

Forest Glen Station Homeowner's Association

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board 8 August 2005

I. The meeting was called to order by the President, Catherine Bocskor, at 7:34 P.M. The meeting was held at the Wheaton Regional Library, 11701 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, MD.

Board Members Present: Catherine Bocskor, President; Charles Ehrlich; Francis O'Donnell, Secretary; Greg Slovik, Treasurer

Others Present: Michael Deitchman, Birgit Mitchell, Rob Tarkington, Jason Sartori, Ron Maccado (CMI representative)

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

The Board reviewed, made one minor change to, and approved the minutes from the meeting of July 11, 2005. The change, in paragraph V.A., changed the payee for checks for gate keys from "CMI" to "Forest Glen Station Homeowners' Association."

II. Officer and Committee Reports

A. Covenants Committee. Ms. Mitchell reported. The last meeting was on July 12. (The next meeting will be August 9 at 7:30 PM at 9800 Darcy Forest Drive.)

Old business considered:

1. An application for a deck addition for 3 Clark Court. The Committee has not yet received all the needed information and has notified the owner. This action is still pending.
2. A retaining wall at 9821 Darcy Forest Drive was erected without prior approval. The Committee notified the owner who submitted a request for architectural change for both the wall and landscaping. The Committee approved the wall. Landscaping has not been approved yet, pending assurance that the change will affect only the private property, not common property.

New business: The Committee considered:

1. An application for a deck.
2. A request for a steel security door.
3. A complaint about a resident drying clothing outside in public view. A letter has been sent asking the resident to desist.
4. An inquiry about cutting down non-native plants. This item was referred to the Grounds and Landscaping Committee.

The Committee may make recommendations to modify some covenants, based upon the results of the survey last year. The Committee is interested in soliciting recommendations for changes to covenants. The President suggested using the list server and the newsletter to canvass residents. (The President reminded the Board that last year the Board voted to not submit several proposed covenant changes to the HOA membership at the annual meeting. These included lifting the prohibitions on garden hoses in the front yard and on leaving garage doors open. The Board decided last year to focus

on the vote to change the 5 day appeal period to 15 days for Covenant Committee decisions. The HOA membership approved that change.) The Board asked the Committee to submit recommended changes. If the Board concurs with such recommendations, they will be referred to the annual meeting for possible approval by the HOA membership.

Ms. Covert is still working on the next newsletter, which should go out shortly.

B. Budget and Finance Committee. Mr. Sartori reported. There were no funding requests before the Committee. The next meeting will be in September.

Trash Survey. Mr. Sartori provided to the Board a draft letter to homeowners requesting responses to a survey about the Saturday trash collection and about placing a trash can in the playground. The Board reviewed the proposed questions.

One asked the homeowners if the HOA should continue the Saturday trash collection in 2006. (The Tuesday collection is arranged by the county and is funded through the Solid Waste Charge in the annual property tax bill.) The second question asked the same thing, but under the condition that there was an increase in the cost of the service. Under the current contract, which is up for renewal at the end of 2005, the once-a-week collection costs each owner \$ 3.75 per month or \$45 per year. It was noted that, with rising fuel costs, a fee increase was certainly possible in the future. There was discussion about adding a third question that asked, in effect, "If the HOA decides to stop contracting for trash collection, would you want to contribute toward a private (non-HOA) contract for trash pickup services?" There was concern about owners who might want twice weekly collection. The Board decided not to include the latter question in the initial survey, but agreed that, if the Board voted to discontinue the HOA collection contract, the Committee would organize an effort for a private arrangement for interested residents. An HOA member described his concern, based on previous experience, that rodents may become a problem if pickup were only once a week. He felt that it was in the entire community's interest to discourage rodent infestation because of the impact on the whole community.

The second pair of questions asked if a trash barrel should be placed at or near the playground area, and, if so, would residents be willing to volunteer (on a rotating basis) to collect the trash and replace the bag in the barrel. The Board and members in attendance discussed this subject. Concern was raised about the possibility that people from outside the community might use the barrel for trash disposal and that hazardous substances might be deposited in the barrel. The President commented that the Board had debated the pros and cons of this issue in the past and felt that the community should be surveyed before making a final decision.

After minor modifications to the text of the questions, the Board approved the distribution of the survey to the HOA membership.

Contract with Management Company. In anticipation of the end of the contract period with CMI, the Committee solicited proposals from seven other management companies in the region. Mr. Sartori furnished to the Board a copy of the email he sent to the companies. He asked Mr. Maccado to get CMI to submit a proposal as well. If the response rate is low, the Committee will approach other companies. So far, one company has responded.

Property ownership. Mr. Sartori has reviewed state tax records and determined that the Forest Glen Station property is broken down as follows:

Detached single family homes	12.81 %
Townhouses	31.76 %
Condominium	2.83 %
Commonly owned land	52.60 %

He noted that this information is important for use in preparing the budget. He showed the Board a map which highlighted the commonly owned land. There is one very small section where it is unclear who owns the property. This section abuts the fence which borders the Americana Finmark property. He said that copies of the site map at Maryland National Park and Planning Commission are not the most recent.

In response to Board questions about the significance of this information, Mr. Sartori responded that it was relevant to decisions about assessments for lawn services, as was discussed further under IV.A., Next Year's Budget (see below). Last year the Board had estimated that approximately 50% of the community was commonly owned.

July Disbursements: Mr. Sartori reported that July disbursements included:

CMI - Monthly fees and copying/ mailing charges	\$ 1,189.36
FGS HOA – Monthly replacement reserves contribution	\$ 1,184.92
Potomac Disposal – Monthly fee	\$ 397.50
A&W Landscaping – 2 nd Monthly installment	\$ 2,565.00
Reimbursements to 3 HOA members for block party	\$ 140.83
Montgomery County – Annual HOA registration fee	\$ 240.75
State Farm Insurance Co. – Monthly Installment	\$ 128.83
Stanley S. Pickett – Attorney's fees and court costs for a "Notice of Intention to Create a Lien" (reimbursable). This is for a homeowner whose payments for HOA assessments are in arrears.	\$ 165.00

Mr. Sartori announced that HOA assets grew to over \$100,000 for the first time.

C. Parking and Safety Committee. The President noted that, at the last meeting, oversight of the Metro gate issue was given to this Committee. Mr. Tarkington, the Chair, reported that the Committee has not met since the last meeting. The President commented that, because some residents were angry about having to pay for new keys to the gate, the Chair should expect to hear from complainants. The President noted that the slot for the gate bolt needs to be enlarged and asked Mr. Slovik to help Mr. Pitlick and Mr. Joseph with this job.

With respect to the installation of new street lights, there has been no concrete progress. The President commented that a number of weeks are necessary for Centex to complete the permit process and for PEPCO to do the needed new wiring.

D. Grounds and Landscaping Committee. No report, as the Chair was absent.

E. Treasurer's Report. Mr. Slovik noted that the most recent account balance showed that HOA expenditures were \$ 1,503.10 less than budgeted for the year to date.

III. Open Forum. Ms. Mitchell reported that the recent storm caused a large tree branch from the forest preserve area to fall onto a deck on Darcy Forest Drive and block the alley at that point. Mr. Sartori said that A&W Landscaping had removed the tree branch. The damage to the deck and railing

would have to be covered by the owner's insurance. One of the newly installed, young trees was damaged. With respect to the question of HOA liability, the President reminded that we are not supposed to touch the vegetation in the forest preserve areas. Mr. Deitchman commented that we would need to get permission from the county to remove any trees that appeared to present a hazard. Mr. Sartori recommended that an arborist should be asked to look at the trees to determine their stability. He said he would contact MNPPC to find out if they could send an arborist.

Mr. Deitchman asked about the possibility of moving underground the power lines on Forest Glen Road to avoid repeats of the recent incident when a branch fell on the lines and cut off power. Mr. Ehrlich responded that, for a variety of reasons, such work was unlikely to happen.

IV. New Business.

A. Next Year's Budget: Mr. Slovik began the discussion with the observation that the historical budget had been set up by Centex for its own convenience. As an example, twice weekly trash removal kept the neighborhood clean while homes were still being sold. (The President remarked that the former, twice-weekly, private trash removal was a mistake because CMI did not know that county trash service had begun.) Mr. Slovik continued his comments, noting that the distinctions between the single family homes, townhomes, and common property have not been fully incorporated in the budget process.

The President reviewed the events of last year. A Board meeting was devoted to the budget and the Board compared two alternative proposed budgets. The Board voted on the specific line items. This process required one full meeting and parts of others.

A lengthy discussion ensued. A summary of Mr. Slovik's viewpoint follows. The budget includes expenditures for both private and common property (grass cutting, other landscaping, and snow removal). The covenants imply that owners are responsible for their own property. The single family home owners perform all of their own landscaping and snow removal. In the townhome area, the landscaping and snow removal are done by contract services arranged by the HOA. The distinctions between private property and common property in the townhome area have been blurred. Landscaping and snow removal services for both types of property have been combined. The single family home owners do not get benefits from these services in the townhome area.

Mr. Sartori added more information about the budget process from last year. He mentioned that this year's budget had been decreased by about ten thousand dollars and assessments had been reduced. The differences between the single family homes (SFH) and the townhomes (TH) were raised last year. An attempt was made to allocate costs according to those differences. For budgeting purposes, the lawn maintenance and snow removal were considered separately. As a result, assessments were modified, so that now the costs are underwritten as follows:

<u>Element of Cost</u>	<u>Paid by all (SFH+TH)</u>	<u>TH Only</u>
Landscaping	42 %	58 %
Snow Removal	30 %	70 %

Because there are only nine SFH, the result is that 98% of snow removal is paid for by the ninety eight TH.

An HOA member commented that placing the responsibility for lawn care solely with the individual homeowners would produce uncoordinated upkeep that would harm the overall appearance of the community.

After discussion about separate budget proposals from the Budget and Finance Committee and from the Treasurer, the President asked the Committee to consider the issues raised in the discussion and to propose a budget to the Board for 2006. The Treasurer is a member of that Committee and its

recommendations should reflect the concerns he has raised. It was agreed, however, that the Treasurer would submit a separate proposed budget to the Board for its consideration. The HOA Bylaws require the Board to approve the budget and to set the annual assessment for homeowners.

The Board decided that its September meeting will consider the results of the community survey and the selection of a management company. The Committee's budget proposal can be presented at the October meeting and final discussions will occur in November. A working budget session can be held in late October.

V. Old Business.

A. Mews Brick Sidewalk – Mr. Maccado had distributed a request for bids to fix the brick sidewalk in the Mews area. He received only one bid and it would charge \$1860. The Board felt that this proposal was exorbitant. The Board asked Mr. Maccado to see if he could get a bid from A&W Landscaping. The Board would like to get these repairs done as soon as possible.

B. Pedestrian Gate: No members with complaints were present so there was no discussion.

VI. Next Meeting. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 20, 2005. The meeting adjourned at 9:11 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis L. O'Donnell
Secretary