

HERITAGE HILLS SOCIETY
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2020

The meeting commenced at 7:30 PM

Motions:

- To approve paving of Society "B" road portion of 342-348 cluster in Condo 12, using Superior Surfacing, same contractor being used by Condo 12 for repaving their portion of the road. Repaving cost \$58,600, cost of replacing pipe crossing is \$9,640. Approved.
- To approve replacement of aging pool equipment at Pool #2 by Blue Water Pool at a cost of \$79,995. Approved.
- To approve replacement of two sections of 36" drainage pipe in Condo 19 at a cost of \$35,600 and repave a section of the "B" road at that location at a cost of \$33,900, both to be done by Northern Construction. Approved.

Dom Rubino opened the meeting thanking all in attendance, including the camera crew, and advised the meeting was not being broadcast live on Channel 12 because of Comcast issues, but would be rebroadcast once the problem was fixed. Email questions were sent by residents and would be answered later in the meeting. There will be sessions on Oct 6 in the afternoon and on Oct 8 in the evening for Q&A's on the 9-hole golf course. At this meeting residents' questions will be at the end. Mary Lou is still not feeling well, and Anna Milano is working in the office on a temporary basis.

In attendance: Gloria Anderson, Annette Bensen, Bob Ettinger, Ed Goldfarb, Bill Harden, Bob Lundry, Jack Mattes, Mark Packer, Patricia Ploss, Bruce Prince, Dom Rubino, Deica Ruiz. Gene Archer, Ann Harper and Richard Tortorella were absent. John Milligan, Property Manager and Dave Jacobsen, Prosegur Services Security Site Supervisor were also in attendance.

Dom Rubino asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of the August 17, 2020 meeting. Approved.

Treasurer's Report – Bill Harden reported on the August financials. Income was \$441,561, expenses were \$403,130, surplus of \$38,431. Surplus so far in 2020 is \$209,579.

Activities Reopening – Gloria Andersen, Chair – Outdoor activities such as tennis, swimming, and bocce have been open for a while and everyone is maintaining social distancing and wearing masks when necessary. Swimming pools will be closing on Sept 20th. The Activities Center reopened on September 8 for meetings, some activities, and condo meetings. To enter the Activities Center you must wear a mask, present ID, and have a reservation. The maintenance crew and property manager have made the building as safe as possible, with improved ventilation and filters on AC systems. We hope to enter Phase II soon, with longer hours and greater capacity as soon as it's safe to do so. The Fitness Center will reopen on September 21 with limited hours and capacity. An inspection of the Fitness Center is scheduled on September 23 and everything possible has been done to make sure that all requirements have been met, and we are confident that we will pass the inspection. Instructions for making reservations are set out in the Newsletter. The Library has reopened, with hours on Monday and Friday

afternoons. You need to call the Library and leave the name of the book you want to borrow, your name, unit and telephone number, and a volunteer will call when the book is ready and meet you at the outside door. The big, red book drop box is outside the building.

Community Affairs – Jack Mattes, Chair – HH is establishing a stronger relationship with the Somers Food Pantry, housed at St. Luke’s. The Community was very generous at a food drive at Pool 5 last week, and raised \$2,000 in monetary donations in addition to many bags of food. Thank you to those who participated, and you may reach out to me for more information.

We are doing better with Census numbers at HH, the Town of Somers is still seeing some growth but there has not been growth at HH in the last few days. Census money that is raised for the State is critical and affects how many people represent NYS in our Congress. If you need help filling out the Census, contact the Activities office and they will contact me.

Elections are coming up, the plan is for November 3 voting to be in the Activities Building, and there will be shuttles running to/from the AC that day. Early voting will be at Town Hall building and weekday shuttle service will be available. More information will be available soon.

It is becoming more important for residents not to use street names (i.e. Fawn Street) because the postal service does not recognize them. This may be one of the reasons census numbers are down. Typical address should be the number of the building (i.e. 999 Unit C) plus Heritage Hills –do not include Drive, Boulevard, Road, etc.

The Town of Somers created a Telecommunications Task Force and I am representing HH. Somers will work with several neighboring towns to get improvements on how telecommunication companies, including cable companies, respond in emergencies and in the service they give us. During the storm Security could not get calls. Complaints have been filed with the PSC, the initial complaint was directed to Altice. The County has put up \$190,000 to fund a consulting company to help fight the way through PSC.

Question from resident: Security is on a generator, why couldn’t they get calls?

Dave: The Verizon box that controls the phone did not have power and that is why we lost phone service; the Security generator is working.

Website Study Update – Annette Bensen, Chair – We are researching how to simplify the website login for everyone in order to facilitate use of the site and the information it contains. Please email me at Activities@hhsociety.org with any suggestions you have to make the website easier and smarter. The site contains an unbelievable amount of information, including about the Library and all the other activities available in HH.

Dom added that it might be a little complicated to get on the website right now, and less than two thirds of residents receive email notices. Much more information has been sent by email blasts in the last six months and we would like to have as many email addresses as possible.

Question from resident: What are some of the issues with the website?

Annette: The main issue is that residents have to log in and we're trying to make it so that if you log in once that will be the first and last time you need to do it.

Landscaping – Patricia Ploss, Chair – The Committee met in August and in late September/early October. Mums, kales, and cabbages will soon be out, as well as hay bales. A couple of areas need some work, one is at Pool 1 and the other is at our entry, we have dying junipers and the two Colorado blue spruce are looking sad and will probably be removed. We lean on advice of our landscapers regarding replacements. We won't meet again until February when we start talking about spring flowers.

Activities – Ed Goldfarb, Co-Chair – Not much going on in Activities right now. Clubs and classes have come back very slowly, a few have contacted Andrew regarding reopening. Any resident who has been in a Class or Club and wants info contact Andrew in the Activities Office and he'll bring you up to date.

Fitness Center – Annette Bensen, Chair – The gym looks different, machines have been moved, a lot of additional signage. Mary and Jonathan are wearing full garb, masks and gloves. Unbelievable cleaning schedule, and John will give you more specifics. We have reopened on a limited basis and the Committee has been active trying to make sure everyone is safe before we extend hours; it is not our intent to make it more difficult for individuals who work.

Infrastructure – Bruce Prince, Chair – HEPA air filters (MERV 13) are the most effective but cannot be used in our HVAC systems because the resistance they produce is more than our HVAC systems can handle so we have to use MERV 11 filters. MERV 11 filters have been installed throughout. The Fitness Center and Heritage Room have three foot exhaust fans in the attic which pull in fresh air and in turn helps the air flow.

Revised Rules and Regulations – Patricia Ploss – In August the Board adopted the revised R&R and they will be posted on the website.

Comment from resident: Suggest that the Rules and Regulations be sent as pdf in an email blast so residents could print out a copy if they wish.

Library – Bruce Prince, Chair – The Library reopened September 14; we are open Mondays and Fridays from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm. Access the Library page on the website to find the list of all books we have, then call the Library at 276-7655 and place your order, leaving your name, unit, telephone and name of the book(s). A volunteer will call you when the book(s) is ready; call when you arrive call the Library and a volunteer will bring your books to the door. No one other than two volunteers are allowed in the Library. The book drop is outside the building, a big red box built by Marcus. Please return any books that were borrowed before the closing, there are no fines or penalties. The Library gets cleaned every Mon and Friday, and returned books will be quarantined for three days before they can be borrowed.

Security – Dave Jacobsen, Head of Security – Thanks to the Reopening Committee for their hard work. We had 23 cases of COVID in the beginning, down to no cases to our knowledge. For August, there were 81 medical calls, 225 security calls, 76 service calls, 5 emergency maintenance calls, 1 accident, and 7 parking violations, 2,314 calls year to date. On another topic, tennis courts are not for dog walking and roller blading, but this is happening. Courts 1, 2 and 4 now have combination locks and you will receive

the combination upon making a reservation. We hope this will protect our courts. No dog walking is allowed around the Activities Center.

John Milligan – Property Manager – The Board will vote on motions tonight for projects that will cost \$220K, taking care of any surplus we have. We have tracked savings since March, and early on we saved money on lifeguards, maintenance on pools, and bus service. In the past our buses totaled about 300 miles and 45 riders per day, now it is less than 40 miles and 2 commuters to the train station daily.

We have several independent AC systems in each building and in the interest of safety we replaced 32 filters, put in MERV 11 rated filters, the highest our system can take. We have UV ionization units throughout the building. Cleaning protocols include a Clorox 360 machine purchased at a cost of \$4,000, with a germicidal solution that clings to all surfaces. There are many cleaning products, with 48 sanitizing stations, including at pools and buses. In the final analysis our savings versus expenditures will be net zero. Surplus is seasonal in nature, and repaving projects will soon be underway.

Question from resident: Are all the other tennis courts going to be locked as well?

John: Courts 1, 2, 4 seem to be a problem with dog walkers using them even during the day. All courts are locked at night. There are now combination locks on three courts and monthly codes will be given when reservations are made. Dog walkers are not picking up. We have security cameras at the courts but they are not in real time, and it is difficult to identify individuals.

At Condo 12, part of the road is Society's responsibility. The Condo and Society will use Superior Surfacing for paving (\$58,600) and for drainage (\$9,640). A motion made to approve both projects passed unanimously.

At Condo 19 there is a drainage and paving project where 40 feet of pipe needs to be replaced. Northern Construction will do both jobs – pipe replacement for \$35,600, repaving patched section \$33,900. A motion made to approve both projects passed unanimously.

Following recent approval from the Dept. of Health, mechanical equipment at Pool 2 will be replaced by Blue Water Pools at a cost of \$79,995. A motion made to replace Pool 2 mechanical equipment passed unanimously.

All these projects are in our current budget. Money is put into the budget every year for paving and drainage issues. Many changes, including air quality improvement and additional cleaning measures are being taken in the Fitness Center. A rigorous inspection by the Somers Inspector will be done on behalf of the Dept. of Health.

Update on 9-Hole Golf Course – Patricia Ploss – The Society Board has met with current golf course owners and they are interested in selling the 62-acre parcel on the East Hill. The course has been abandoned for two years and is unsightly. The HH owners will vote on whether to purchase this golf course, and if the purchase is approved the property will not be operated as a golf course. The visible areas will be maintained and mowed; there are wetlands and steep slopes that we will not maintain. A brochure has been created to inform owners about what is involved in this project, the brochure will be included in the October Newsletter. Ballots will be mailed to owners in October.

Two information meetings will be held, on October 6 and on October 8, to answer owners' questions. Reservations and masks are required.

Society has developed a preliminary budget anticipating what it will cost each unit owner to purchase and maintain the property. The property is within the HH Designed Residential Development (DRD), and with that come several restrictions. The property cannot be further subdivided and if unit owners vote to purchase it anything Society does will need approval from the Town – the 62 acres are currently designated as a golf course or open space. Please read the brochure and send questions to the email box noted, and your questions will be answered within a few days.

Dom commented Society is waiting for additional information from outside sources, and we have answered all the questions we can at the moment. The brochure contains financial information, including loan cost, interest, and median cost figures, among others.

Pat mentioned that the current owners are taking over the mortgage and the interest is 3.25%, considerably lower terms than we could get from a bank. Bill said there will be no assessment for this purchase.

Question from resident: How long is the financing; are we in bidding competition with other buyers.

Pat: financing is over a ten year period.

Bill: we understand there are other bidders but we don't know who they are.

Comment from resident: It would be helpful if the high and low numbers be communicated when they are available.

Bill: we are doing that for the purchase costs, taxes, etc but cannot give maintenance numbers at this time.

Questions/comments from resident: This will mean an extra amount for a ten year period - does it include maintenance, taxes, insurance, and repairs of buildings? Purchase price is just the beginning and are unit owners expected to vote on this without having all this information. What happens if they walk away from the 18 hole course and restaurant? There's a DRD on the property.

Pat: we have a budget and approximate figures. Recommend we have a Master Plan Committee to determine needs vs wants and phase improvements in over time.

Dom: many questions can't yet be answered. For 2021 we know we know we're going to clean it up, we know what the debt service is, we know what the maintenance will be. We're asking that you vote on what we know and what we can do with it. We are addressing what is possible to do in 2021. We know it's going to cost about \$45/annually per unit for the next 10 years, or \$450. Overall we know certain costs for contracts, but last year we had an unexpected expenditure of \$90K on a culvert.

Pat: A Master Plan Committee would look at what needs to be done; crumbling retaining walls are a need, walking trails, dog parks, other ideas need to be evaluated and costed out, need to see if there is support for these projects. The Board is responsible and committed to working for your best interests.

Question from unit owner: what if people don't vote.

Pat: the majority of those who vote will decide.

Mark Packer: if someone else make a higher bid, is seller committed to us?

Gloria: we do have a signed Letter of Intent which means they have taken it off the market. We are currently negotiating the contract. To our knowledge until the Contract of Sale is signed, it's not binding on either party.

Dom: We have been told there are other purchasers interested in the property. The seller told us they have offered more than we have, but we can't prove this. You have to look at this as homeowners – do we want to feel comfortable and safe that no other company or outsider can purchase the property and do something that will decrease the value of our homes. This has happened in other places that had DRDs. The only way we can be sure of what will happen and that the property will be maintained and kept beautiful is to own it ourselves. And if we don't purchase it and it remains abandoned, it will continue to deteriorate. We will move forward and work with the Town, and form a committee that Pat spoke about.

Comment from resident: It's on the East Hill but affects the West Hill as well. What goes on in one part of our property affects the entire property.

Comment from resident: Anyone else who buys it won't keep it as is and might be something we don't want.

Question from resident: Can we do things to make it "self maintaining?"

Dom: we spent \$750K on the yard, pay \$90K a year, and collect \$70K; we are doing our due diligence and looking at how we can possibly generate income. We checked insurance and would pay an additional \$1,000 a year for liability. We are doing our due diligence by working with the Town in advance of the purchase to see what we can do with the property under the current DRD, we are waiting for an answer. We're looking at the purchase from every angle. Remember we are having meetings on Oct 6 and 8, send your questions to the e-mailbox. Your questions help us as we pursue this purchase. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Deica Ruiz
Secretary, Heritage Hills Society, LTD