

HERITAGE HILLS SOCIETY
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes November 19, 2020

Meeting commenced at 7:30 pm

Dom Rubino, President, greeted all in attendance and those watching on Channel 12. Dom advised that the Society office is open from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday, on a permanent basis. The office can be fully managed within these hours, and if you visit the office please do so between 9 and 1. All emails and phone calls are being covered and will be answered. Mary Lou Martelli is scheduled to return on January 4 and will be working from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm daily.

The results of the East Hill Golf Course vote: a total of 1,521 ballots were received, 1,294 were affirmative, 165 were no, and 62 were invalid due to missing names and unit numbers. Hopefully in the coming year everyone will agree this was the right thing to do. The clean-up will make a huge difference, and with all the plans we have going forward, this will add a lot to our community and to our various demographics.

Board members in attendance: Gloria Anderson, Annette Bensen, Bob Ettinger, Bill Harden, Ann Harper, Jack Mattes, Mark Packer, Patricia Ploss, Dom Rubino, Deica Ruiz
Absent: Gene Archer, Ed Goldfarb, Bruce Prince, Richard Tortorella

Dom Rubino asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting. Motion made and approved. The minutes were released at the Board Work Session on November 12, allowing us to put them on the website and in the Newsletter earlier in the month.

Treasurer's Report – Bill Harden, Treasurer reported we previously had agreed to get a loan from the current owners of the golf course, however, the loan agreement failed to meet our expectations. We are now planning to get the loan from PCSB, borrowing \$995,000 for seven years at 3.5% interest rate. We were also able to re-open our current loan on the maintenance yard, which has about \$600,000 outstanding at a 5.5% rate, and PCSB agreed to reduce this amount to a 4.5% rate for the life of the loan, a significant savings. All paperwork has been completed and subject to bank approval we are hoping for a closing date sometime before the end of the year.

Dom Rubino requested a Motion to approve the new loan plan from the original HHH LLC to PCSB in Somers. Motion was made, the Board Secretary provided the roll call. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report Continued: The 2021 budget has been drafted. There were a number of expenses in 2020 that will not appear in the 2021 budget, therefore the increase in Society fees will be 2.9% for 2021, the same increase as in 2020. Our total income will be \$5,488,946, and total expenses will remain the same, with a contingency account of \$186,778. The budget is a little tight but still comfortable.

Bill Harden requested a Motion to accept the budget for 2021 with the increase of 2.9% in Society fees. Motion was made, the Board Secretary provided the roll call. Motion approved.

Dom Rubino thanked everyone who took part in creating the budget, noting we were able to include the new loan for the golf course into the 2021 budget and still maintain the same increase as in 2020. Dom said he is often asked why increases are necessary. The answer for Society is that there are contracted services with

Heritage Management Services, Prosegur Security, and Westchester Properties Group that have escalation clauses in them, automatic increases of 2% or 3% yearly. In addition, salaries, benefits, and insurance for employees go up on a yearly basis, consequently increases are necessary in order to keep up with rising costs. There is over \$2 million budgeted just for “fixed costs,” and almost 1.25% of the increase is strictly for these escalating costs.

For the October financials, income was \$444,322, expenses were \$371,817, surplus of \$72,505. Surplus so far in 2020 is \$318,014, which sets us up for a good year-end report for 2020.

Activities Reopening – Gloria Anderson, Chair: We have had a rapid and dramatic increase in the number of COVID-19 cases within HH in the past week. The Reopening Committee recommended changes that were approved by the Board. All shuttle bus service will be discontinued effective Monday, November 23rd, including commuter runs and midday service to shopping and doctors. We are limiting the number of people attending meetings in the Activities Center (AC) to a maximum of ten people, also effective November 23rd. There can be up to three meetings taking place in the AC at one time, with a maximum of thirty people in the AC at any time. This action has been taken because up to now we have had up to 200 persons in the building at a time, making it very difficult to conduct contact tracing if someone who has been in the building tests positive. The ten person limit is in line with the Governor’s recommendations that no more than ten people congregate in any one household. In addition to the thirty people who may attend meetings on this floor of the AC, downstairs the Woodshop will continue to work under their current guidelines, as well as the painting class that takes place in the arts and crafts room. These two activities may continue as long as the participants and the instructors continue to strictly adhere to the safety guidelines that are in place.

Fitness Center: We have decided to continue with our current plan of a maximum of ten persons on a first come, first served basis in the FC. This is in line with the NYS Governor’s recommendations. We do anticipate numbers will climb, in which case the Governor will likely close gyms statewide. Anyone who enters the FC, or the AC by reservation, must provide a phone number and an email address in order to assist us with contact tracing in the event that we need to contact you of potential exposure. We are strongly encouraging all Condo Boards, groups and clubs to meet via Zoom, rather than meeting in the AC. Our future Board meetings will be via Zoom for the indefinite future. Once approved the meeting minutes will be placed on our website and published in the newsletter. We will continue our policy of responding to all questions received via email to the Activities office, and these questions will be discussed at the Zoom Board meetings.

Dom Rubino reminded everyone to sign onto the website with your email address in order to receive notifications. Please feel free to contact the AC and ask for help if needed.

Comcast Committee – Gloria Anderson, Chair: We have edited the draft of the Comcast franchise agreement and sent it to the Town attorneys for review. They have forwarded it to Comcast and we are waiting for a response. We expect it to be similar to the existing contract.

Landscaping – Patricia Ploss, Chair: On December 4th, our white lights will be installed for the holidays.

Bad Debt Write-off – Patricia Ploss recommended to the Board that we write off outstanding arrears on Unit 239B in the amount of \$14, 148.71. This Unit has been in foreclosure since 2010 and has been abandoned. The bank has been paying the fees under a NY state legislation since last August. The prior balance, up until August, is owed by the estate and is deemed to be uncollectable. Patricia requested a Motion to write off the

arrears of \$14,148.71 on Unit 239B. Motion was made, the Board Secretary provided the roll call. Motion approved.

Patricia also advised that foreclosures in New York have been suspended into 2021. We have three other properties on site that owe over \$10,000.

Golf Course Master Plan Committee: Patricia Ploss will be Chair of this Committee, which includes Bill Harden and Bob Ettinger. Several residents have volunteered to serve and the Committee will discuss how large a team is necessary, decide on the makeup of the Committee, and begin the work.

Activities - Ann Harper, Chair: Due to the rise in Covid-19 cases, we have decided not to approve any new activities, clubs or classes at this time. Stay safe.

Fitness Center – Annette Bensen, Chair thanked Marcus and staff for a wonderful job on cleaning and keeping the Fitness Center safe. The “no reservation” idea has been working very well. More residents use the facility due to this change. Today we reorganized the equipment to recycle use of the machines, and opened up more equipment for use. The FC will be open on Wednesday, November 25th, and closed for Thanksgiving and on Friday. The same will be true for Christmas, and details on this will be forthcoming. There are one or two residents who refuse to wipe down machines before and after each use and to wear a mask. It is necessary that we follow the rules and continue to stay healthy. Mary and Jonathon are doing their best regarding compliance. We are placing two heaters and two benches outside for changing shoes.

Website Study Update – Annette Bensen, Chair: We are working hard to keep our website up to date. We are hoping to purchase a new camera with capabilities for streaming on Channel 12, and will be presenting this idea to members of the Board in the near future. Please utilize our website and provide your email, it is important so you can receive email blasts.

Security - Dave Jacobsen, Head of Security – HH has ten positive COVID cases over a period of one week which is a cause for concern. There are sites nearby where you can be tested by appointment – CVS at Somers Town Centre, Rite-Aid, Walgreens and local Urgent Care offices. Please wear your mask, it is for your own well-being. At the FC you will be asked for your phone number in case we need to contact you in the event we find you have been exposed to the virus. While walking on our roadways, please remember to wear light colors and/or reflective gear and walk toward traffic in order to make eye contact with drivers. Neighboring towns have had home break-ins, if you see something suspicious, please dial 911 and we will get the call at Security. October statistics: 81 medical calls, 115 security calls, 42 service, 3 emergency maintenance calls (water main breaks), one car accident, and eight parking violations, totaling 250 calls for October and 2,844 calls year to date. In the future, Rick Morrissey will include HH statistic in his reports on the virus. With regard to contact tracing in HH, when exposure occurs Dave will contact the NYS Health Department with the information; Dave will also contact HH residents who may have been exposed.

Library – Deica Ruiz: The Library is open 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. Please wear your mask when picking up your books. There are eleven new books for the month of December. The large red drop box outside the Library is for returned books and they

will be quarantined for three days. A list of all books can be found on the Society website by clicking on the Library tab, even if you don't have a login for the website.

Community Affairs – Jack Mattes, Chair

General Election: Our team did a great job in setting up for the Election, keeping us clean and safe during the entire process. Early voting helped reduce the number of voters on site November 3rd, but we did have a steady flow throughout the entire day.

Toys for Tots: We will not have a live event in our Heritage Room however we will have collection boxes placed in the lobby in order to receive gifts that you would like to contribute for kids in need. They will be given to the Marines for distribution. Our elves in the Woodshop have been working for months in preparation for this event, building toys for the kids, which is something they do every year. Please feel free to visit briefly to contribute and please abide by all rules. Our lobby will be decorated for the holidays.

Somers Telecommunications Committee: The PSC has begun the process of holding utilities companies accountable for failing to prepare for storm Isaias earlier this year. They haven't gotten to NYSEG yet but today issued a total of \$137million in fines to several local utility companies, and more to come.

Pool Committee Report, submitted by Laura Mellor: We had a safe 2020 summer season under the guidance of the HH Reopening Committee and of the Society Board, and appreciate their diligence and hard work in opening three pools safely and allowing the Pool Committee to be part of the opening process. A huge thank you to J. Milligan, A. Kaplan, M. Lovell, and their teams who worked tirelessly this summer to make sure reservations were handled quickly and efficiently, the pools, furniture and restrooms were cleaned between sessions, and that furniture and pool decks were arranged with proper distancing between chairs. This year we had the added benefit of Gate Compliance Guards and on-site Supervisors in addition to the lifeguards, and any reported issues were taken care of swiftly and in a timely manner. There is a lot of preparation that goes into the use of our pools and even after they are closed in keeping them protected. The Pool Committee was able to meet at Pool 5 throughout the season. We are very thankful and look forward to a successful 2021 season.

Dom Rubino recognized **Jack Mattes** for his many contributions to the Somers Community and to the Westchester Community as a whole. He announced that Jack will be inducted into The Westchester Senior Hall of Fame on December 4, as is Shirley Kipnis of HH. Congratulations to both. In addition, Jack was recently appointed to the Somers Town Planning Board, bringing the total of HH Society members on Town Boards to three – Bruce Prince is on the Planning Board and Bill is on the Zoning Board.

Health & Safety Committee – Flo Brodley: The HH H&S Committee offers programs and services with the intent of keeping residents up to date on the latest information and assisting their needs within the Community. Nurses like Ellie Eidam have administered, will continue blood pressure screenings throughout the winter months, and will check home machines when asked. We have been addressing community needs differently this year because of the pandemic. Our first outdoor flu clinic vaccinated 104 HH residents thanks to Northern Westchester Hospital nurses and staff who provided the tents and safe atmosphere. Thanks also to HH maintenance and Security staff for their assistance in this unusual endeavor, and to our resident volunteers for their help.

Since the Medicare Open Enrollment period began on October 15, the Committee has sent updates on a variety of subjects to help inform residents on how to choose the most beneficial health plans for 2021, by reviewing brochures at home, online, at their leisure. Open enrollment ends December 7th. Our support

groups for bereavement and Alzheimer dementia caretakers online and in person make it possible to continue supporting residents while staying sequestered. Many thanks to our professional leaders, Linda Ludwig, HH resident, who is holding in person meetings, and Monica Hobson, who is holding Zoom bereavement meetings. In addition, we have been transmitting information from hospitals, lawyers and other authorities to offer residents the most up-to-date videos and webinars on a variety of topics to help them through this difficult period.

As always, we encourage those with health and safety backgrounds to contact us at flo613@comcast.net if they wish to join our Committee. Thank you to the Society Board for their continued support of this Committee.

The H&S Committee - Alicia Brescia, Flo Brodley, Ellie Eidam, Peggy DeGasperis, Barbara George, Rosemary Glassman, Leslie Guttman, Mona Moriber, Eileen Plastino, Susan Savitt and Dave Jacobsen wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Newsletter Committee Report, submitted by Susan Statkowski-Rivalsi: In spite of the pandemic, this year the Committee has been diligent in publishing an issue every month in an effort to continue to provide all residents with information about our fine community and its residents, and especially to provide an additional form of entertainment while so many have been stuck at home.

We are grateful to the residents who have submitted articles, poems, and photos; and we have made every effort to include all suitable submissions, eventually if not immediately. In fact, 20 non-Committee names appeared on bylines in the November issue. We look forward to an even greater influx in 2021 from our younger residents, as well as our adult ones. Please send your submissions to HHillsNewsletter@gmail.com. Our deadline is the 6th of the month, so for the January issue, please submit items by December 6th.

Bill Harden advised that every two years HH puts together a phone book of HH residents. A form will be in the January Newsletter so you can submit your name, email and other information. The phone book will be put together early in the New Year.

John Milligan – Property Manager

Every major project planned for 2020 was completed at or under budget, and we rebuilt the walkway at the AC, and the steps to the overflow parking lot, two projects that were not in the budget. In the 2021 budget we incorporated \$200,000 worth of costs and still kept the increase to 2.9%. We will be doing the same amount of paving next year as we did this year, expect to replace storm water piping at a cost of approximately \$125,000, and plan to convert Tennis Court #3 to use as a pickleball court, for which we will be getting bids.

Regarding infrastructure, Northern Construction has completed miscellaneous repairs on the property, in particular curbs that needed to be replaced, there are sections of road that need repaving to get us through the next few years, and some shingled roof replacement will be done at Lake Lodge. HH Waterworks started hydrant flushing again to make sure pressure and flow in the hydrants are working properly. They will soon finish on the West Hill and move to the East Hill.

We are hoping to make technical improvements in the AC and on the website – which is Annette’s website – to make it easier to use; we also have plug in reservation modules that will make the website more functional and user friendly. We are changing how we broadcast on Channel 12, revamping audio and video to improve the quality of the broadcast, and acquire the capacity to stream videos, etc.

We are about 75-80% finished replacing new equipment at Pool #2 and will be done by the end of this month, with inspections in the Spring.

The shuttle buses have been used very little since we brought them back in June, a total of 15 different residents have used the buses to the train station, early voting and mid-day service, and for this reason, and because of the recent rise in COVID cases in HH, we will suspend bus service effective November 23rd. We hope to put buses back in service when numbers go down.

Dom Rubino received an email from the Tennis Committee who wanted to discuss the conversion of Tennis Court #3 to pickleball courts. Jan Thornley, Tennis Committee Chair, will be invited to meet with members of the Board via Zoom to discuss this matter.

Dom advised that the Board would go into Executive Session immediately following this meeting's adjournment to discuss a personnel matter. Dom made a motion that we hold an Executive Session immediately following the meeting. Motion was approved.

Dom closed the meeting by reminding that the Board will meet on December 16 and the minutes will be sent soon thereafter, and asked that everyone stay safe and stay well. Motion made for meeting to adjourn. Motion was approved.

Special Meeting of the Society Board:

Following the regular Board meeting, the Board met in Executive Session to discuss Bill Harden's Related Party Transaction to supply Heritage Society with the monthly Newsletter production at a cost of \$500 total for postage. The Audit Committee has determined that there is no conflict of interest as it relates to this transaction, and has approved the related party transaction. A motion was made to approve this transaction. Motion was approved.

Motion to Adjourn approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Deica Ruiz

Secretary, Heritage Hills Society, LTD