

MINUTES

October 19, 2013 Homeowners Association Meeting

Board Members present: W. Michael Tupman, President
Jeff Lillquist, Vice-President
Elizabeth Fields
Ed McDonough
Jack Mooney

1. Architectural Review

Jeff Lillquist, the Architectural Review Chair, reminded owners that, in addition to the required architectural review before an owner starts to build, any subsequent additions (porches, decks, fences) will require further architectural review. You can submit plans for architectural review directly to Jeff (jrsup356@aol.com).

2. Fences

The fence behind the postal boxes houses a water pump station which is on HOA property but subject to an easement by the Board of Public Works. BPW paid for the stain and brushes for Tim McMillan and Karen Fleck and their posse of volunteers to re-stain the fence. Looks great guys, and thanks!

The Board commissioned a consulting report from Zando Design to inspect the New Road fence and propose options for short-term and long-term maintenance of the fence. Replacement of the entire fence or even the cedar posts (18) which show some signs of rot would be prohibitively expensive. The Board opted to re-stain the entire fence and do minor repairs to the cedar rails and caps to enhance the Reserve's "curb appeal" and prolong the life of the fence for another 4-5 years (if we are lucky). After soliciting competitive bids, the Board awarded the contract to Tim McMillan as the lowest bidder. The cost was just under \$5,000.00 paid out of the capital reserve fund.

The Zando report noted that the New Road fence – built by the developer to highlight the boundary of the new community – may become obsolete as more owners build along the New Road side of Lightship Lane and University Drive, though the fence may still be desirable around the two entrances.

3. Tax Ditch

The tax ditch (a legacy of the area's agricultural past when farmers banded together to drain their crop fields) runs between the Reserve and Pilottown Village. Owners on the east side of Marina Drive and Captains Circle border the tax ditch. The tax ditch drains water into the run-off ponds in the Reserve and Pilottown Village. The tax ditch is maintained by the Highland Acres Tax Ditch Authority. The Board invited Frosty McDaniel, the Manager of the Tax Ditch Authority, to address the meeting. The Authority contracts with Double E Landscaping to remove debris and spray the invasive phragmites to ensure that the water drains properly. The cost is underwritten by Sussex County and a tax on the owners who border the ditch (\$15.00 per year). According to Frosty, the owner taxes have to be increased to keep up with the costs of maintenance. The contributing taxpayers should have a say in that decision. Anyone who would like to get more involved in tax ditch issues, please contact Frosty directly (frosty.mcdaniel@comcast.net).

4. New Road Ditch

It was a very wet summer and water flooded the ditch along New Road around the first entrance to the Reserve (Forecastle Court). Upon inspection, Solitude Lake reported that it appeared that the concrete water drain into the pond might be clogged by vegetation and debris. The Board believes the area is the responsibility of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDot) which has a right-of-way on both sides of New Road.

Ed McDonough reached out to our two representatives in the General Assembly, Senator Ernie Lopez and Representative Steve Smyk, who interceded with DelDot. DelDot engaged Environmental Resources, Inc. to inspect the site. By letter dated September 30, 2013, Environmental Resources reported back to DelDot:

The dual culvert crossing at the entrance to the Reserve at Pilottown subdivision was reviewed during the site inspection. There are two additional dual culvert crossings that are located downstream from the subdivision entrance that were reviewed by ERI. The culvert crossing at the subdivision entrance and the two culvert crossings downstream are all currently unobstructed and draining adequately.

To date, DelDot has not received any reports of this drainageway causing flooding onto New Road or adjacent properties. After careful inspection, the drainageway and culverts within the drainageway along the east side of New Road are functioning as intended. Therefore, no

maintenance activity with respect to drainage enhancement is needed at this time.

The water in the ditch has largely receded over the drier fall season but the Board will continue to monitor the situation. Representative Smyk is re-visiting the issue with DelDot after receiving additional information from the Highland Acres Tax Ditch Authority.

Although the New Road ditch appears to be DelDot's responsibility, the owners decided several years ago not to rely on DelDot to mow the grass regularly but to include that in the HOA's contract with Sposato Landscaping in order to enhance the appearance of our community. Sposato has been directed to take precautions in mowing and weed-wacking to protect the New Road fence.

The HOA would still like to enlist volunteers for a trash "clean up" day for the New Road corridor, but deferred that action until next year because the ditch was too wet for most of the summer.

5. Board of Directors Election

Three current members of the Board (Ed McDonough, Elizabeth Fields, and Jack Mooney) were up for re-election and volunteered to serve another one-year term. From the floor, Tim McMillan nominated Karen Fleck to the Board. Karen was vacationing in Australia but authorized Tim to submit her name in nomination. The owners unanimously re-elected McDonough, Fields, and Mooney and elected Karen Fleck to the Board. Congratulations Karen!

6. Hospitality Committee

Kathy McDonough, the Committee Chair, welcomed new homeowners to the neighborhood: Michael and Sharon Stone (318 Captains Circle) and John and Mary Louise Bogia (319 Lightship Lane).

7. Statement of Income and Expenses

The HOA has a projected budget surplus for Fiscal Year 2013 of @ \$1,300.00. That is razor thin. With monthly expenses ongoing, the coffers will need to be replenished with dues paid on time by January 15, 2014. Last year, as of January 15, 2013, 27 owners were delinquent. Collecting those delinquent dues increases the operating costs of the HOA, so PLEASE, everyone, pay on time this year.

8. FY 2014 Budget

The owners unanimously approved the Board's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014. The annual assessment (notices will go out in December 2013) is \$170.00 per lot (\$150.00 operating budget, \$20.00 capital reserve), the same as last year. The operating budget assumes that, based on two-years' experience, most owners will pay their dues and the HOA will not have to incur legal expenses in filing judicial liens against their property (two in 2012). The Board pointed out that over time, as more owners build, the income from opt-in grass cutting (\$8,500.00 last year) by owners who have not yet built will decrease and will not offset as much of the landscaping budget for the common areas.

9. Stormwater Run-Off Pond

Elizabeth Fields, the Pond Committee Chair, presented a report. The author of the minutes was not present for that portion of the meeting. However, the author understands that there was much discussion about the bio-swales. For those owners who had not purchased before the October 20, 2012 Homeowners Association Meeting, I re-publish the minutes of that meeting relating to the bio-swales:

For those of you who are not familiar with the term "bio-swale," those are the drainage areas which run between Marina Drive and University Drive, and Captains Circle and Lightship Lane. The bio-swales have underground pipes which feed into the pond. The bio-swales, which are planted with indigenous flora, are designed to hold sediment which otherwise would flow into and clog the pond. At the end of each bio-swale is a stormwater overflow to drain off excess water. The bio-swales will degrade over time, and eventually may have to be dug out and replaced. That is why the Board has decided to create a capital reserve fund. The Board will be inviting Solitude Lake to submit another proposed contract to remove any trees whose root systems could impair the bio-swales, and to re-plant areas that are relatively bare. For those owners whose property abuts the bio-swales, your property line runs roughly down to the middle of the swale. However, the HOA has a 30' wide stormwater management easement (15' into each lot). While you are free to plant just about whatever you want up to the bio-swale, the HOA asks that you refrain from planting anything in the swales, at least without prior Board approval after consultation with Solitude Lake.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION WILL BE
ON SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2014 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Lewes Public Library.**