

HERITAGE HILLS SOCIETY
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2023

Meeting commenced at 1:30 pm

Motions:

- To approve the 2024 Society budget of \$6,245,110 with a 3.5% Society fee increase - motion passed.
- To approve a 3-year Prosecur contract through the calendar year 2026 - motion passed.
- To approve hiring Total Circle HR at a monthly agreement of \$276/month - motion passed.

Board members in attendance: Gloria Anderson, Gene Archer, Ann Harper, Dorinda Haskell, Joe Kelly, Jack Mattes, Patricia Ploss, Bruce Prince, Dom Rubino, Deica Ruiz, Art Singer, Alan Tepper and Carol Vartuli. Karl Milde and Jay Wright were absent. John Milligan and Rob Casasanta were also in attendance.

Dom Rubino, President greeted everyone in attendance and those watching on Channel 21.

Deica Ruiz asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 18, 2023, Regular Board Meeting. Motion passed.

Financial Report – Gene Archer, Treasurer

- October income was \$523,282 and expenses were \$404,980 with a net income of 118,302.
- Pool season and storm clean up expenses are done for the year.
- The 2024 proposed Society budget is \$6,245,110 with a 3.5% Society fee increase; it is a balanced budget. The budget is broken down into Operating Expenses and Major Project Expenses.
Operating Expenses – Our largest expenses are Security (\$1,183,323), General Administration (\$1,097,294), and Roads and Grounds, which include landscaping and snow removal (\$1,039,469). Other large expense items are pools, employee benefits, insurance and transportation.
Major Projects – Among 2024 major projects are a revamped ID card access system, storm water management, road paving, and a new shuttle bus.
- At the end of this year, we will be able to repay a loan taken from our savings of \$160,000.
- The Purchasers Contribution Policy is working well, we are currently averaging ten sales a month. We should be able to use the proceeds to supplement expenditures for Pool 4 which we anticipate being more than \$600,000.
- A **Motion** was made to approve the 2024 proposed Society budget of \$6,245,110, with a 3.5% increase. Motion passed unanimously.

John Milligan, Property Manager noted – Society maintains 13 miles of roads which are the ones with the yellow stripe down the middle. We pave about ½ mile annually along with some miscellaneous repairs that warrant the \$300-\$350k line item in the budget. In the last 10 years, we've paved around 5 miles of road out of the 13 miles, therefore almost half of our roads are 10 years young. If we continue at this pace, we avoid any major expenditure on having to pave 3 miles in one year.

Willow Wood Gun Club – Gloria Anderson, 2nd VP

As of 11:00 am today, no decision has been rendered on documents that were submitted to the Courts on October 10th. We are hopeful the Judge will overturn the Carmel Town Planning Board's decision to allow the gun club to operate a series of skeet shooting stations that are pointed toward the Somers Land Trust and toward HH Condos 21, 22 and 30. We will keep you updated as we receive more news.

Activities Committee – Ann Harper, Chair

- We have four new Activities and Clubs; details will be sent via email blasts and flyers will be in the Activities office. They are: *Restorative Yoga*, a preholiday stress busting workshop; a *Spanish Conversation Class*, which is a free class; a monthly *Ted Talks*, consisting of two videos followed by open discussions, and a new book club, *Friends of Literature*.

Communication/Website – Carol Vartuli, Chair

- In the spirit of better interactive communication within our community, our committee would like to invite residents to participate in informal focus groups which can help us determine what will work best.
- Website: We are actively looking at vendors with expertise in creating, hosting, and maintaining websites.

Fitness Center – Alan Tepper, Chair

- All equipment continues to be in a state of good repair.
- Usage: The Fitness Center was closed for one day in October. During the month the gym had 464 individual visits and the Fitness Center had 3964 individual visits.
- The new air conditioning units were installed in October with no interruptions, and the system is working well.
- The new boilers were installed over 2 days between Nov. 2nd and 3rd and the FC was closed for approximately 27 hrs. The heating system is also working well.
- The quarterly deep clean and preventive maintenance is scheduled for Thursday Nov. 16th, when the facility will be closed.
- Mary and Jonathan continue to do consultations.
- We are now entering the winter months and will begin requiring people to change their shoes before entering.

Newsletter Committee – Gloria Anderson, Chair

- Society's agreement with our former publisher has come to an end. Our next newsletter will be published by Halston Media Group.
- The newsletter will list contact information if you would like to write a column or submit an article, please contact Susan S-R at HHillsNewsletter@gmail.com. If you would like to place a classified ad or an advertisement for your business, please contact Brett Freeman at 845-208-8151 or email at freeman@halstonmedia.com.
- The new publisher, unlike our old publisher, will be sharing revenue with Society, therefore we will be earning income from the advertisements which will benefit our community.

Dorinda Haskell

- Our first Trunk or Treat was a tremendous success. It was moved inside due to rain, we had close to 100 Trick or Treaters and parents in the HR who had a wonderful time with lots of candy, games, arts & crafts, and great costumes.
- A big thank you to our Security team who participated with their own Trunk of a red light display which added to the fun.
- Another big thank you to all our residents who donated treats and beverages to the event.
- Looking forward to next year!

Meadowlark Park – Patricia Ploss, Chair

- The awning has been removed for the winter. However, the tables and chairs are still out, and Park Place will remain open throughout the winter.
- Thank you to the anonymous donor who donated games for Park Place.
- Unfortunately, deer got to the 10 cherry trees that were planted at MLP before we could protect them, but they are being replaced at no extra charge to Society.
- The playground remains open all year round.

Landscape – Patricia Ploss, Chair

- We received many compliments on our Fall plantings of mums and cabbage plants.
- The holiday lights have been installed at our main entrances and have been turned on since last night.
- A tree will be placed in the gazebo behind Lake Lodge.
- Please enjoy all the holiday decorations.

Community Affairs Committee – Jack Mattes, Chair

- The Town of Somers and the Lions Club are holding a Veterans gathering and welcome all veterans to a meal at DeCicco & Sons this Friday, November 17th from 5 pm – 7 pm.
- Toys for Tots is scheduled for Saturday, December 9th in the HR from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. An HO train layout will be on display this year. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and an Elf will be here with gifts for children. All residents are welcome to attend with or without children.
- An agreement has been made between the Town of Somers and the State Police on the purchase of a piece of land behind the current barracks. The Town will float a bond to fund a new barracks on this land, and the State Police will pay rent until the amount of the bond is paid, at which time the State Police will own the property. This bond will not be paid by the taxpayers.
- The NY State Dept. of Highway Transportation has submitted a work permit application from our Town for a) the installation of a sidewalk along the north side of US 202 between Heritage Hills Access Drive and Heritage 202 Center and b) a crosswalk across the western approach of the intersection of Route 202 and Heritage Hill Access/DeCicco Access Drive with Pedestrian push buttons and indications.

Library – Deica Ruiz, Chair

- For December we are once again adding 16 new books, including Barbra Streisand's My Name Is Barbra, mysteries by Baldacci, Patterson and Connelly, and a new Nora Roberts.
- Last month I told you about Cindy Kennedy's book reviews which appear in the Heritage Hills Newsletter. We have a binder in the Library with all of Cindy's reviews, again a great way to find a new read. The November review was for The River We Remember by William Kent Krueger.
- A reminder that Library hours are Monday through Friday 10 am to 3 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm. Books can be reserved in person or by calling 914-276-7655 and leaving the name of the book and your contact information. The Library will be closed Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, so get in before then to pick up a good book to read as you consume those leftovers. We will be open on Saturday.

Resident ID Card System Committee – Joe Kelly

We decided to broaden our search for an access control company to accommodate our needs and stay within a budget. We want the new system to be capable of future growth to include pools, tennis and pickleball courts, and Lake Lodge. We will keep you updated as we interview new vendors.

Somers Town Update – Bruce Prince

- Construction is planned for a new storage facility on Route 100, with a façade that will improve the area's appearance.
- The Town of Somers Planning Board is in discussion about the request for two (2) 3-way stop signs in Heritage Hills at Westridge Drive & West Hill Drive, and Westridge Drive & Waterview Drive

Ad-Hoc Committee / Alternate Energy Committee - Energy Sources for Society Facilities – Bruce Prince

We have eliminated the idea of providing geothermal for LL and are now exploring a split system. We continue to gather information on solar systems for our other facilities. It was noted that the new energy provider for Sustainable Westchester is Direct Energy, it used to be Constellation. If you currently have Sustainable Westchester and are no longer interested in it, you have until the end of November to opt out.

Health & Safety – Flo Brodley, Chair

- This Friday, the 17th, in the Heritage Room, at 10am the Health & Safety Committee presents our final program for 2023. Conversing With a Pet Doctor. Dr. Julie Fixman, Medical Director of the South Putnam Animal Hospital will talk about, among other things, caring for a young pet as opposed to an aging one, discerning common household toxins, how to/when to administer pet first aid and the health parallels and benefits in aging pets and people. Dr. Fixman earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University and is Board certified. By the way, you need not have a pet already to attend, everyone is welcome!
- It has come to our attention that some long timers, as well as new residents, don't have the File of Life materials. The Health & Safety Committee provides the File of Life free of charge that can be picked up at the Security, Society or Activities Offices. Your list of medications, personal health issues and emergency numbers are written in two segments - one part to travel with you and a second magnetic portion to put on your refrigerator. Also, a small identification marker is placed on the window near your front door that alerts Security, EMTs, Police and Fire Department teams to quickly find this information should there be a medical emergency.
- Nurse Ellie Eidam will continue to provide Blood Pressure screenings on the second Friday of each month amid quiet conversation about your health. You may bring your home blood pressure machine to be checked out for accuracy.
- Health & Safety members are on the job planning 2024 programs so if you have a topic that you'd like us to include, contact me at flo613@comcast.net or leave a note in our mailbox and we'll do our best to follow through.

Security – Rob Casasanta, Prosecur Supervisor

- October stats: 49 security calls, 6 burglar alarms, 85 medical emergencies, 0 car accidents, 63 service calls, 9 parking violations, 7 maintenance calls, and 6 fire alarms.
- A blue light has been installed on our roof to make the Security Office more visible to the community.
- Handicapped parking is an issue in the Activities Center parking lot. It is now past the 90-day mark for courtesy notices. We will begin to call Somers Police on repeat offenders to begin issuing violations.
- Two Speed Radar signs are positioned on the sides of our roads that flash and record your speed. They are located on the East Hill by MLP and the other is on the back side of the East Hill. As a reminder we have school buses on the property with children entering and exiting as well as many walkers, please slow down.
- Our three new Security vehicles have arrived and are waiting for the outfitter to install the graphics, radios, and lights. We're hoping to have them in service for the new year.
- Our meeting with the Emergency Shelter Committee and the Town officials was very productive. We are currently looking for volunteers if we must activate the shelter. Please reach out to me if you are interested in being added to our list.
- This past summer, a wedding band with an inscription on it was turned in to the Security Office. It is currently secured in my office, and no one has yet to claim it.
- When to call 911 – If you have a Police, Fire Dept or EMS emergency, your first call should be to 911. These dispatchers can map your call to your address in case of a lost call. Our security office does not have the capability to map your call to your location. Our office monitors all 911 calls and will be present as well for those emergency calls.

Operations Report – John Milligan, Property Manager

- The most important service Society offers to the HH community is the EMT and security services provided by Prosecur. Society recently finalized the terms of a new three-year agreement through calendar year 2026, and this new agreement was negotiated with a 3% reduction in cost for 2024. A **Motion** was made to approve a three year contract with Prosecur for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026. The motion passed.

- Society currently employs 19 individuals and relies on the advice of HR professionals for a myriad of employee/employer concerns, workplace issues and regulatory compliance. For 2024 we will engage the services of a highly regarded and highly recommended HR firm, Total Circle HR, at a monthly cost of \$276. A **Motion** was made to approve hiring Total Circle HR. The motion passed.

Fitness Center HVAC/Boilers

- The installation of two 10-ton roof top AC units on the Fitness Center has been completed. This project began last year when Society put down a deposit to order these units which were subject to an 8-9-month lead time.
- Another completed project is the installation of two 450k BTU boilers for the Fitness Center, replacing a 27 year old boiler.

Replacement of Tennis Courts 1 & 2

- The other important project recently completed was the replacement of the very worn-out and unsafe surfaces of tennis courts 1 & 2.

Paving/Line Striping

- Northern Construction has completed this year's main paving project in three separate locations, and several miscellaneous smaller repairs were just finished throughout the property.
- In an important effort to make our roads safer, particularly at night, re-painting of the center yellow stripe on all Society-maintained roads was just completed, including re-painting of all stop bars, speed humps and pavement markings. We contracted a street sweeper to clean along the edges of those same roads with the goal of making the white lines much more visible, work to be done after Thanksgiving.

Lake Lodge Roof Repair

- A persistent roof leak in Room 3 at LL required an emergency authorization by the Board to replace a small section of flat roof at a cost of \$23,900, work performed by W.A. Kelly Company; replacement of an additional and larger section of flat roof on the LL building has been included in next year's budget.

Pools

- We expect to receive approval for the replacement of the mechanical equipment at Pool #3, something that has been in the Society budget for a couple of years. This project, important to ensure that Pool #3 can operate reliably next season, has been included in the 2024 Society budget and it is hoped that DOH approval will be granted before next year's pool season.
- We are just about ready to submit repair plans for Pool #4 to the DOH for their review. This process could take as long as 1-2 years, and in the meantime we will take measures to minimize the water loss at that pool for the 2024 season.

NYSEG/Veolia/Verizon

- Verizon has committed to providing a backup generator for their switch cabinet by Warren Street. They just finished installing equipment to accommodate the connection of a standby power source in the event of a prolonged power outage. This switch cabinet provides phone service to the East Hill and most importantly to our Security office. Several years ago, we installed a standby generator to power the Security office. Now Verizon has completed their work to ensure that residents can contact Security during power outages.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 pm. Motion passed.
The next Board meeting is on December 13th at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Deica Ruiz, Secretary
Heritage Hills Society, LTD