

MILESTONE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting
May 2, 2022 – 7:00pm
Meeting was held by video/telecon.

Board Members Present: Mike Johnson, President
Romain Tweedy, Treasurer
Raman Veda, Member at Large
Rajesh Sreedharan, Secretary
Vic Dua, Vice President
Dennis St. Jean, Member at Large

Board Members Absent: Mahendra Pandey

Management Present: Laura Etchison, Community Manager

Recording Secretary: Marcy Grove

Others Present: Thirteen homeowners were present on the video call.

Laura E announced that the meeting is being recorded. She requested everyone on the call please mute their microphones unless they are speaking.

Call to Order

Mike J called the meeting to order with a quorum of six Directors at 7:02 pm.

Owner Forum

Teresa Fernandez inquired whether removal of two trees required ARC approval. Mike J advised the owner to follow through the application process to obtain approval.

Chris Zoladze and Shauneen Miranda attended to hear the Board of Directors resolve regarding the sweetgum tree removals.

Melissa Johns reported the tot lot swing is not yet repaired. Maura E will be speaking with the Board later regarding engaging a different contractor for the repair.

Gerry Schmidt asked about the status of the large dead ash trees behind Milestone Manor Lane. Laura E noted the Association is aware of the trees and these are listed among the eighty trees on the PGC bid for attention.

Dennis St. Jean contacted MC311 today to gain a definitive answer to the ownership of the street side trees. The County stated the trees from the street to the sidewalk are their responsibility and their arborist should inspect and advise action. He recommends the homeowners contact their County Council representative to force the County to stop shirking their duty. The Association should not be spending funds for tasks the County should be managing. Laura E noted a couple years ago the County arborists started pushing the tree responsibility back to the HOAs or homeowners. She recommends an in-person meeting with the County to gain cooperation. Dennis St. Jean suggested the Board send the County Councilman a letter requesting correct response from the County.

Shauneen Miranda welcomed the plan to approach the County as a Board. However, the County takes one month to inspect and up to three years to act.

Approval of the February 7, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Dennis SJ noted that the minutes reflect open items which are not being answered nor carried to the next agenda for solution. Raj S agreed, stating action items should be created and assigned to specific individual(s) with deadlines for completion.

Raj S made a motion to approve the February 7, 2022 minutes. Raman V seconded the motion which was approved five ayes to one nay (Dennis SJ).

Approval of the April 4, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Raj S stated the April 4, 2022 draft minutes are not yet in an approvable version. There were two issues not properly captured. The minutes may be presented in either a summarized or detailed format, but if detailed, must be in chronological order and all comments by all members represented. Dennis SJ noted the draft should be at a version ready for approval. Raj S noted a delay in receiving all the information which had pushed tonight's deadline for approval back.

Action Item: Mike J stated going forward, the minute taker will provide the draft to the Board within two weeks. Raj S as Secretary will review the recording and draft to provide and receive and any Directors' amendments so as to better manage the process.

The Board of Directors agreed to table review and approval of the April minutes until the June meeting.

Financial Report – The February and March 2022 financials were provided to the Board. March expenses were \$11,103.09 versus a budget of \$32,298. Year to date expenses were \$129,790.43 against the budgeted amount of \$137,477.83, The reserve fund total stands at \$594,000 for the first quarter.

Vic D queried a \$24,000 deficit reported in FY2021 financials.

Action Item: Laura E will need to research this information and email the Board tomorrow.

Dennis SJ noted checks to PGC on pages 50-51 signed by Linda Wildman rather than the Board Treasurer. Romain T replied he had approved these payments electronically. Laura E stated the accounting system has an electronic check signature for Romain T and new accounting members may require education to use the proper signatures in the system.

Raj S asked who the signatories are for the Association bank accounts; The Treasurer should be signing payment and the President and Treasurer signing reserve expense payments. Laura E said signature cards were filed for Mike J and Romain T; Linda Wildman should not be signing.

Action Item: Laura E to confirm names on bank signatures cards prior to the June meeting.

Raj S asked why \$8,000 was paid for leaf removal in 2022 yet no removal will occur until late in 2022; he noted this will create a budget deficit when invoiced in December 2022. Laura E stated this invoice and others arrived late so was not processed in 2021 but the auditor will adjust this and the other accrued expenses to 2021.

Action Item: Raj S requested Laura E review the accrued 2021 expenses posted in 2022 to determine if the leaf removal monies were used for any other expense.

Mike J inquired about the 2021 budget which the Board developed with funds designated for the community needs. Laura E needs to review the \$24,000 shortfall noted but stated the December financials show the budget allocation for leaf removal without expenditure. The 2021 financials displayed a potential positive result but as invoices arrived after year end, this will be updated by the auditor. She will provide full details for the accrued 2021 expenses. Vic D expressed concern that February 2022 financials presented a positive result of \$15K but the March financials exhibit a \$24K deficit, a \$40K differential.

Management Report

The Spring Newsletter has been mailed. Verizon installed telephone service at the pool in lieu of the pricey Comcast service during the 2021 season. Laura E has been working on opening tasks with the pool company and requested Mike J walk the pool with her. She appreciates Dennis SJ bringing up the street side tree topic and asked for Board volunteers to attend a meeting with the County.

Raj S made a motion that Dennis SJ act as Board liaison to meet with the County representatives and management regarding street side tree responsibility. Raman V seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Regarding the broken swing, Laura E asked whether the Board would approve Gardeners' who can complete this repair within a couple days. Raman V asked whether the swing was under warranty. Laura E noted some of the equipment was re-used and the Songbird Lane swings were original, she will verify the warranty information. Raj S asked the cost; Laura E replied approximately \$200, to be expensed through GL 6325.

Raman V asked if the fence pressure washing was completed? Laura E said yes. Raman V reported a poor job was done and the fence along Stardrift Drive from Route 355 is still mildewed. On his daily walk Dennis SJ observed the fences had been cleaned but the overhanging tree branches had re-established the mildew; he recommended elevating the branches, Raman V stated elevation is in PGC's contract. Romain T had inspected the fence and found the work done but had also noted the mildew had returned.

Biweekly inspections have commenced.

Mike J asked about the entry light outage at Stardrift and Route 355. Laura has sent work orders to PSE and Montgomery Lighting. Would the Board recommend a third vendor? Romain T and a homeowner did see work being done one month ago and one week ago, respectively.

Action/Discussion Items

Pet Waste Stations

A map displaying proposed pet waste stations and trash cans was presented. Romain T suggests a trash can at the cemetery as there used to be.

Romain T delivered a motion to install a trash can at the cemetery (existing concrete slab) funded from GL 6150. Vic Dua seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The Board of Directors reviewed estimated costs and efforts required to install trash cans versus pet waste stations, budgeted funds which could support this installation, potential locations, service schedule and provider, whether bags should be included and whether a gradual or complete approach should be implemented.

Romain T made a motion to approve up to \$500 to purchase and install two pet waste stations, charging the expense to GL 6150. Vic D seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Tennis Court Proposals Laura E has two proposals in hand but recommends the Board table action until the Mid-Atlantic proposal arrives. Mike J agreed.

Covenant Inspections – Laura E included a report in the management package along with updated Schedule A fees for this service. Previously the Association had not been billed; the usual rate is \$50 per hour but a special rate is offered to Milestone HOA of \$20 per hour. The Board of Directors resolved to review the management contract regarding this Schedule A charge and in light of the contract being signed by a former Board member and IKO's ownership. change.

Action Item: Laura E to provide a copy of the contract to the Directors for discussion in an Executive Session meeting.

Pool Pass Hardware – Laura E requested the Board of Directors approve funds to purchase a tablet and SIM card to manage the pool pass entry software with cellular internet service. Raj S asked the status of the laptop. The Association retains the laptop but Romain T noted the laptop could not operate on a SIM card, the tablet will. The costs saving from Comcast removal will be significant. The Board of Directors considered costs, the budget, fate of the laptop and protecting the tablet.

Raj S made a motion to approve no more than \$700 to purchase a tablet, SIM card and protective case using funds from GL 6416 and 6435. Dennis SJ seconded the motion of which all were in favor.

Owner Handbook Laura E reported the recorded document has been posted on the website and resale disclosure package. She suggested the Handbook might be reviewed for updating. Mike J has requested the ARC Chair Bill August also review the Handbook as well as the Directors. Raj S noted any contradictions between the handbook and governing documents should be analyzed by the attorney. Upon questions from the Directors, Laura E noted the governing documents and law would always supersede the Handbook. Many homeowners did not receive this document when they purchased their home. Romain T noted the Handbook offers more latitude than the Covenants; the ARC should take this opportunity to modernize and enhance the Handbook as a living document.

This will be a future Action Item, date to be determined.

Milestone Manor Court Tree Removals Laura E presented two proposals, PGC offered \$5,500. She asked if this should be tabled as the County meeting has been decided upon? Dennis SJ stated it would be bad to set a precedent with a decision before meeting with Montgomery County. Raj S agreed, trees are an asset, removal is negative – the Board should also explore other control options. Raman V agreed, other treatments should be investigated. Romain T stated Montgomery County will likely not remove trees which are a nuisance.

Shauneen M, speaking on behalf of the Milestone Manor Court residents, stated the trees must be removed as they have presented a serious pedestrian safety hazard for years. Not all owners clear the gumballs, others sweep them into the storm drain. Some of the trees are top-heavy, an arborist stated injections could damage the trees. Could the Board vote today to approve removal in the event Montgomery County will not take responsibility? Vic D will await the County decision. Raj S says the Board can also work with various County agencies to provide alternative solutions to the tree issue. Shauneen M asked if the County and Board would

not take action, could the owners remove the trees; Mike J noted this would require ARC approval. Mike J, Laura E and Dennis SJ all opined the County will likely not take rapid action. Raj S noted that County reps had previously met with and agreed to take action on street side trees; Romain T noted that had been during the emerald ash borer invasion.

Action Item: Dennis SJ and Laura E will meet with the County and if no action is taken, initiate communications with the Council member representing the area. He and Laura E will work on scheduling the appointment this week.

Romain T made a motion to accept PGC's \$5,500 tree removal quote should Montgomery County refuse to act, charged to GL 6345. Dennis SJ seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Raj S noted this account is over budget. Romain T noted reserve funds are available.

In Person Meetings: Returning to in-person meetings at Gibbs Elementary School had previously be considered. The 2022 budget has \$550 allocated.

Raman V made a motion to return to in-person meetings. Raj S seconded the motion which passed five ayes to one nay (Dennis SJ).

Action Item: Laura E to engage minute-taker for in-person meetings.

Website – Laura E confirmed the website domain has been transferred to management's care and is no longer in an individual homeowner's name. She arranged a three-year renewal with a \$200 savings. Vic D inquired whether the homeowner had been reimbursed for expenses supporting the domain, she affirmed this.

Committee Reports

Architectural Committee

No report was made.

Social Committee

Michael DeCesare announced the May 14th Community Yard Sale and asked participants to sign up by May 8 to ensure their address appears on the map. The Memorial Day Fun Run has been organized. Preparations continue for the June Summer Kick Off Party. Upon review of the planned beer and wine truck vendors, Dennis SJ expressed concerns with liability and the proximity to the pool and school. Mike DeCesare noted the vendors were licensed. Laura E reported insurance coverage had been obtained. The Board deliberated potential liability of offering alcohol at a family-friendly event and possible enforcement methods.

Dennis SJ presented a motion to not offer alcoholic beverages at a community event with children in attendance. Romain T seconded the motion. Discussion was held but no vote called. Mike J noted four members were against serving alcohol at Association events.

Action Item: Social Committee to remove the beer and wine vendors from the event.

Adjournment

There being no further business Raj S made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 pm. Romain T seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Marcy Grove

Minutes approved by the Board of Directors at the June 2022 Meeting.