

**MEADOWS AT SHAWNEE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO BOX 475
MILFORD, DE 19963**

**FOURTEENTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING
June 15, 2022 – 7:00 PM
Milford Senior Center, 111 Park Avenue, Milford, DE**

Board Member Attendees: Mike Boyle, Robert Sheats, Dan Marabello, Linda Steiner, Tom Chilton, Taylor Shunk, Ellen Miller, and Bob Shinholt

OPENING REMARKS:

Board President, Mike Boyle, opened the meeting at 7:05 P.M. by welcoming and thanking all homeowners that were present for attending this year's annual meeting. After two years of conducting virtual annual meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Board of Directors is happy to be with everyone in person once more and to report to the membership that the Meadows at Shawnee Homeowners Association (MAS) remains a financially strong and sound corporation.

Mike informed homeowners that the meeting room was available to the MAS until 9:00 PM so the Board will adhere to tonight's agenda. If anyone has questions during the meeting, please first state your name and address for the meeting's minutes.

Following the HOA Treasurer's report and the vote on the FY-2023 budget, separate reports will be given by the Chairs of the Architectural, Grounds, and Neighborhood Watch Committees. Each presenter will take questions related to their presentation.

Following "Other Business" on the agenda, the Board will take any general question(s) on HOA related topics not already addressed during the meeting.

It was then reported to President Boyle that a quorum had been achieved with **fifty-five (55)** lots being represented by homeowners in attendance and by proxy. The 55-lot requirement (30%) was met as stipulated in the By-Laws and the meeting can be conducted. Mike then called the 2022 Meadows at Shawnee Homeowners Association's Annual Meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Boyle began his report by stating that it has been his privilege to have served the Meadows at Shawnee (MAS) community for the past year as president of the HOA. During this time, the Board of Directors has addressed enhancements to the community's appearance, conducted a review of the HOA's administrative procedures, and reviewed administrative processes to ensure they are in alignment with our governing documents – the By-Laws and the Declaration of Restrictions.

Following are some notable actions in the past year affecting the Meadows at Shawnee community:

- Concurrent with last year's Annual Meeting, a referendum was conducted on 11 proposed amendments to our Declaration of Restrictions but only one (1) amendment was approved. It was **Article VI, General Use Restrictions, Section 11, Trees, Shrubs and Landscaping**. The approved amendment was certified and recorded, as required, with the Office of the Recorder of Deeds in and for Sussex County, in Georgetown, Delaware on February 16, 2022.
- The Board of Directors reviewed two HOA's processes to clarify guidance and better align them with the By-Laws and the Declaration of Restrictions:
 - In January, the Board codified policy guidance on administering referendums (votes) to make changes or amendments to the HOA's By-Laws and the Declaration of Restrictions. Titled *Procedural Guidance for Administering Referendums*, it standardizes a process for administering referendums establishing a petition format for requesting a change to the By-Laws or the Declaration of Restrictions. This policy is available on the HOA's website.
 - Since August 18, 2010, the HOA has had a policy in effect that addresses processes for addressing violations of HOA By-Laws and its Declaration of Restrictions to include a schedule of charges or fines. The Board has begun a review of this policy to ensure its compatibility with Title 25, Chapter 81, Section 302 of the Delaware Code and our By-Laws and the Declaration of Restrictions. This will be available on the HOA's website when completed.
- Some homeowners have enlarged their driveways to accommodate additional parking or activities like basketball. A recent revision to the Milford City Code changed the requirements for expanding driveways. While no longer requiring a city permit, new restrictions to driveway expansions were established by the new City Code affecting driveway cut-outs and placing a limit of 40% of impervious surface coverage of the total square footage of a lot's size.
 - Enlarging driveways still require approval from the Architectural Review Committee in accordance with **Section 21, Review of Plans** of the HOA's Declaration of Restrictions.
 - The committee will review applications and issue an appropriate letter for homeowner's records.
- On April 9, 2022, fourteen (14) Meadows at Shawnee residents participated in Milford's annual city-wide cleanup. The participants picked up litter and trash along Rehoboth Blvd. from the golf course south to the north bound off ramp of Highway 1, and along Kirby Road to Beaver Dam Road, as well as our storm water retention ponds and common areas. The cleanup was sponsored by the Milford Chamber of Commerce and the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

- On April 23rd, Meadows at Shawnee residents, Mayor Archie Campbell, and City Council Member Mike Boyle, were re-elected to serve another two-year term of office. Thank you for your strong turn-out.
- On May 9th, our MAS neighbor, David Sauls, was appointed to Milford's Planning and Zoning Commission.
- On May 23rd, the Milford City Council denied a request from Key Properties to change the City's Comprehensive Plan's future land use designation of 110 acres of land on Route 1, which is directly across from Meadows at Shawnee, from its current designation as Low Residential (R-2) to Highway Commercial (R-3). This was the second time since 2016 that this request was denied. A cautionary note, the property owner has the right to submit another request in two years.
- On June 2nd, our first Food and Ice Cream Truck Thursday night was rained out. The next one will occur tomorrow evening, June 16th, beginning with the Topsy Flamingo food truck at 5:30 PM, and the Cup 'R Cone Ice Cream truck at 7:15 PM. The full schedule of Thursday night activities was delivered to all homes and is also on the HOA website.
- Planned improvements to our front entrance are proceeding and will be reported on by the Grounds Committee Chairwoman in her report and the HOA Treasurer's report.
- Because of increasing expenses for liability insurance, pond and common ground maintenance, insurance, and other associated administrative costs, the Board of Directors is recommending an increase of \$10.00 to our annual assessment from the current \$130.00 to \$140.00. The Treasurer will go into further details in his annual budget report.

The Board of Directors has been active. Maintaining the MAS as one of, if not, the most desired neighborhoods in Milford, takes work and involvement by all of its members through simple things like adhering to its By-Laws and Declaration of Restrictions.

Appearance matters. Aside from keeping lots looking good, free of mold or algae and well maintained, we ask homeowners to comply with HOA restrictions by keeping trash receptacles stored in clean, sanitary, enclosed areas and hidden from view except on regular collection days. Also, to park all vehicles overnight from midnight until dawn in your respective garage or driveway. Of the 183 lots in the MAS, a few consistently ignore the HOA's restrictions to the detriment of the other homeowners. Don't be one of "those houses" that detract from our community.

Paramount to the continued success of our community is the need for more homeowner involvement in the HOA by volunteering to assist with MAS community activities such as participating in neighborhood and city-wide cleanups, common ground maintenance, planting, watering, and tending to the front entrance. And, most critical, becoming involved with the Neighborhood Watch or consider becoming a candidate for the Board of Directors.

The HOA is administered by homeowners who serve on its Board of Directors. Until now we have always relied upon the help of resident volunteers to keep costs down. But some of the volunteers

we depend upon, who have been helping for the past 15 years, are getting older and are not always able to provide their services. We are approaching the point when, without new resident volunteers, we will unavoidably need to become reliant on contractors to do much of the activities we currently perform, necessitating increases in expenses and, in turn, our annual dues.

Mike stressed that there is a need for more residents to become involved with HOA activities. Even if you are not able to volunteer your services, please talk up the HOA's need for more younger resident homeowners, especially those with children, who will bring new perspectives to the HOA to get involved.

Take pride in your community. Its future rests solely upon our homeowners to keep it attractive. The better we look, the more desirable the MAS becomes and the more our property values will increase over time. Visit other neighborhoods in Southeast Milford and see how much more attractive we look.

Finally, discover Milford. Take advantage of the many festivals and other year-round events Milford has to offer such as the Bug and Bud festival in the spring, the Farmers Market through the spring and summer, the Bug and Bud Music Festival, Third Thursdays in the summer, the year-round live stage productions at the Riverfront Theater, and the Holiday Stroll in December. These are only a few activities that make Milford a vibrant city. Go and experience the fun of living here.

Again, thank you for coming and the Board appreciates your support for the community.

Nominations from the Floor and Election of Board of Directors

President Boyle referred all members to the packet given to them at the door which includes a blue ballot sheet with the names of eight (8) homeowners running for a seat on the Board. He asked a number of times if anyone in the audience would like to add their name to the Ballot as a nominee but there were no nominations from the floor. At this point, homeowner Mike Zaremba made a motion that the eight (8) people on the ballot be elected to the Board of Directors and it was seconded by homeowner, Joe Palermo. There was a majority of hands in favor of the motion and none were opposed.

The following homeowners were elected to the Board of Directors for Fiscal Year 2023:

Michael Boyle, Thomas Chilton, Dan Marabello, Ellen Miller, Bob Sheats, Bob Shinholt, Taylor Shunk and Linda Steiner.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Dan Marabello referred all members to the financial report included in the packet. The total cash projected as of June 30, 2022, including money in the checking account and CD's, is \$103,000.00. All funds are secured by a Dishonesty Bond for \$100,000.00. Each year, the sum of \$6,650.00 is deposited into a new CD in the bank and this money is being held in reserve for

any future maintenance expenses or problems with the ponds. Total accounts receivable due from two (2) homeowners is \$275.00.

Dan then reported on the actual income and expenses for the Fiscal Year ending 2022 as follows:

FY2022 INCOME

The total assessment fee income collected this year was \$23,660.00 which represents \$130 collected from 182 lots. One (1) lot owner is delinquent for the nonpayment of the annual assessment. The sum of \$1,260 was collected this past year from assessment fees and interest owed from prior years. Interest earned from money in reserve in the CD's is \$1,358. The sum of \$1,501 was collected this past year from property settlement income and late payment fees. **Total income: \$27,904.**

FY2022 EXPENSES

Grounds maintenance \$9,027; Front entrance: landscaping \$1,800, lighting and power supply \$4,284 (new lamppost) and irrigation \$3,000; Maintenance on the ponds \$5,575; Insurance \$2,877; Office and postage expenses \$848 (includes \$350 for color printer); Annual meeting expense \$560; Miscellaneous general administration \$1,607; Newsletters \$200; Neighborhood watch expense (signs) \$375; Professional fees (lawyer) \$511; Taxes \$484; Reserve for the retention ponds: annual allocation of \$6,650 plus earned interest income of \$1,358 = \$8,008. The goal is to have \$120,000 in reserves by the year 2025 and the HOA is meeting this goal. **Total Expenses: \$39,156.00.** The amount of income under expenses is <\$11,252>.

Dan continued his report by detailing the proposed Budget for the next fiscal year. Because of increasing expenses for liability insurance, ponds and common ground maintenance, and other associated administrative costs, the Board of Directors is recommending an increase of \$10.00 to our annual assessment from the current \$130.00 to **\$140.00.**

Dan then reported on the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year ending 2023 as follows:

FY2023 INCOME

Homeowner assessment fees for FY2023 - 183 lots x \$140/ year = \$25,620; assessment fee owed from prior year \$130; retention pond interest income \$830; delinquency fees \$300. **Total income \$26,880**

FY2023 EXPENSES

Grounds maintenance \$8,500; Retention ponds maintenance \$3,720; Insurance \$3,000; Office and postage \$600; Annual meeting expense \$550; Miscellaneous general administration \$800; Newsletter \$200; Neighborhood watch \$130; Professional fees \$500; Contingency \$1,000; Taxes \$400; Reserve for ponds maintenance \$7,480. **Total expenses \$26,880.**

Dan reported that an internal review of the financial reports for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 will be conducted by former Board Member, David Markowitz. Due to members in the community volunteering to do much of the work for the past 13 years, this has saved the community a great deal of money. Volunteers are needed for the Grounds and Neighborhood Watch Committees. If the HOA has to hire outside help, it will affect the budget.

At this time, all homeowners in the audience were asked to fill out the green ballot forms in their packets and cast their votes for the approval of the proposed budget of **\$26,880.00** for Fiscal Year 2023 and annual assessment of **\$140.00** per lot. The green forms were collected and the budget was approved with **53 “Yes”** votes by homeowners in attendance or by proxy and **2 “No”** votes.

Letters will be sent to all 183 Meadows at Shawnee homeowners by the end of June notifying them that the annual assessment of **\$140.00** will be due by **July 31, 2022**.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Architectural Committee

Chairman Tom Chilton reported that during the 2021/2022 fiscal year, there were ten (10) requests approved by the Architectural Committee as follows: 2 fences, 3 decks, 1 shed, 1 gazebo, 1 for solar panels, 1 patio expansion and 1 approval for replacement windows. During COVID which occurred in the 2020/2021 fiscal year, there were thirty (30) projects that were approved.

The committee is made up of the following individuals: Tom Chilton as Chairman and the following committee members: Bob Rodenberg, Robert Sheats, Bob Shinholt, and Kent Del Rossi.

The turnaround time from receiving the request to approval usually takes approximately three (3) days. It is best to submit the request directly through the Meadows at Shawnee website at: www.meadowsatshawnee.com. Click on “Committees”, then “Architectural”, complete the architectural request form, and e-mail it to tchilto44@gmail.com with supporting documents. The application and supporting documents can also be dropped off at Tom’s house at 38 Meadow Lark Drive.

Grounds Committee

Chairwoman Taylor Shunk reported that this was her first year serving on the Board of Directors and also as Chair of the Grounds Committee. In the Spring of this year, she focused her efforts on the overhaul of the front entrance which was a big undertaking and took 2-3 days to complete. In mid-May, Taylor and Dan purchased plants for the three (3) beds, plus soil and mulch from East Gate Nursery. She then organized and participated in the cleanup of the front entrance which included tilling, weeding, trimming of existing plants and removal of old shrubs. Other volunteers who helped with the cleanup were Tom Chilton, Dave Markowitz, Bob Sheats, Dan Marabello, Fadwa Webster and Linda Steiner.

The new plants were picked up by the end of May from East Gate Nursery and nursery owner Tina came to the development and suggested the layout for all the new plants and shrubs. The planting was completed by Taylor and Grounds Committee volunteers: Tom Chilton, Bob Rodenberg, Dan

Marabello, Linda Steiner and Bob Sheats. Tom and Dan started a watering schedule for the new plants until the electric and irrigation system is installed. Taylor reported to the members in the audience that there is a need for more volunteers to join the Grounds Committee.

A new “Warning Pond – Do Not Enter” sign was ordered from homeowner Michele Keen who lives in the Meadows at Shawnee and is the owner of a local business, My Bambino.

Taylor organized the “Food Truck Thursday” events and the three (3) food truck vendors that will be coming into the development are: Topsy Flamingo, Ennis BBQ and Cup ‘R Cone. They are scheduled to come in every other Thursday from June 2 through August 18. Door hangers were ordered with all the information on the food truck nights and they were hand delivered to every home at the end of May by the following volunteers: Taylor and Craig Shunk, Paige Evers, Fadwa Webster, Amy Garrahan, Michele Keen, Rick Sylvanus and Liz Drury.

Armstrong’s Lawn Service is the company that does all the lawn cutting of the common areas in the development and the HOA is in the middle of a 2-year contract.

Coastal Tributaries is the company that handles the maintenance of the Little and Big Ponds. They come in once a month to perform regular service like inspecting the ponds, removing debris, mowing and applying herbicides when needed.

Taylor handled the planning and editing of the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Newsletters. She asked homeowners to email her at taylorshunk@gmail.com with any new topics or ideas that can be added to the publication.

Taylor will start a new Meadows at Shawnee “Facebook” page within the next few weeks.

Neighborhood Watch Committee

Due to Chairman Dave Markowitz’s absence from tonight’s meeting, Mike Boyle read the report to the audience, as follows:

It has been relatively quiet since the first of the year with no significant criminal activity with the exception of some reported thefts by “Porch Pirates” that were caught on camera. If you are a victim of these types of incidents, report them to the Milford Police Department. These type of thefts and car break-ins tend to be repeated by the perpetrator, like a rolling action, at various locations in the city. If alerted early enough, the police are more cognizant on what to look for when patrolling.

Dave recommended that homeowners sign up with the package delivery services, UPS, FEDEX, the USPS or others, to receive real time delivery notices on your smart phone, tablet or computer.

A little history. The Neighborhood Watch was formed about 12 years ago by a group of MAS homeowners to offer a degree of protection for all residents of our community. The original organizers were trained in policy by the Milford Police Department and the original members have continued to train as new residents volunteered to join. We have a great relationship with the local

police and they are quick to respond when needed, usually within minutes. Over the years the Neighborhood Watch has helped to suppress thefts in the MAS.

Unfortunately, many of the original members have moved from the development over the years, and newer residents have not volunteered to fill the ranks. As a result, we are short of the numbers needed to cover as much as we would like to.

Interested residents who feel they can volunteer one day out of every four weeks should add their name on the Neighborhood Watch sign-up sheet in the lobby, or call Dave Markowitz at 302-422-8003 for more information.

After reading Dave's report, Mike commented to the audience that the Milford Police Department is very responsive and that if anyone in the development sees something suspicious, they should say something. The police do respond when called.

OTHER BUSINESS:

A homeowner from East Bullrush Drive commented about solicitors that come into the development ringing doorbells. Mike replied that "No Soliciting" signs are posted at the front and rear entrances and the police can be called.

A homeowner from Meadow Lark Drive complained about trash cans that are being kept out in view for months at some homes. The HOA sends letters to homeowners reminding them of the trash receptacle restriction and the date the violation has to be corrected to avoid fines.

Q & A and Comments from Homeowners in the Audience:

One homeowner asked about installing a solid fence. Tom Chilton replied and referred the homeowner to check the **Fence** restriction (**Section 9**) in the Declaration of Restrictions which details what types of fences are permitted.

A homeowner from East Thrush Drive complained about a neighbor who is not picking up dog waste in the rear of their property. The HOA has no jurisdiction or restriction regarding this and Mike suggested that the homeowner speak directly to the neighbor about the problem.

A homeowner from Little Pond Drive complained about homeowners who park their cars on the street overnight. The streets are narrow and this could be a safety matter in an emergency. Mike replied that the HOA sends an initial letter to homeowners reminding them of the parking violation and if it is not corrected within a certain time frame, a 2nd letter is sent advising the owner that fines will begin by a certain date. If the violation continues, fines are imposed at \$5.00 per day for the first 30 days and after 30 days, the fines will increase to \$10.00 per day.

A homeowner from E. Bullrush Drive asked if cars can temporarily be parked on the street overnight if the driveway is being resurfaced. Mike Boyle replied that the owner should notify the HOA when the work will be done and it will be permitted.

A homeowner from Kirby Road had a question about **Section 14** in the Declaration of Restrictions restricting trampolines. Mike replied that it involved a liability issue and was in the restrictions when the homeowners took over the HOA.

A homeowner questioned why a tent was set up on the common area behind a home on Big Pond Drive. Tom replied that it was for a party.

A homeowner from Big Pond Drive suggested that the HOA hire and pay some of the teenagers in the development to participate in the Spring and Fall cleanups. It would be less than paying an outside contractor.

After all questions and answers were completed, a motion was made by member, Mike Zaremba, to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by member, Joe Palermo. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

A transition meeting with newly elected Board Members immediately followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Steiner, Board Secretary