

Southwinds Association, Inc.
Zoom Annual Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2023

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** George Sexton, President, called the annual meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
2. **Introduction of Board Members:** George Sexton introduced himself, Peg Farley, Treasurer and Suzanne Tweed, Secretary to those attending the meeting.
3. **Affirmation of Quorum:** Suzanne affirmed the following thirty three homeowners were represented by proxy or attending the meeting: Anderson, Bonacorsa, Bonanno, Brochu, Caulfield, Connell, Czaplak, Decker, DeCrescentis, Farley, Fisher, Flynn, Gibson, Hammen, Kearns, Kenney, Levene, MacMillan, McCaffrey, McDonald, Middendorff, Morica, Needleman, Perrotti, Porcaro, Quets, Saitta, Salbinski, Sexton, Tweed, Weatherby, Wolff.

By-laws require 1/3 of our 58 homeowners (20) participate in attendance or by proxy.

4. **Review and Approval of the December 8, 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes was made by Bruce MacMillan and was seconded by Pete Bonanno. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.
5. **President's Report:** George asked if there were any questions regarding his annual report, which briefly summarized issues addressed by the board during the calendar year. There were no questions. Refer to the President's Report attached.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Peg presented the year-to-date status of the 2023 operational budget and the proposed 2024 operational budget. George was advised that the dam must be inspected every seven years. This inspection will take place in 2024. The funds will come out of our checking account.

Peg reminded us that going forward, no monthly dues reminders will be sent out. The invoice will be sent out in January and late fees will be applied on the first of April.

Fred DeCrescentis brought up the issue of replacing the signs and gates at both entrances to Southwinds in this coming year, which will be addressed by the board after the new year.

Don Flynn questioned how much we are paying to insure and maintain the pond. Fred DeCrescentis reminded us that homeowners are responsible for the upkeep of all property, including the pond. Our insurance covers our property in full.

Motion: A motion was made by Fred DeCrescentis to approve the 2024 operation budget. Bruce MacMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed with four nay votes noted in the proxies received. A revised copy of the budget is attached.

7. **Standing Committee Reports:**
 - A. **Open Space Committee:** (Pete Bonanno) Pete briefly summarized the volunteer work completed by members of Southwinds Association, Inc. to clear large branches and logs that had been blocking the trail. He also commended the volunteer spirit in our community.

- B. **Pond Committee:** (Jack Kearns) Jack reported that the pond is looking very clear after the treatments.

Dan Needleman recommended a company called All Habitat in Branford to give us an estimate on pond maintenance costs. Jack will look into that and report back to the board.

- C. **Landscape Committee:** (Judy Jendrucek) There was no report filed. There was discussion about the high price of landscaping.

Theresa Connell thinks that the landscapers are using too much mulch and suggested that they mulch every other year going forward.

Linda Levene gave us the name of a landscaper that she recommends. George will call to get an estimate from them.

8. **Old Business:** George asked if there was any old business to be discussed. Fred gave us an update on 32 Birch Mill Trail. The legal briefs have been filed and are available on line. The judge now has 120 calendar days to decide the issue.

9. **New Business:**

- A. **Motion to Approve:** Suzanne Tweed as Secretary of Southwinds Association, Inc. (January 2024 - December 2026) was made by Bruce MacMillan and seconded by Jack Kearns. The motion was approved unanimously.

- B. **Other Issues and Concerns:**

Peter Decker updated us on the Air B&B regulation meetings that are ongoing in town. In January there will be a vote on compliance and impact.

Pete Bonanno requested that we resume in person annual meetings going forward. Frank Perrotti has suggested that we could meet at The Copper Beech Inn next December for our annual meeting.

Bruce MacMillan brought up the idea of resuming an annual block party. Cory Needleman volunteered to be entertainment chair and Dianne Sexton, Suzanne Tweed and Peg Farley will join her committee.

Peter Decker offered to look into our second developers declaration of restrictions to see if anything needs to be updated and will report to the board..

10. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jack Kearns and seconded by Pete Bonanno. By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

The minutes were prepared and submitted by Suzanne Tweed, Secretary.

President's Annual Report

December 7, 2023

I hope everyone had a productive and healthy year. The Southwinds Association is on budget for 2023. The Open Space has been maintained with a number of problematic trees cut down by a work party and a professional tree company. The pond is looking good this year. We did two treatments for Lilly pads but did not have to have a treatment for milfoil. The Entry ways for both Southwinds and Birch Mill Trail look good but the signs themselves need to be refurbished.

You have probably noticed when driving up Southwinds Drive that a number of tree branches are hanging low over the road. I called the Tree Warden and on 11/08/2023 The town lifted (cut) the branches to a 14 foot clearance.

Our dam on the pond is a BB Class dam that has to be inspected every 7 years. Next year the dam must be inspected and it has been included in the budget.

The status of the 32 Birch Mill Trail lawsuit: The lawsuit filed by the Town of Essex, Inlands Wetlands Watercourses Commission (Robert Doane v Terry Lynn McDonald, et.al.) concluded May 4, 2023. The lawsuit was filed for failing to comply with the IWWC for allegedly dredging a portion of Birch Mill Pond and building structures (stone wall, stone walkway, and patios) in her back yard without a permit. Some of the structures extend into the wetlands and encroached upon open space owned by Southwinds Association Inc. The above was based upon a land survey conducted by Annino Survey, LLC (November 24, 2020) and assessments made by Robert Doane P.E., and the Enforcement Officer for the IWWC. Our past president, Fred L. DeCrescentis, testified at the four day trial. The outcome of the trial will not be known until early 2024. This time frame is based upon briefs to be filed by attorneys representing the Town of Essex and Terry Lynn McDonald, et. al. The Superior Court Judge has 120 days to make her final determination following receipt of the briefs filed. The Southwinds Association, Inc. Board will provide its homeowners with the outcome of the trial once it is known.

Thanks for your attendance at the meeting and if anyone has any problems or suggestions please advise.

Regards,

George Sexton

President of the Southwinds Association, Inc.

Southwinds Association, Inc.
2023 Annual Financial Report & 2024 Proposed Budget

Current Balances as of 12/10/2023 Checking \$14,505 CD \$21,488				
	Proposed 2023	Actual 2023		Proposed 2024
Income	\$14,250	\$14,320		\$14,250
Expenses	Proposed 2023	Actual 2023	Variance	Proposed 2024
State Dam inspection	\$0	\$0	\$0	*\$3900
Lawn Care/Mulching*	\$3,000	\$2,803	\$197	\$3,665
Pond Treatment/Cleanup	\$2,800	\$936	\$1,864	\$2,800
Property Insurance	\$3,120	\$3,120	\$0	\$1,819
Attorney Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
Directors Liability Ins.	\$1,157	\$1,157	\$0	\$1,212
Open Space/Tree pruning	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Property Taxes	\$900	\$875	\$25	\$900
Contingency Expenses	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$500
Website	\$175	\$0	\$175	\$350
Administrative/Postage	\$275	\$216	\$59	\$225
Zoom	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$160
Legal Entity Fees	\$50	\$50	\$0	\$50
Total Expenses	\$ 12,977.00	\$ 9,157.00	\$ 3,820.00	\$14,181
Net Surplus	\$1,273.00	\$5,163		\$69

*Dam inspection will be taken out of checking account.

* Not yet paid through 2023, outstanding bill expected for fall cleanup