

Minutes
Refuge at Whitehall Owners Association
Annual Meeting
February 15, 2017, 7:00 PM

- **Call to order:** Larry Drake called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. 19 members were present. 1 proxy was submitted.

- **Approval of minutes:** Minutes have been posted on the website since shortly after last year's meeting and were distributed again today via email. Alan Stemple made a motion that the association approve the minutes of the February 4th, 2016 annual meeting. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

- **Introduction of Board of Directors**
 - Larry Drake, President
 - Woody Fields, Vice-President
 - Mark Palmer, ARB (Absent)
 - Robert Young, Treasurer
 - April DuPree, Secretary

- **President's Report:** Robert Young is taking over as Treasurer provided the workload fits with his professional responsibilities. We are hiring Maurice White to serve as our accountant. We are just waiting on his final signature on the contract. This will increase our accounting fees from \$150 to \$200 a month. Maurice will cut checks for our bills, collect dues, file our taxes, etc. We will have to pick up our bills from our mailbox, review them, take them to Maurice, then pick up the checks to remit. We will incur some upfront cost as Maurice gets our files up to date in Quickbooks.

We have about \$53,000 in our reserve account.

A member had asked Larry why our HOA dues went up by \$40 this year. We were unable to get a clear answer from Frank Glover because he is out of town. At one point, Frank was worried we were going to have a shortfall in our operating fund so that was probably offset with the increase in dues. It was brought up that the perceived shortfall could have been because the HOA had paid the money for the consulting and maintenance related to Preservation Lane and residents of Preservation Lane are paying that money back. The board will re-evaluate at the end of the year and see if we can do away with this \$40 increase for 2018.

- **Vice-President's Report:** Photometrics of the neighborhood collected by SCE&G identified several dark areas in our neighborhood. We are currently waiting on a contract with them to place 4 new poles and lights. The cost is between \$38-\$43 a month per pole which includes all maintenance and the necessary power. Once those are up, we'll re-do the photometrics to see if we need any further improvements. A member asked for the total pole count. The board did not have that information handy but can get back to the membership with this information.

The fence along Preservation Lane is in need of some repairs. Two sections have been damaged. The vines and accompanying drip line need to be replaced/repared. There is a section of the fence at the very beginning of the road that was never put into place. The board is working to remedy that and will collect three estimates before moving forward.

Woody is looking at ways to improve the door to the dock so that it is more difficult for it to be vandalized. He is looking for more substantial replacements for the dock lights that have all been kicked off. The board is considering faux security cameras and motion-activated lights for the back side of the pavilion that won't be offensive to neighboring residents or Middleton Place. It was suggested that some of these measurements will be in vain as the unfortunate truth is that someone is always going to want to vandalize these areas. While that may be true, the board recognizes that some of these safety measures are required by our insurance.

It is the general impression of the VP and several residents that the terms of our contract with The Greenery are not fully being honored. Common areas are not as kempt as they had been in previous years. Woody is meeting with the company to ask them to address our concerns. Our contract with them expires soon so if our concerns are not addressed adequately we will investigate other companies to provide this service.

Woody is also going to take a look at our insurance policy to see if we can find the necessary coverage at a lesser price.

- **ARB Report:** Mark is looking at the standards for neighborhoods such as ours so that we can put some guidelines in place in terms of fines for covenant infractions, time given to correct them, etc. Larry stated that it is the obligation of the board to conduct inspections of the neighborhood periodically and enforce the covenants and restrictions (C&R). If a member is found to be in violation of the C&R, they will receive a letter from the HOA secretary informing them of the infraction, the potential fine if the issue is not addressed and the time-frame in which the infraction must be corrected.

- **Old Business:** The board is working diligently to address all issues of which we are aware.
- **New Business:** The current terms for both VP and ARB should be expiring. Since both Woody and Mark only took on these positions in December, Russ Miller made a motion that we leave both of these gentlemen in their roles for the next term. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.
- **Discussion:** Thank you to Rodney for maintaining the website, his work on the holiday decorations and for helping maintain the lights at the entrance.

Thanks Rich for the new metal signs.

As previously discussed, any official communication from the board will come via email, although you will receive a hard copy of your HOA dues bill each year. We will send draft copy of the minutes before they are approved at the following meeting.

On the subject of treasurer and accountant, once the files are all updated in QuickBooks, could we take this responsibility back instead of paying an accountant? We can do that and the board will consider it but the general consensus is that we are more comfortable with having an external accountant.

A member asked for an update on last year's financial audit. Frank Glover, Russ Miller and Craig Sheasley reviewed the books and found them to be in good shape.

Do we know the total that is outstanding in both dues and Preservation Lane resident payments? The total is about \$17,000. Maurice will levy fines for late payments shortly.

If the Accountant did a good job previously, why did we stop working with him? The board had wanted to move to the use of a management company, which turned out to be a mistake. The company seemed to be a good one but our community manager was negligent in her duties.

We need to plan a day to work at the pavilion and the entrance. The board will work to set a date. Woody is also looking at replacing the paint at the bottom of the light poles where weed eaters have worn it away.

With no further discussion, Craig Sheasley made a motion that we adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.