

## HOA Minutes September 9, 2023

### Present:

President: Bram Larrick

Treasurer: Kat Garrido

Secretary: Valerie Atchison

Director: Evan Archerd

Director: Erin Douglas (Erin was not present, Kat held her proxy )

Homeowner: John Nystadt

Landscape Contractor: Leonard of Oliva Landscaping joined for a quick introduction

Minutes for the previous meeting were approved

Bram explained to John that homeowners are invited to present their concerns/comments, but because the agenda is typically full, comments are addressed later. John remarked that he was just attending and observing, and at this time had nothing to add.

### Erin had previously requested that Evan address why we have an HOA

Valerie asked Evan if he could also address this at the upcoming community meeting.

Evan replied that one place we could address this would be on the FAQ page on the website.

[Added later: Members may go to the FAQ page on the website, and find that this question is already addressed on the FAQ page, with three items. The first two items are: "What is an HOA?", and "Why do we have an HOA?", and the final FAQ item is "Can we dissolve the HOA?" ]

### Communicating with the Membership

Bram: When we used Mail Chimp to contact homeowners, we were able to track who opened their emails. Approximately 34-36 would see the message and open it. With Walsh, we don't get that feedback, but using the results of the recent votes, it looks like the same number is responding. Eighteen to 20 people just do not seem to respond to Board communications.

### Landscaping

Bram: This is the first meeting since the dues increase was passed.

Hopefully members will see that with the new landscaper, Oliva, our property values will be maintained, and we will feel pride in the increasing beauty of our neighborhood.

Bram has invited Leonard, the owner of Oliva, to drop in to meet the Board.

Any concerns that homeowners have concerning landscaping need to go to Bram, who will be the contact with Leonard. The major reason the previous landscaper gave for leaving was that he got too many complaints. Evan said that

has been an ongoing problem for the landscape contractors since the beginning. Having one contact with the landscaping company will limit confusion and clarify communications.

Bram proposed that he send an email to the membership. It will include the information that Bram is the contact for communication with Leonard. There will be a form on the website for homeowners to indicate questions and preferences, complaints and compliments re: landscaping. Leonard is a pro, communicates well, comes highly recommended, and his team knows what they are doing. This is a partnership. Hopefully, as we move into fall and lawn care becomes less time consuming, other landscaping tasks that were not taken care of by the previous contractors can be addressed in a timely fashion that will make us all feel good about the appearance of our neighborhood.

#### Plan an in-person Open Meeting

Ideally, we could have a quarterly in-person meeting that would allow more members to attend and get to know the workings of the HOA Board. Saturday mornings are a likely time to meet. There is a large meeting room in the Talent Library that can be used. Bram asked John if the end of September would be good for him, and he responded that mid-October would be better for them.

Kat: we are entering the cold and flu season, and local COVID

is on the rise. Air exchange in the library is not optimal. Perhaps outdoors for the meeting would be better, or in a larger room. Vaccines for the flu will not be available until October. She recommended that we aim for early November for the in-person meeting.

Valerie: meeting outside or on Zoom would allow us to meet sooner. It seems that earlier for the first one would be a good idea.

Bram: we can follow up on this with an email thread, and perhaps there are venues that would host us if we patronize them.

Kat: we have a nice park, it's not far for us to pack our own lawn chairs.

Bram made a motion to meet in the park on September 30.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Valerie asked if tenants are invited and it was agreed that would be good to include everyone.

#### Treasurer's Report

The delinquent dues list for this quarter has gone down by 13 accounts, compared to the previous quarter.

A lien process was started by Walsh on August 25 on a delinquent property owner, which encouraged the owner to pay in full before the lien was placed on the property. Kat will follow up with Walsh if there are any additional fees incurred by the lien process.

Utilities have increased this past quarter to \$1,000.

The Profit & Loss spreadsheet is posted on the website.

Quarterly P&L reports will be updated with the January-July, 2023 statement. The 6 month P&L is a better reflection of costs.

#### Leonard joined the meeting

Leonard joined for a few minutes to meet the Board. Bram mentioned that we expected it would take a few months for Leonard's crew to get things brought up to standards. Watering system improvements will be addressed early on, once the need for lawn care lessens. Leonard will begin Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. [ Added later: Oliva is now coming on Mondays instead of Tuesdays.] He will have a crew of 2-3, and 3 for leaf season. They will be here on Tuesdays, starting between 7 and 8 AM.

Valerie asked how will Leonard deal with yards without lawns, and also will his crew be careful to not disturb milkweed. Many of our yards are pollinator friendly. Leonard said that they are aware that milkweed is not a weed, and that it is necessary for the butterflies.

Bram said that more people in Clearview are moving to water-wise, no-lawn yards. In that case, Leonard can check whether the homeowners want any help from his crew.

Leonard said that he and his crew will quickly get the neighborhood looking nice for the homeowners.

Leonard signed off.

Kat resumed her Treasurer's report:

Sixty days remain from our 90-day suspension of Violation Notices.

Walsh has informed us that they need to know no later than September 15, any pertinent information regarding individual members' dues, including their status regarding pre-payment.

Bram remarked that those who have pre-paid their dues will be grandfathered in until their prepayment has been fulfilled. New rates will go into effect October 1, for those who have not pre-paid.

Kat provided the new pre-payment chart. Bram will update it on the website and it will go to Walsh.

Walsh will have to communicate with those who have not responded to the new information.

Kat remains the contact person for Walsh. She will refer any questions Walsh has about payments to Bram.

Kat and Bram discussed who should deal with delinquent dues payments. Bram is dealing with the Architectural Review Board and Presidential duties and said that delinquencies seem to fit more into the responsibilities of the Treasurer.

Bram will continue to communicate to the membership during this transition to increased dues, and will keep the Board informed, also.

#### Groundskeeping

Swing set and replacement for damaged bench in the park:

Bram thinks that we should wait on these until we know what the landscaping expenses are going to be because Oliva will have to begin repairing the irrigation

for the common areas, in addition to the regular landscaping work. A bench that will stand up to use, comparable to the ones the city has, costs \$950. The swing set costs will not come out of HOA funds, but are being funded by donation. The homeowner who proposed the swing set for the park has pledged to cover costs that are above whatever has been donated by others. The major donor has offered up to \$1,500 for a quality swing set, and it has to be anchored by a professional. Valerie asked about safety mats and installation. Erin had asked Leonard if his crew could anchor the set; and perhaps Evan can recommend someone. Since the swing set is being paid for by donations, we can move ahead with it. The bench will have to wait since we have to wait for the funds to accrue.

Kat and Bram discussed what the potential costs could be as Oliva works on the irrigation. Kat said that additional costs could potentially add up to \$1,000/month, at \$80/hour. Bram said that Oliva has agreed to do minor repairs as part of their regular work. The additional fee of \$80/hour would cover work over and above their regular time, and would include, e.g., digging up and moving a line, or adding an irrigation zone. For major work, we would get an estimate and a bid, and a separate contract.

There was further discussion as to whether this kind of work would be covered by the regular account or by funds from the Reserve Fund. Bram said that the bylaws state that repair does come under the Reserve Fund.

#### Tree trimming

Bram has talked to Mario, the arborist, and he does not want to work on contract with the HOA. Mario wants the individual homeowner to reimburse him, and then the HOA would have to reimburse the homeowner. This would be too cumbersome for the HOA.

Leonard can trim trees up to twelve feet, so he will be able to take care of a great deal of the tree work, for a lower fee.

In response to Valerie's request for clarification, Bram said that the HOA covers tree work for front yard trees and community trees.

Valerie then asked when we should consider Evan's suggested text for revising the landscaping CC&Rs.

Evan responded that he would send his suggested text to the Board within a couple of days.

#### Parking Strips

Leonard is confident that he can get them cleaned up and looking much nicer. He is a Licensed Landscape Designer, in addition to being a Licensed Landscape Contractor. He could have suggestions for us on how to deal with the parking strips.

Valerie brought up the need for mulch for the trees. Bram said that during his walk-around with Leonard, Leonard noted that the mini clover that had been planted as a trial mulch would not meet our needs. Mulching the trees is a high priority. Forest and Derek charge \$30/hour, perhaps we can ask Leonard for recommendations, and Forest and Derek can do the labor of spreading the mulch.

A homeowner had requested help with a broken sprinkler head, Bram replied immediately, and is waiting for a response from the owner. This highlights the need for homeowners to understand that they are responsible for their own water bills. If there is a broken sprinkler or line, the HOA is not responsible.

### Communications

Kat recommended that each letter sent out to the membership, at the beginning, state that it is the responsibility of members to be informed; and to go to the CC&Rs and the current announcement page on the website. This way it is put out in a repetitive manner, and is documented. The website should have a link to recent communications, and there should be an archive folder for older communications. Bram noted that this is a great idea, and that we could develop boilerplate to head each communication from the Board.

Kat said she would check with Walsh to add some boilerplate to this effect to every letter/email.

Bram also said that whenever Walsh sends out a message from us, the link to the Board needs to be very clear, so that members aren't confused and reply to Walsh instead of the Board.

Kat volunteered to put together some wording that would indicate the link to the Board (only for messages that the Board originates), and a direction to the website and the CC&Rs, as suggested above.

Bram suggested that the Board send out a monthly communication that would be interesting and informative, so that members would know to look for a monthly communication. Valerie said that the Subject Line in communications from Walsh need to very clearly state that it is coming from the Clearview Board.

### Bulletin Board

Bram and Valerie had talked about having a physical bulletin board in the park, and Bram thinks that it would get people's attention. He will research options for a bulletin board with a locking plexiglass front. We could post not just the Clearview HOA business, but also lost pets, notices of garage sales, etc. It would be a source of community information that would stand out, since everyone is inundated with electronic communications. Evan agreed that it would be a good idea.

### Upcoming Changes and construction on Wintersage

A new owner of the two parcels where the two apartment complexes burned down on Suncrest is pursuing City approval of a 44 unit townhouse development. The City is planning to widen Wintersage at its eastern intersection with Clearview by eight feet, in order to accommodate driveway access for the proposed new construction. Our HOA would lose that triangle with 5 young trees. The Planning Department insisted that that triangle does not belong to the HOA, but Evan checked with the Surveyors who surveyed for the Clearview development, and their records indicate that that is indeed Clearview HOA property. Bram has been talking to the City, which expects to eminent domain

that parcel for the road, and he thinks that the .05 acre assessed at \$93K/acre, could bring \$4,600 to the HOA general account. Bram will return to the talk with the Planning Department and take the appropriate documents to show them, and hopefully that will lead to the City recompensing the HOA for the eminent domain action.

#### Closing

Bram asked John if he had any comments or questions.

John asked what was meant by irrigation?

Bram replied that it refers to the irrigation lines in the front yards (excluding the controller, which is the homeowner's responsibility), and the existing irrigation lines in the common areas, including the timers and the different zones.

John asked if the mulching for the parking strips could be something that doesn't blow around. The shredded bark blows into other people's front yards.

Bram said that we are looking for something that is not flammable, is stable and keeps weeds down, e.g., blue mountain granite 1/2" to 3/4" gravel that locks together and doesn't roll, for areas that get foot traffic. We do want water-wise plantings, e.g., lavender, that would be low enough to allow drivers to see children by the roadway; and for around the trees, an organic mulch that is fine enough to not be a fire hazard. The large-scale bark mulch originally used proved to be a danger during the Alameda fire, and that was why it was removed. The Ashland Fire Department has recommendations for fire safe mulch options.

#### Meeting Adjourned