

Forest Glen Station Homeowner's Association

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board 22 March 2005

I. The meeting was called to order by the President, Catherine Bocskor, at 7:40 PM. The meeting was held at the Americana Finnmark Condominium, 9900 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD.

Board Members Present: Catherine Bocskor, President; Joshua Denney, Vice President; Francis O'Donnell, Secretary; Charles Ehrlich, Member at Large.

Others Present: HOA members: Jason Sartori, Kevin Covert, Rob Tarkington, Marcus Joseph. CMI representative: Ron Maccado.

The agenda for the meeting was distributed by the President. A copy is attached.

The Board reviewed the minutes from the meeting of February 15, 2005. Following a motion by Mr. Denney, the Board voted to approve those minutes, subject to corrections to the spelling of the names Denney and Bocskor in several places.

II. Officer and Committee Reports.

A. Budget and Finance Committee – report by the Chair, Mr. Sartori, on the committee's meeting on March 8, 2005, at which 3 members were present. Topics discussed at that meeting included:

- Committee responsibilities
- Current and previous budgets and the current budget's formulation
- Contracts with Potomac Disposal and CMI
- Spending proposals for:
 - = \$1,225 to Goldklang, Cavanaugh & Associates (GCA) for annual audit and tax filings
 - = \$30 per Board meeting to Americana Finnmark for meeting room

The Committee made the following spending proposal recommendations:

- \$1,225 to GCA. The Board had already budgeted \$1,300 for this, so no need for a vote.
- \$270 to Americana Finnmark for monthly meetings (total of April through December)
 - = The committee recommended approval due to close proximity and the known price of comparable locations.
 - = Since the committee meeting, Mr. Sartori became aware of a room available at the Wheaton Regional Library on Georgia Avenue for \$10 per meeting.

The committee has requested a complete list of line item codes from CMI in order to facilitate the designation of new expenses.

The committee noted that the Condominium Association insurance bill (\$250.16) incorrectly debited from the HOA account on January 26 was credited back to the HOA on February 24.

The committee expressed concern over a past-due payment of \$975 to GCA for auditing 2003 financial statements. The check was disbursed on February 16, 2005 but the amount had been originally billed (invoiced) on July 26, 2004. As a result, what was budgeted for 2004 was not actually paid until 2005. A late fee of \$25 was cancelled. The 2004 budget included payments to GCA of \$250

for preparing income tax returns and \$975 for auditing. The firm must have been paid on time last year for the tax work. Similar amounts are already budgeted for this year.

The 2005 budget included \$10,000 for snow removal. Over \$4000 has already been spent up to February 1, 2005. Some snow removal since then has not yet been paid for. Board discussion noted that although the snow season is likely over for this spring, the 2005 budget must also cover any upcoming snow removal in the fall. Snow removal before December 2005 would likely have to be paid from 2005 funds.

Mr. Sartori recommended that the Board meet at Wheaton Library in the future, incurring a fee of only \$10, instead of \$30 for the Americana Finnmark location. The Board agreed. Mr. Maccado said that he would make the arrangements.

Mr. Ehrlich raised the issue of paying for new street lighting. It has not been budgeted for. Mr. Sartori concurred. Board discussion concluded that the working capital fund would likely be used for the lighting expense, as was the case for the cost of the new bulletin board. The current balance in that fund is about fourteen thousand dollars.

B. Safety and Parking Committee – Report by the Chair, Mr. Rob Tarkington. That committee met on March 14, 2005.

Mr. O'Donnell reported that Greg Slovik (Treasurer) had agreed to meet with Mrs. O'Donnell to review specifications for the new streetlights and to assist with negotiations with Centex on this matter.

Mr. Tarkington reported on the Darcy Green Place parking violations. He said that Mr. Joseph (member of the committee) had volunteered to talk to the owner in question. Mr. Joseph reported that the owner said that other residents are parking under their decks and thus blocking the alley, using their garages for storage. The Board agreed that this issue may need to be referred to the Covenants committee.

There was discussion of making 6 spaces out of the 5 on Darcy Green Place and designating these spaces as reserved for the homes they front. There was general agreement that if such spaces were reserved, then the spaces behind the homes, in the parking lot, would no longer be marked as reserved. Mr. Tarkington said that the committee will look at this issue in more detail. It will canvass the owners concerned. Installation of the new lighting may lessen the security concerns for at least one owner.

Regarding the broken parking sign of Darcy Green Place, Mr. Tarkington said that he had talked with Henry's towing company about the sign. Henry's assured him that the repair is on its to-do list. Board members noted that they had observed tow trucks from Henry's towing patrolling the neighborhood.

Mr. Tarkington said that the committee had recommended that the Board approve the painting of the parking spaces for Clark Court. CMI can do this work. Mr. Maccado said the cost is on a per-line basis. He said he would prepare an estimate for painting 7 lines. The President said that, after she receives the estimate, she will poll the Board members by email to approve the expenditure.

Regarding the Neighborhood Watch, Mr. Tarkington said that two of the engravers on loan from the police are in the possession of Mssrs. Sartori and O'Donnell. He said that he would draft an article for the newsletter, soliciting residents to use the engravers.

Mr. Tarkington reported that last December he had attended Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). It prepares community representatives to support emergencies, such as might occur in the context of homeland security. It was a 20 hour classroom training session plus a weekend on resuscitation, fire fighting. He said there will be an article in the newsletter about it. He passed out to the Board a tri-fold brochure about CERT training. The county would use a telephone tree to contact trained representatives. Communities would self-activate their response. The training was provided off Route 28 near Shady Grove hospital.

Mr. Denney reported that mailings from the Community Associations Institute (CAI) are coming. They will provide useful information regarding covenants, parking, and other matters. He urged the members to share the documents with committee chairs.

C. Covenants Committee – Mr. Covert, the Chair, reported.

Mr. Covert reported on two old action items. They pertained to architectural changes, namely the pouring of a sidewalk behind Darcy Green Court, and the installation of a white front door. After some discussion with the Board, it was agreed that these issues will be resolved by the committee.

Mr. Covert mentioned two new items for the committee. One pertained to a request to plant vegetation on a retaining wall at 2219 Forest Glen Road. The committee will forward this item to the Grounds and Landscaping committee for comments.

The second item pertained to a complaint about parking at 2110 Darcy Green Place. This relates to the discussion earlier (see above). Referred to the Safety and Parking committee.

Mr. Covert reported that last year's survey had asked about changes to the covenants. A summary of the findings will appear in a Newsletter article.

The Newsletter will feature a covenant-of-the-month article. The covenants tend to use legalistic language. The plan is for the Newsletter articles to put them into plain language.

Mr. Covert reported that he had spoken to Josh Pitlick regarding the Web site and that the latter had reestablished the links to the forms and handbooks.

Mr. Covert asked for clarification of the process for appeal on covenants rulings. After some discussion, the Board agreed to review this issue in some depth. Mark Weinberger has also looked at the issue and said he would volunteer an opinion.

Mr. Covert asked that the new Bulletin Board have a notice that the Covenants Committee plans to meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at 7 PM, at 2202 Kimball Place. The Board also agreed that the Board should post notices of its meetings on the new Bulletin Board.

D. Grounds and Landscaping Committee – Mr. O'Donnell provided a report on behalf of Vincent Hughes, the Chair, who could not attend the Board meeting.

The committee discussed tentative plans for the first volunteer cleanup of the forest reserve areas on a weekend early in April.

The committee agreed to a procedure under which residents could donate trees or shrubs for planting in the forest reserve areas. The committee will develop a form for people to use when submitting a request to donate such plantings. The ground rules agreed to by the committee were that:

- Residents would have to request (on the form) to donate trees or shrubs. The form would be reviewed by the Grounds and Landscaping Committee. The request would have to specify the species of vegetation and the desired location for its planting. The committee would approve the request if the location was suitable and the species of vegetation was on the list approved by the state.

- The donating resident would arrange for purchase, delivery, and planting of the vegetation and would underwrite all costs.

The committee discussed the idea of a sun screen for the Tot Lot. The President had found out about these screens at the CAI conference. The national association of professional dermatologists has a grant program whereby it underwrites the cost of such a screen and its installation. Notice on how to apply for the grant will be posted on the WWW on May 2. The committee agreed to revisit the issue after this notice is posted.

The President reiterated what she had learned about the sun screen, which would be suspended over the Tot Lot, shielding those present from the sun. She endorsed this possible initiative.

The committee noted that the community bulletin board had been erected near the corner of Darcy Forest Drive and Clark Place. The O'Donnells have custody of the keys.

III. Open Forum

Mr. Sartori commented that his recollection was that any resident could appeal covenants decisions. Thus, it was important to get out the word about decisions for the benefit of those who might be impacted by decisions. Mr. Denney noted that the Board or the Covenants Committee could use the new bulletin board for announcements.

IV. New Business

A. New Meeting Place. Mr. Maccado said that he would obtain more information about the Wheaton Library as a possible site for Board meetings. He will advise Board about cost and location. There was discussion about the pros and cons of the location. Because there was uncertainty if the site was at the Wheaton Library or at the Mid County Services Center (Metro accessible), Mr. Maccado said he would double-check this matter. The Board was concerned about being able to stay after 9 PM at the location.

B. Newsletter report. Mr. Covert reported on behalf of Lesya Covert. She has enjoyed doing it and the next issue is in draft form right now. He led the Board in a discussion of the appropriate frequency of publishing the Newsletter. The consensus was that bimonthly (every other month) was right. Although budgeting had been for quarterly, cost savings were likely by limiting them to 4 pages in black and white and delivering them by hand or by e-mail. It was noted that the Board can use the CAI website for materials for the Newsletter. Passwords will be sent to Board members.

Mr. Covert said that there was a need for a readers' survey to see what content was desired for the Newsletter. Items such as committee reports, crime and safety news, and community news were possibilities. Other possibilities were family announcements (new arrivals, births) and sale or lease of homes. A realtor living here might volunteer to assist with the latter. Forest Glen Station Connection is the name of the Newsletter.

Other content might include information from one HOA committee per issue. The budget might also be featured. The Communications Committee has helped distribute the newsletter in the past.

C. Privacy walls. Recent damage to a wall on Darcy Green Place prompted this discussion. That damage was repaired, with the costs covered by the insurance for the moving van company responsible. The Board's discussion focused on ownership of such walls. Does the adjacent resident own it or does the HOA? Mr. Sartori noted that the Maryland government web site shows plans that suggest that the property of end units (5 feet wider than other units) includes the walls, so they may be the responsibility of the resident. Another question was: if repairs are not made by the homeowner, is this a covenants issue? Mr. Sartori noted that there is a replacement reserve fund in the budget for retaining walls. The Board agreed to table resolution of this issue for the time being.

D. Street cleaning. Mr. Denney noted that the costs of cleaning of sand from neighborhood streets were not in the budget. Last year, in May, a crew hand swept areas of the community but did not do a thorough job. The county will likely sweep the county roads, namely part of Darcy Forest Drive. That effort begins on April 1 and will take about a month or two. Most of our neighborhood will likely not be done by the county. The incentives are that the abrasives are hard on the roads and the residual sand/dirt presents problems for appearance and safety. The Board asked Mr. Maccado to get an estimate of cleanup costs for the streets and alleys.

E. Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities. Mr. Denney distributed a handout from CAI to start the discussion about familiarizing the Board and community with rights and responsibilities of homeowners and community leaders. He asked the Board members to review the material for the next meeting and to consider adopting the contents of the handout. (Copy is attached to these minutes.)

F. Votenet. Ms. Bocskor has twice called a representative of Votenet, a company that provides online voting solutions for associations, schools, and universities. The representative had suggested that the HOA could use the Votenet voting capability on a trial basis at no cost. She tried a sample ballot. Votenet could post ballots for up to 60 days. Members eligible to vote would use passwords to access the ballot. It is a simple, electronic way to hold elections. Although possibly free at first, it would not likely be free for more than one year. Ms. Bocskor said she would pursue this with Votenet..

G. Large, Blue Recycling Bins. Mr. Ehrlich noted that such bins had been distributed to the single family homes. He asked if they needed to be kept inside garages, as is required for trash cans. The Board consensus was yes. They are bulky, with a 40-gallon capacity. It was noted that they can be returned to the county.

H. Block Party. Possible dates for the 2005 party were discussed. June 11th or 18th were judged to be the best tentative dates, but not June 4th, the day of the Race for the Cure (of breast cancer). Jacylyn McKelvey will be approached about organizing the party.

V. Old Business

A. Street Lights. Mr. O'Donnell noted that his wife had been in contact with Centex, which had made a proposal to arrange for the 5 lights' installation and to pay a share of the total costs. He would ask his wife to report at the next meeting.

B. CENTEX transition. It was decided to defer this subject to the next meeting. Centex is waiting for warmer weather to complete the work. The pond has not been turned over to the county. Ms. Bocskor has met with the county official charged with accepting the pond. Mr. Holzman of CMI has been working with that official.

VI. Next Meeting of the HOA Board: The Board tentatively agreed to meet on either April 25, 26, or 28, with the 26th most favored. In the future, May 10, June 14 (2nd Tuesdays). After that, the Board would try for the third Tuesdays of the month, starting in the July to September time frame.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis L. O'Donnell
Secretary