

HERITAGE HILLS SOCIETY
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes October 21, 2020

The meeting commenced at 1:30 pm

Dom Rubino, President, greeted all in attendance and those watching on Channel 12.

In attendance: Gloria Anderson, Gene Archer, Annette Bensen, Bob Ettinger, Ed Goldfarb, Bill Harden, Ann Harper, Jack Mattes, Mark Packer, Patricia Ploss, Dom Rubino, Deica Ruiz, John Milligan, Property Manager, Dave Jacobsen, Security Site Supervisor

Absent: Bruce Prince, Richard Tortorella

Dom advised that Bob Lundry, who has been a Society Board member for over ten years, has resigned. He has been especially helpful with Heritage Hills past history, and we thank him for all his work over the years. He will be missed.

Please send emails to Society regarding the golf course and/or any other questions you may have. The golf course website is still up and will come down after the ballots are counted.

Deica Ruiz, Secretary - Asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 17, 2020 meeting. Approved. Going forward, we will be approving previous Board Minutes at Work Sessions that are held a week before the board meetings. Therefore, starting next month, Minutes will be posted in the Newsletter a week earlier.

Treasurer's Report – Bill Harden, Treasurer reported on September financials. Income was \$441,369, expenses were \$405,458, surplus of \$35,811. Surplus so far in 2020 is \$245,516. The 2020 surplus will be used by year's end on major projects. The 2021 Budget is 80% complete and should be finalized by next week and approved at next month's meeting. A reminder that club members who have paid an individual \$600 or more during the year must get a W-9 from that individual and forward it to Mary Beth at Heritage Management so we can report this to the IRS.

Activities Reopening – Gloria Anderson, Chair – Most facilities are open on a limited basis, we have capacity restrictions and masks must be worn. Attendance is light, majority of residents seem reluctant to be inside despite all the precautions we have been taking. Shuttle bus service will be expanded effective November 4th to include mid-day trips for local shopping and doctor visits. An email blast will be sent the beginning of November. Due to COVID-19, facility use is restricted to residents only. Guests, home health aides or owners of rented units are not permitted to use the facilities at this time. Every building is restricted to residents only, current ID cards must be presented, reservations must be made and masks must be worn. We are trying to stay as safe as possible during this second wave and hope to get back to close to normal when we can do so in a safe manner.

Activities - Ann Harper, Chair – Some Clubs and Activities have resumed. Club Shalom and the Independent Film Club have shown films in the Heritage Room and everything went smoothly. Other clubs who rely on outside speakers, such as Continuing Education, have decided to stay with Zoom for the time being. Several

book clubs have met live. The only class we currently have live is “Gushing with Paint.” It is important that residents check the Newsletter for up to date information and to also make sure that you are signed up to receive the email blasts that announce everything that is taking place. If you are not receiving them, please check your spam folder, and if you are not signed up, contact Andrew in the Activities Office.

Comcast Committee – Gloria Anderson, Chair – Our TV and Internet services in Heritage Hills are provided by Comcast Xfinity. They are a monopoly and operate in HH by virtue of entering into a franchise agreement with the Town of Somers. HH is in not a party to that contract. This contract is now up for renewal and the Town has invited members of the Comcast Committee of the Society Board to meet to provide our input regarding issues that are important to us and that should be included in the renewed franchise agreement. The draft contract I’ve reviewed did not include items that we deemed important to protect HH. We have made additions to the contract and have sent them to the Town to review. Gene Archer and I hope to meet with Town Supervisor Morrissey and Councilman Anthony Ciriaco to discuss the renewal Contract.

Residents have asked if there is another service provider within HH. Unfortunately, there is not. Comcast does have the exclusive franchise agreement to operate within HH. Society has no control over that whatsoever. The Town in the past has been good about exploring options for other providers who would like to come into HH, but to my knowledge there have been no other providers who are willing to make the capital investment that would be required to lay the cable. I believe at one point another provider made an offer to Comcast to buy them out and Comcast refused that offer. Currently it’s either Comcast or nothing, unless you request a variance from your Condo to place a Dish onto your roof or deck and receive “Direct TV.” In the future, 5G may become available but we don’t believe that’s going to be for a number of years. The initial investigation made by Ed Goldfarb, a member of our Board, reported that it would take significant capital investment to put up all the antennae that would be required for 5G and HH would have to pay for those antennae. The franchise agreement usually runs for a 10-year period. It’s due to be renewed shortly, we will be working on it, and you will be kept updated as we go along.

Community Affairs – Jack Mattes, Chair

The Census has ended for 2020 and won’t be dealt with for another 10 years. We were very successful. Our percentage rate for self-response closed at 75.9%, and this rate will rise once individuals who responded to in-person census takers are added, increasing the dollars we get in federal funds for the state of New York and the Town of Somers. Out of all the municipalities in Westchester, we did well - within the County we were #15 from the top. The top response was only 84.9%. We thank everyone who filled out their forms promptly. In 2010 Somers closed at 73.7%, and in 2000, the Town had a 58% completion rate. There are thousands of dollars over a 10-year period for every resident who completed the form.

The Somers Food Pantry: We had our very first food drive at HH to collect donations for the St. Luke’s Food Pantry in Somers. They’ve been able to deal with a huge increase in the demand for food for people who are less fortunate. Our residents were very generous with donations of good as well as several thousands of dollars in monetary donations. It is on-going and you can contribute at any time. Hopefully, we can come back in the Spring and have another food drive. It was gratifying to see how many people showed up and were happy to do it. Residents of the Somers area appreciate it.

Elections: Early voting, absentee voting and Election day which is November 3rd. The last day to request an absentee ballot is October 27. There is a New York State website where you can request an absentee ballot,

write to Activities and we will provide you with it. Absentee ballots can be mailed back to White Plains or they can be hand delivered to the polling site here which is the Town House. Our Shuttle buses will be running hourly. Early voting starts October 24 and will run through November 1. Absentee ballots must be placed in the bright blue bag with the yellow handle. This bag will be guarded by two people from the Board of Elections for the entire day. It will be signed and sealed at the end of each voting day and will be hand delivered to the Board of Elections in White Plains, and placed into a queue to be counted. The same blue bag will be here in this room on November 3. The Activities center will be your location to vote in person on November 3. There will be two social distancing Ambassadors, one Republican and one Democrat to present equal opportunity voting. They will guide you to either vote in person or to drop off an absentee ballot. Be careful with golf course ballots – do not put in with your absentee ballot, use the golf course ballot box. Any questions regarding the process, please contact the Activities Office and you will be answered personally.

Somers Telecommunications Task Force: 5G is something to look at down the road. We are dedicated to improving Telecommunication efforts here, specifically in Northern Westchester. There is a coalition of local towns, Somers included, acting in concert in helping to receive better security and improved communication during an emergency.

Fitness Center – Annette Bensen, Chair – The staff is extremely competent and creates a safe atmosphere, there is a tremendous amount of clean-up taking place. The center is mostly used between 8 am and 11 am, the rest of the day is light. In the afternoons it is very light, about 5 reservations per day. So far, we have had 0-5 people in the evenings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Gym has been open since the second week of October, and we have had two pickle ball groups. We are currently working on the reservation system and hope to have it updated and more user friendly. Someone has requested that we offer meetings online and I am in the middle of checking with our host. Broadcasting on Channel 12 will continue in the meantime.

Website Study Update – Annette Bensen, Chair – We are trying to find out why our website is not well received. In my research with other Condominiums and other companies with websites, I've found that all are similar with regard to requesting a login. If anyone can find one that doesn't request this, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are looking into an upgrade for our website. If you have any questions or recommendations, please contact me. If you have never logged on to the website you won't receive email blasts. Please call Andrew if you are having problems logging in, or send an email to Activities with my name in the subject line and it will be forwarded to me.

Landscaping – Patricia Ploss, Chair – We hope everyone is enjoying the mums, kales, cabbages and pansies which bring color. We are all set for the fall and planning to meet again in February for spring flowers. We are looking at two special projects for next year. One is rejuvenation of our main entrance, especially as you're exiting the property. If you look to your left, it needs a little help. There's an area off Pool 1 next to the paddle tennis courts which will also be renovated. I would like to thank Westchester Properties for reseeding the grass area outside the Activities center at no charge.

Library – Deica Ruiz, Chair – The Library is open Mondays and Fridays from 1:00 pm-3:30 pm. To request a book, please call the Library at 276-7655 and leave a message with your name, unit #, phone and the name of the books you want to borrow. A volunteer will return your call to confirm we have the books, then you can call us when you arrive in the parking lot and a volunteer will bring the books to the side door. Books may be

borrowed for two weeks at a time. We will have ten (10) new books in November and ten (10) newly donated. The large red drop box outside the Library is for returned books and they will be quarantined for three days. Please wear your mask when picking up your books. You may view a list of all our books on the website on the Library tab, even if you don't have a login for the website.

Security - Dave Jacobsen, Head of Security - Walkers should be wearing something white or reflective and walking against traffic so you can see cars coming toward you. Drivers, please be aware of our walkers on the road and the leaves on the ground. There is still a group entering unlocked cars and taking items, therefore please lock your cars at night. No locked cars have been broken into. Please take in all personal items, laptops and bags. It is important that everyone obey the Stop signs. Statistics for September: medical calls: 59, security: 162, service: 56, maintenance calls/water main breaks: 3. No parking issues and no car accidents this month.

Health and Safety Committee – Flo Brodley – We are producing email blasts to provide important information rather than having small meetings. Blood pressure screenings are taking place each month thanks to Nurse Ellie Eidam. There were 16 screenings in September and 12 in October. Currently, Medicare has begun its Open Enrollment Period which runs from October 15th until December 7th. Email blasts are providing information on Medicare Parts B and D, Medigap/Supplemental Plans, Emergency Care, and on Advanced Directives and Hospice Care. These help you navigate through the enrollment period regarding your current and future health plan needs. One directive going out today is the trouble with the Medicare Planfinder, for drug plans, for which an alert has been issued and should be fixed shortly. It's usually a good site to look into, just understand that it is not stable at the moment

Dom mentioned that this re-enforces how important it is to sign up to our website. Information is sent out daily that we should know about.

John Milligan – Property Manager

Shuttle buses: The shuttle was brought back to service as of June 8th with limited commuter service, four runs in the morning and four runs in the evening, with one or two commuters per day, compared to the 30-35 commuters we averaged before the pandemic. We will have bus service to early voting next week, running buses hourly to and from Town Hall. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday voting is between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. Tuesday and Thursday voting starts at noon and goes until 8:00 pm. Election Day, Tuesday, November 3 buses will be available hourly to this building from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm. Buses are for residents only, no home health aides, guests or family are allowed. Masks must be worn at all times and there is no food allowed. The capacity of the bus is seven and residents are to sit every other seat. As always, reservations for the shuttle are necessary, please call 276-2877. Email blasts on all of this will be sent to residents.

Starting Wednesday, November 4, midday bus service will resume for shopping trips (Acme and DeCicco's), two pharmacies (CVS and Somers) and doctors' offices (Caremount Offices, Bailey Court, and Mill Pond). Email blasts will be sent out with schedules.

A new shuttle bus has been placed in service. We have a three-bus fleet. Next year a new bus will not be necessary due to the mileage we saved during the pandemic which will save us \$60,000. Normally, we purchase a new bus every year.

Capital Projects: Condos 12 and 19 paving projects are complete. In the next few weeks miscellaneous paving repairs will be completed. At pool #2, replacement equipment has arrived and should be completed by mid to late November, after which there will be an inspection.

Road work: yearly we repair 25 to 30 catch basins, with each repair starting at \$1800. Storm water management and paving consume a large portion of our budget. We also replaced over 150 feet of guard rail on the East Hill, all of which are made of wood and have been in the ground for 30-35 years. There is over a mile and a half of guard rails on the property and we address them on an as-needed basis.

Building related repairs: Air conditioning units have been replaced in the lower level of the Activities building and a couple at Lake Lodge. In the past 3-4 years we have replaced all A/C units in both buildings, which consist of six or seven separate independent systems in each building, and now most are new or almost new.

Tennis Courts: Five new nets have been replaced. Comments have been received regarding the locking systems. Locks are required due to dog walking, roller blading, and bicycles on our courts. When you make tennis reservations you will see the code to the locks. We have agreed with requests to allow courts #6 and #7 nets to remain up throughout the winter due to the hard surfaces which can withstand the elements. No shoveling or desalting is permitted on these surfaces and courts can be used as long as it is clean of snow.

Street lights: Our new LED lights are reliable, however the sensors at the top of the pole do need replacing. Our Security provides a street light report twice a week and our electrician is quick in responding with replacements. We have over 400 street lights and have yet to have a failure of the LED fixtures. Only sensors and the components within the fixtures have needed replacements. Only two solar lights are left on the property, located on the West Hill. We do have a master map of the locations of the poles with 3 digit numbers on the pole which makes it easy for residents to report if there is a light out.

Salt Storage Barn: A new canopy will be installed to protect the salt from moisture. It is a \$40,000 item.

Lake Lodge: Shingle roof areas will be replaced due to minor leaks.

East Hill Golf Course, Gloria Anderson, Chair – Society has entered into an agreement to purchase the East Hill Golf Course and the contract was signed on October 16, 2020. The Contract is contingent on the approval of the Heritage Hills owners, who will be asked to vote on whether or not to approve the purchase. The ballots were mailed to each HH owner on October 19, and must be returned by November 18. I encourage each owner to vote ye or nay and return the ballots to us. There will be a ballot box located inside the Activities Building. Assuming the residents approve purchase of the Golf Course, the closing has been set for December 1st. We will be taking a loan out from the current owners of the Golf Course in the amount of \$995,000 at 3.25%. Payments will be monthly over a ten-year period. A committee of residents and Board Members will be formed to explore possible uses for the property. The Town has preapproved four potential uses: walking paths, exercise stations, a playground and community gardens. Other ideas residents have may be explored by the Committee. Please make sure your ballot has your name and unit number on the envelope or it will not be counted.

Question from Annette: If approved, when will clean up take place?

John Milligan replied that clean-up will begin in December, weather permitting. Westchester Properties is prepared to purchase or lease equipment needed to mow and maintain the property.

Dom reminded everyone that we have not bought the golf course yet, nothing can be done until we receive and count the ballots, therefore it's important to submit your ballot, yea or nay, as soon as possible.

Questions from Resident, Unit 519A: What was the total price of the property? How did you arrive at that price? Who else would purchase this property? How will this affect Society fees?

Bill provided the following answers: The total price is \$1,244,000, and we did negotiate down from \$1,500,000. Society owns very little property and if we purchase we could have 62 acres in which to expand, even under the current DRD. The only other interested bidder we are aware of is Con Ed, although we heard that other entities could buy the property and shelve it, in the hope that a future Town administration might change the DRD and permit building on it. The brochure contains information about possible changes in Society fees.

Pickleball – MaryAnne Finella, Unit 761C: We are requesting that one of the tennis courts be converted into four dedicated pickleball courts, not a shared court. Notes and a diagram to illustrate the conversion of one of the tennis courts to a pickleball court have been submitted. It is the fastest growing sport in the US. It's a sport for all ages. Pickleball has a fun, social, and inclusive aspect to it. Experienced players enjoy playing and sharing their knowledge with beginners. We believe it would be an attractive amenity for current and future residents. Somers HS has introduced pickleball into their gym time curriculum. It uses a lightweight racket and light waffle ball.

Denise Elliot-Wood, Unit 597B: Outdoor pickleball courts use the same smooth surface as tennis courts. Converting an existing tennis court may be the most financially prudent and efficient option to successfully bring pickleball to Heritage Hills. We have enough tennis courts to convert one court without affecting tennis play. From July through October, Activities had 995 tennis court reservations and found that there were always at least two courts still available. Most of the time, only one court was being used. The existing outdoor pickleball court is not conducive to safe and fun pickleball games. It's made from plastic tiles which are dangerous when tiles pop out and cause an uneven surface and forces the ball to bounce wrong, which is why no one reserves it. Converting that court to the standard surface would probably be expensive. We also ask that you not consider court #5. The foliage and lack of sunlight create a lot of dirt and water on the courts, and the stairs to get to it are intimidating. It would make it difficult, if not impossible for some of our residents to play. We would like a successful conversion that gives the growing pickleball community the ability to play here in HH. We are hopeful you will approve our request.

Mike Schwartz, Unit 675A: It would be a great amenity to add dedicated pickleball courts. Social aspects are outstanding. Reservations are not required. You can show up, wait in line and rotate in, similar to Bocce.

Dom agreed that it is a fast-growing sport, and that Society is budgeting funds for it in the 2021 budget.

Email question from Cathy Pryor, Unit 180B: Comcast issues, requesting another provider. Will Comcast provide a senior discount?

Dom said there is no other provider for us to use. Gloria has tried asking Comcast for a discount but has not been successful. Unfortunately, they are a monopoly and we only have a voting power with the Town. The Town of Somers does receive a 5% franchise fee from Comcast. Therefore, 5% of the gross receipts that

Comcast receives from HH residents, goes directly to the Town of Somers. You can make that complaint to the Town, that you would like a discount. Dom mentioned that Cablevision also gives a fee to the Town. Gloria confirmed that it is part of the federal regulation that the providers pay a franchise fee to the Towns and/or the governmental entity with whom they enter into a contract.

Responses to emailed questions:

John Milligan: Email regarding children being allowed at pools. Children are allowed at all five of our pools. Pool #3 is where we allow the use of toys. Recommend you reach out to the Pool Committee to discuss the use of toys at other pools.

John: Email regarding a sidewalk from the main entrance at DeCicco's all the way through the East Hill to the rear of the East Hill Entrance. Society doesn't own most of that property, it belongs to 7 or 8 separate Condo Associations. They would have to agree to construct, maintain, and obtain the insurance for sidewalks. HH was never designed or intended to have sidewalks. Since 30 separate Condo Associations own the property, it would be a huge logistical problem to get them all to agree. A walking path on the Golf Course property is a real possibility.

John re surveillance cameras: There are cameras in all three of our buildings and are monitored in the Security office. There are also cameras at our pools, however, because we don't have internet at the pools, we would have to view footage at the pool, they are not transmitted to the Security office. We do not have cameras on the roads because we do not have the internet service that provides a signal. Re radon readings: because of the geology and geography in HH, it is not uncommon to find radon in your crawl space or even in your unit if you're a slab on grade. It is an inexpensive test and, if you are selling your unit, your bank may require it. You can reach out to your Condo Board for more information.

Bill: There will be many uses suggested for the golf course land, and some of these may not be approved by the Planning Board. We have a few ideas for the property to become income producing that we may pursue.

Dom reminded everyone that there has been an uptick in coronavirus cases in Westchester and we are back to June/July levels. We need to remain cautious, especially with the upcoming holidays.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Deica Ruiz

Secretary, Heritage Hills Society, LTD