018. A motion was made by Mike Boyle to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Kate Leith. All members were in favor and none opposed. The minutes were approved as written and will be posted on the HOA website.

It was reported in the minutes of July 11, 2018 that a homeowner on Little Pond Drive had been contacted twice by the City of Milford about their high usage of water amounting to 5 times more than normally used. Kate Leith asked if the homeowner had called the City regarding the high bills and checking the meter. The City did come to the house to check and said nothing was wrong with the meter.

**Dan Marabello, Treasurer**, reported on disbursements that were made since July 1, 2018 as follows: \$2,838.00 was paid for liability insurance; a used cultivator was purchased for \$50.00; \$1,550.00 was paid to Lou's Lawn Service for grounds maintenance for July and August; Preen was applied to the front entrance garden at a cost of \$10.90; office expenses totaled \$80.00; a \$50.00 gift card was purchased for homeowners on E. Bullrush Drive for use of their water spigot to water shrubs at the front entrance; \$150.00 was paid to the Rookery North to reserve a room for next year's annual meeting on June 12, 2019; \$1,150.00 was paid to Eastern Ornamentals for six (6) trees to be planted in the big pond. A new CD will be opened in Artisans' Bank in the sum of \$6,650.00. The current interest rate for CD's is 2.25% interest per annum.

Dan then handed out a "Reconciliation of Deposits" sheet covering the period from 7/1/18 to 9/11/18 to all board members for review. As of today's date, 181 homeowners have paid their annual dues of \$130.00 for this year totaling \$23,530.00. Total interest received for late payments was \$22.15, other income totaled \$48.65, and \$300.00 was received from a settlement for fines imposed against a homeowner for a violation of the restrictions. Total deposits equal \$23,900.80.

One homeowner who lives out of state has made a prepayment of \$130.00 for next year's dues. There are 2 homeowners who have not paid this year's annual assessment and they also owe multiple years of dues. Liens have already been filed against both properties and judgments have been obtained against both of these individuals. Next year Dan will ask Dave Markowitz to do another review of all the HOA's financial records. A compilation would be very costly.

Bob Shinholt suggested that the HOA's financial records should be kept in a fire safe drawer or box. A motion was made to purchase a fire safe strong box to store the financial records. All board members were in favor.

The subject of the collection of delinquent dues came up for discussion amongst the board. This past year, a few board members went door to door on a Saturday and Sunday in August to collect from homeowners who had not paid their dues by the due date of July 23, 2018. A few homeowners complained to the Board about this practice. It was decided that next year, a late notice letter will be sent by certified mail to these particular homeowners with a notation that they will not be visited by the board pursuant to their request. The cost of the certified postage will be added on to their annual assessment.

A motion was made by Mike Boyle to accept the Treasurer's Report as reported and it was seconded by Kate Leith. All members were in favor, none opposed.

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

- July 16, 2018 – notice posted on the “Next Door” website to remind homeowners of the annual assessment due date of 7/23/18.
- July 17, 2018 – updated the Architectural Review form to include Dick Vehlow's name as the new Architectural Committee Chairman and emailed the information to Jim Mandelblatt.
- July 17 and September 1, 2018 – hand delivered “Welcome” packages to new homeowners at 12 Meadow Lark Drive and 23 W. Bullrush Drive.
- July 27, 2018 – mailed out 43 late notice letters to homeowners who did not paid their annual dues by July 23, 2018.
- July 27, 2018 – delivered architectural fence approval package to Dick Vehlow for homeowner at 37 Meadow Lark Drive.
- August 2018 – Nine (9) letters were mailed to homeowners for various restriction violations:
  - E. Bullrush Drive - trailer in driveway and overnight street parking;
  - Meadow Lark Drive - trash receptacles, lawn maintenance;
  - E. Bullrush Drive, W. Thrush Drive, E. Thrush Drive, Meadow Lark Drive, Little Pond Drive – political signs posted more than 30 days before an election.
- August 16, 2018 – Email sent to estate attorney regarding payment of fines for a restriction violation at W. Bullrush Drive property.
- August 20, 2018 – Certified letters mailed to homeowners on Big Pond Drive and W. Thrush Drive regarding non-payment of HOA dues.
- August 29, 2019 – Email sent to an out of state owner of property on Meadow Lark Drive about trash receptacles being kept in the driveway.

- September 4, 2018 – Certified letter sent to homeowner on Little Pond Drive regarding a bounced check for payment of annual dues.

Kate Leith suggested that a sentence be added to overnight parking violation letters advising violators that leaving a car on the street overnight can create a safety issue in an emergency situation. Since the streets are narrow, it could possibly prevent a firetruck or large emergency vehicle from getting down a roadway in an emergency. Linda Steiner said she would include a sentence regarding this issue in future violation letters.

A motion was made by Mike Boyle to approve the Secretary's report and it was seconded by Ellen Miller. All in favor, none opposed.

### **Report of the Committees:**

#### **Architectural Committee:**

Chairman Dick Vehlow reported that he had received one architectural request dated July 13, 2018 for a four (4) foot white vinyl fence to be installed in the backyard at 37 Meadow Lark Drive. The request was approved on July 27, 2018 and the fence will be installed in September. No other requests have been received and there is no ongoing construction around the neighborhood.

#### **Grounds Committee:**

Chairman Kate Leith stated that she would like to propose Saturday, November 3, 2018 as the date for the Fall clean up. This date is right after Halloween and will allow for candy wrappers and other trash to be cleaned up in the development. The rain date will be the following Saturday on November 10, 2018.

On Saturday, September 8, 2018, Kate reported that she, Mike Boyle, Bob Shinholt and Bob's grandson, Isaac Shinholt, along with the help of Eastern Ornamentals, planted 4 of the 6 trees for which a grant was received from the Delaware Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry program. The remaining two (2) trees will be planted at the end of September. There was an additional cost of \$10.00 per tree for materials to stake the trees which had not been included in the grant proposal. This will be reported in the grant match report.

Lou's Lawn Service has offered to extend our mowing contract for the same terms for next year in 2019. There are about 20 to 25 stray trees that have to be cut down in the ponds and the stumps treated. This has to be done before the ponds can be sprayed. Lou's business is small and he recently lost a few workers. Kate is open to thoughts and suggestions for hiring another company to do the pond work. She will call Sussex Tree and get a few quotes from other companies. Linda Steiner asked if Jessica Watson from DNREC has visited the Meadows at Shawnee lately to check on the condition of the ponds. Kate said she had sent an email to Ms. Watson and was waiting for a reply.

Kate distributed a handout to all board members regarding buying a fresh cut Christmas tree for the holidays. The article dealt with how to pick out a fresh tree, steps to take when you bring the tree home, watering and best location for the tree in your home, decorating the tree and finally, properly disposing of the tree.

A motion was made by Linda Steiner to approve the Grounds Committee report and it was seconded by Dick Vehlow.

### **Neighborhood Watch:**

Due to the absence of Chairman Dave Markowitz from tonight's meeting, a Neighborhood Watch Committee report was not available.

### **Old Business:**

Linda Steiner reported on two recent sales in the development. The home at 23 W. Bullrush Drive was sold on August 23, 2018 and the home at 2 Meadow Lark Drive sold also at the end of August (closing date unknown). The home at 7 Big Pond Drive has a real estate sign on the front lawn and is up for sale.

Mike Boyle asked all board members to read the draft of the Fall Newsletter he had been working on. Items that will be included in the Newsletter will be starting a neighborhood social committee, a paragraph about buying and keeping fresh Christmas trees safe, encouraging homeowners to join the "Next Door" social network, the restriction regarding political and campaign signs and the holiday decorating contest. Mike will make changes to the Newsletter and send a final draft to all board members. He asked members to send back their comments.

The Meadows at Shawnee continues to periodically have a problem with discolored water in the development. Anyone in the community who experiences discolored water should immediately report it to the City of Milford so they are aware of the problem and will investigate the cause.

### **New Business:**

President Bob Shinholt discussed some new strategies for collecting annual dues for next year. Letters will be sent as usual right after the annual meeting in June to advise homeowners of the amount of the annual assessment and due date. It will be noted in the first letter that if a second notice letter has to be mailed to homeowners who have not paid on time, there will be a \$5.00 administration fee plus 1 month of interest added on. This past year, board members walked door to door to collect past due payments and there were a number of homeowners who objected to this. Homeowners will not be visited next year and will be sent a certified letter advising them of the past due payment. The cost of the postage will be added on to their annual assessment.

The large Leyland Cypress trees south of the front entrance were trimmed recently because of a complaint made by a homeowner that they were obstructing the view of motorists when exiting the development. The homeowners at 1 E. Bullrush Drive will be advised that the trees are on common ground and have to be trimmed further.

Bob talked about signs that the HOA uses on a recurring basis. So far, the HOA has 4 Annual Meeting signs, 4 Neighborhood Clean Up signs and 4 Caution - Clean Up Crew signs. He suggested that four (4) 18" x 24" signs be ordered that can be posted each year in July reminding homeowners about the due date to pay the annual dues.

A homeowner who lives on West Thrush Drive posted a message on the "Next Door" website on September 4, 2018 regarding the metal grates that are located in the rear properties of homes located on East and West Thrush Drive and East and West Bullrush Drive. These grates sometimes fill up and block the water from flowing. He wanted to inform homeowners who are affected by water buildup that the City of Milford is responsible to maintain the flow of water from the rear yards to the street and for any repairs to the grates and piping. He referred to a City of Milford Council Meeting held on March 8, 2010 which specified the public improvements that the City is responsible for in the Meadows at Shawnee.

Mike Boyle handed out copies of Page 5 from City Council Meeting Minutes from March 8, 2010 to all board members. This excerpt dealt with the City of Milford accepting public improvements including streets, easements and public utilities in the Subdivision. Bob Shinholt said he will send an email to Mark Whitfield, Director of Public Works and City Manager Eric Norenberg regarding the City's responsibility for the yard basins and piping as stated in the minutes.

Dan Marabello reported on an article that appeared in the Milford Beacon on September 5, 2018 regarding a seminar being held on September 11, 2018 in Georgetown about collecting on delinquent HOA Assessments. He was unable to attend this seminar but will check with the Department of Justice Ombudsman's office to find out when and where the next workshop will be held so he can plan on attending.

Mike Boyle reported that he will be working on planning and organizing the first Holiday Decorating Contest to be held in the community in December.

The next board meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 14, 2018** and Kate Leith has volunteered to have the meeting at her home at 32 Meadow Lark Drive.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:46 pm.

Submitted by:  
Linda Steiner, Secretary