

South winds Homeowners Association

Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2014

I. Call to order:

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the South Winds Homeowners Association was called to order at 6:30pm on December 5, 2014 at Essex Elementary School.

II. Roll Call:

The following homeowners were present: Ghilani, Quets, Bonnano, Kearns, Himsel, Rodriguez, Eppard, McCaffrey, Shepherd and Kurras. The following homeowners sent proxy forms: Fisher, Polito, Hammen, Connell, Levene, Wolff, Tweed, Sexton, Brochu, Palmes, Strong, Kenney, Harrigan, Porcaro and Decker. There were 25 homeowners represented in person or by proxy and the required quorum was met (25/58 = 43% vs. 33% required).

III. Committee Reports:

A). Open Space Committee (Bonnano): Dock was not removed last winter and unlikely to be removed this winter. Pete lobbied for a "T" shaped section to be added to the end of the dock this year to provide stability. No cost estimate was provided. Discussion centered on the pros and cons of adding and additional section (Pro: would add stability, be safer / Con: limited use by handful of residents). No motion was made for funds to be spent on dock improvements in 2015.

Pete mentioned need for annual clean-up of open space area and trails (downed trees and brush). No funds had been budgeted for this last year, however; Steve Farley had cleared the trails of downed trees from the hurricane in late 2013. Clean-up of the trails and open area should be an annual project. *No motion was made at this time but was addressed later in meeting when 2015 Budget was approved (Up to \$1,000 discretionary funds for common area improvements and maintenance - Bonnano).*

B). Entranceway Committee (Bonnano): Entranceway lighting was discussed. No replacement lighting improvements were made in 2014 although \$500 had been budgeted. It was not felt that the low-grade solar lighting that could be installed for \$500 was a satisfactory solution. Bonnano mentioned that Diane Bell would be amenable to re-establishing the old arrangement where entrance lighting on the north side of the Rte. 153 entrance could be lighted by drawing electricity from her residential meter. Bonnano mentioned that Rocco D'Amico was not amenable to re-establishing the arrangement on the south side of the entrance. This solution would only provide lighting on one side of the entrance and is not permanent. In ~2006 a quote was obtained from CL&P to install a separate transformer and meter to serve the entranceway at a cost of ~\$6K. That would have required excavating a shallow trench across the entrance of South Winds drive to serve both sides of the entrance. While somewhat cost prohibitive, this remains the best permanent solution for entrance way

lighting. There was discussion and interest in also adding lighting to the Mares Hill Road entrance, however; it would have to be prioritized after the Rte. 153 entranceway lighting was completed.

*A motion was made by Bonnano, seconded by Kearns and approved by a majority of members that: **The Association would waive Diane bell's dues on an annually recurring basis in exchange for allowing the Association to tap into her residential meter to provide electricity.** This would be supported by a 2015 budget expenditure of up to \$1,000 for electrical contracting to tie into her line. Bonnano is responsible for obtaining a quote for this work to be performed.*

Entranceway Landscaping (Eppard): Pruning of the 2 crab trees was discussed. The two trees at the entrance are overgrown and need to be pruned back before they become too overgrown. Judy obtained 2 quotes to perform this work: Bartlett Tree (\$466) and Sprigs & Twigs (\$957). The Association landscaper (Cerase) does not have a license to cut trees so a third quote was not obtained. The cost to remove the trees entirely and replace them with new trees would be \$1,300. It was generally agreed upon that the Association would have the trees pruned as the less expensive option.

*A motion was made by Eppard, seconded by Bonnano and approved by a majority of members that: **The Association approved a \$500 expenditure for pruning of the two crab trees at the South Winds Drive entrance.** Eppard is responsible for the project.*

C). Pond Committee (Brochu): No report was provided.

Pond Issues: Kurras provided an overview of the pond treatment that occurred in 2014. The pond was treated in late July in 2 phases at the recommendation of the contractor (treating all at once would have potentially resulted in a fish-kill). The cost of the pond treatment was \$3,831 vs Budget of \$5,200, resulting in a savings of \$1,369 vs. Budget. Association members were pleased with the results of the pond treatment. Bonnano mentioned that he will contact the contractor to recommend an appropriate frequency for future treatment.

Pond Syphoning: No action was taken in 2014 to pursue a fall draw-down of the pond level although the town and Middlesex Hospital remain supportive. Permits need to be obtained from the town and fire department and the written consent of Middlesex Hospital is required.

D). Web Site: Web Address/Domain dues (\$80) were paid in 2014 and should be good for a period of 5 years.

E). The Secretary position was vacant for all of 2014 and needs to be filled in 2015. Doug Kurras is stepping down as President and this position also needs to be filled in 2015. Without a functioning Board, the Association may not be able to operate and a 3rd party Management Company may be required.

IV. **Votes:**

Vote 1: Review/Approve 2013 Annual Minutes: Passed with 100% (no dissents)

Budget Discussion:

- Will end 2014 with ~\$3,107 Operating Surplus vs. <\$1,705> Budgeted Deficit
- Will end 2014 with ~\$23,627 Cash (\$12,000 Spillway Reserve plus \$11,627 operating account)
- Dues proposed at \$250/yr per resident (no increase for 4 years)
- Non-discretionary expenses budgeted to increase ~11% (driven by property taxes on open space which increased from \$264 in 2013 to \$811 in 2014. Kurras successfully petitioned tax increase which was originally \$2,100.

Discretionary Expenditures:

- Entranceway Landscaping \$ 500
- Entranceway Lighting \$ 1,000
- Open space Discretionary Funds \$ 1,000
- Addition to Spillway Reserve \$ 1,000 (\$13,000 CD for future spillway work)
- Creation of General Reserve \$ 2,000 (set aside CD for future projects)

- Total 2015 Budget Expenses: \$14,388
- 2015 Budgeted Operating Surplus: \$ 112

Vote 2: Approve 2015 Budget: Passed with 100% (no dissents)

Vote 3: Approve 2015 Annual Dues of \$250: Passed with 100% (no dissents)

Open Positions:

Doug Kurras asked if there were any nominations for the open Secretary and President Positions. No nominations for Secretary. Jack Kearns mentioned that Adrienne Brochu was interested in being president and nominated her. The nomination was seconded by Bonnano.

Vote 4: Elect Adrienne Brochu as President for the term 2015-2017: Passed 100% (no dissents)

Doug Kurras adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15pm.

Minutes submitted by: Doug Kurras and John Shepherd.

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