

HERITAGE HILLS SOCIETY
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2024

Meeting commenced at 1:30 pm

Motions:

- To approve two new Activities, “Continual Fluid Form Movement Meditation and Mindfulness” and “Fall Prevention and Balance” – motions passed.

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

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

Deica Ruiz requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 20, 2024, Regular Board Meeting. Motion passed.

Financial Report – Gene Archer, Treasurer

- March income was \$522,582 and expenses were \$402,866, leaving a net gain of \$119,716.
- Newsletter income from advertisements was \$1,344.
- Recent cost savings include: a) \$5,300 saved by changing opening times at two pools; b) \$14,089 negotiated savings in pool maintenance contract; c) \$3,600 saved by changing payroll processing vendor from Paychex to ADP; d) \$2,448 savings by switching telephone service from Verizon to a VOIP System; and e) savings of \$33,769 realized by renegotiating our three-year contract with Prosegur. Overall, these savings resulted in \$59,206, almost 1% of the total budget.

Willow Wood Gun Club – Gloria Anderson, 2nd VP

On April 2nd the NYS Supreme Court issued a decision on the Article 78 proceeding filed by the Somers Land Trust against the WWGC. The Land Trust alleged that the Town of Carmel Planning Board had approved the installation of 14 shooting stations for a sporting clays course without doing the required environmental studies to determine whether the lead shot would contaminate its land and water. HH residents also had a big interest in this case because, like the Land Trust, some of our condos abut the gun club property. The Court found that the WWGC had developed an environmental stewardship plan and a stormwater pollution prevention plan that would protect adjacent land and water from being contaminated by the lead shot, such as the regular collection and disposal of spent ammunition cartridges and plastic wads, the application of Lyme to neutralize the soil's pH level when needed, and the reclamation of lead shot every five to ten years.

The Court also noted that the new shooting stations are oriented so that the lead shot is directed toward the interior of the gun club property and would not exceed the gun club boundaries. The Court concluded that the Planning Board complied with the environmental requirements and its decision to approve the new shooting stations was not arbitrary and capricious (which is the court standard), nor an abuse of discretion, and the case was dismissed. The gun club contends that they have put up land berms and tried to build sound barriers. Because HH was built after the gun club was in place, the law would say we came to the nuisance. Condo 22 may be considering filing another action citing the Green Amendment to the NY State Constitution.

Joe Kelly, Ad Hoc Lithium Battery Project

East Point Energy has petitioned the Carmel Planning Board for approval of a site plan for a lithium battery farm at a 95-acre plot of land located between Union Valley Rd and Miller Rd. Pros: the batteries are

connected to power company sub-stations and are a low-cost and technically efficient method for injecting power into the grid; batteries are cheaper than gas-powered turbines; they will provide cleaner air by avoiding fossil fuels, and can be monitored and operated remotely. Cons: batteries are made up of chemical electrolytes that are highly flammable; toxic gases are released into the air; batteries can self-ignite; local building and zoning codes aren't up to date to meet this new technology; local fire companies/emergency services need special training as well as additional resources to respond to any fires; increased vulnerability of the grid to cyberattacks. Overall, we hope these lithium batteries improve with new fire suppressant techniques, providing a cleaner environment, and more affordable and available power. The Town of Carmel is waiting for approval from some of their agencies.

Activities Committee – Ann Harper, Chair

- Motions were made for approval of two new activities: “Continual Fluid Form Movement Meditation and Mindfulness” and “Fall Prevention and Balance.” Both motions were unanimously approved.
- Details of all activities will be sent via Eblast and are posted in the HH Newsletter.

Audit Committee – Jack Mattes, Chair:

The Auditors are working on their analysis before issuing a draft audit report. Completion is anticipated end of May or early June.

Community Affairs Committee – Jack Mattes, Chair

- Emergency Preparedness - The HH Emergency Preparedness Team (Jack Mattes, Terry Clifford, John Milligan, Rob Casasanta and Marcus Lovell) met with Somers Police Chief Linkletter and Sgt. Burpee, and with Westchester County Commissioner of Emergency Services Richard Wishnie and Dennis Delborgo, Director Dir. of Emergency Mgmt. We have established a direct relationship with the County which has been our source of the major supplies necessary to maintain our ability to serve as the emergency shelter for the Town of Somers. We will receive 300 blankets and pillows to replenish our inventory which includes enough cots to sleep up to 190 individuals. The County will also assist us with some emergency preparedness training. As always, we are looking for volunteers for this committee.
- Food Pantry - Residents generously made food and monetary donations at the St. Luke's Food Pantry collection held last Tuesday. Jay Wright and Jack Mattes managed the effort along with Maintenance and Security personnel, and residents Lynda Magrath, Doris Simon, and Doug Hager. Food donation boxes are located at the Church and DeCicco. Checks payable to St. Luke's Somers Food Pantry can be mailed to Saint Luke's Church, 331 Route 100, Somers, NY 10589.
- Safe Driving Course – A “AAA Safe Driving” course will be held Saturday, May 11th, from 9 am – 4 pm and the cost is \$34. If demand continues, additional sessions will be scheduled later in the year.
- Annual Art Show – This year's Art Show is Saturday and Sunday, September 21 and 22. It is not too early to begin using your artistic talents if you wish to exhibit. Details will be announced shortly.
- Somers School Board Elections and Budget Vote – The election is on May 21st, four candidates for two positions will be on the ballot, as well as the new budget. Voting is at Somers Middle School from 7 am – 9 pm.
- Meadowlark Park Donation – A hand-carved marble rabbit sculpture was created several years ago by resident and frequent Art Show exhibitor Roz Fein, and it has been residing with resident Ina Bass for several years. Ms. Bass has offered this artwork to Society, it will soon reside overlooking the Park.
- Somers Old Bet – The unveiling of the new bronze statue at the Somers Town House is this Saturday. The sculpture was created by Somers resident Luigi Badia.

Communication/Website – Carol Vartuli, Chair

The new website is under construction, and we are working on expanding the trial website that the software vendor has created. The objective of the new website is to be user-friendly and easy to maintain. It will no longer be the responsibility of the sole administrator to update, but rather we will rely on several sub-administrators and/or volunteers, who already run different Clubs and/or Activities that would like to have their

rules and regulations and information kept current. We will be training sub-administrators and residents in navigating the new website. It will have the ability to customize the information that a resident wants to receive, and they will be able to choose categories that are relevant to them. In addition, complete information on all Activities and news items will be available, as well as the monthly newsletter on a running calendar form. We are hoping to identify a target launch date in the next few weeks. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please contact me through the Society office.

Fitness Center – Alan Tepper, Chair

- All equipment remains in a state of good repair.
- The new equipment has been delivered and installed. The Exercise Room is again open for use during regular hours. The new equipment functionally replaces the old pieces but may look somewhat different. Some rearrangement has taken place, so your favorite apparatus may not be where you remember it being.
- Lincoln Hall picked up our old equipment and was very grateful.
- The new ID card readers have been installed, but are not enabled, pending the issuance of the new ID cards beginning this coming Friday.
- Due to technical difficulties with the old system, FC usage statistics are not available for March 2024.

Meadowlark Park – Patricia Ploss, Chair

- “Food Truck Thursdays” will begin on May 30th and be positioned by Park Place. A full schedule of the food trucks will be made available shortly.
- The Cherry trees are budding and appear to be doing very well, we are on the watch for Cherry Blossoms.
- We are arranging a “Concert in the Park,” with efforts led by Karl Milde, announcements to arrive shortly.

Landscape – Patricia Ploss, Chair

Spring flowers will be planted mid to late May depending on the weather. Please look for a two-page display in the May newsletter with photos and information regarding the plants that we use here in HH.

Library – Deica Ruiz, Chair

For May we have 17 new books, including mysteries by favorite authors David Baldacci and Anthony Horowitz, as well as *City in Ruins*, the third novel in the series by Don Winslow, and purportedly his last book. We also have three new nonfiction books, including *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Sheelagh Kaplan, a member of the Library Committee and head of our Volunteers, has been keeping statistics of the number of books borrowed every week. The number is typically 50+, and recently we had 66 books borrowed in one week - we get excited when we see these stats go up. We are open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 3 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm. Call 914-276-7655 to reserve a book, leaving your contact info and the name of the book.

Newsletter Committee – Gloria Anderson, Chair

The May issue centerfold will contain an unusual event. We are happy to announce this year we have 10 candidates who are running for the five Society Board positions that will become vacant on July 1st. Inside your May issue, you will find a brief biography and photo of each of the 10 candidates who are running for the position. Everything is running beautifully, and we are doing our best to keep you informed.

Pool Committee – Dorinda Haskell, Chair

- Starting Saturday, May 25 – Pools 1 and 4 are open 7 days a week from 10 am-7 pm, Pool 3 will open weekends only from 10 am-7 pm, and Pool 1 will open for lap swimming 8 am-10 am.
Starting Saturday, June 15 – Pools 1, 3, and 4 will open from 10 am-8 pm daily, Pools 2 and 5 are open weekdays from 12-8 pm, and weekends from 10-8 pm; Pool 1 will open for lap swimming 8 am – 10 am.
- Please remember to bring your new ID card with your pool sticker. Cluster Captains will not be providing stickers this year.
- Junior ID cardholders (14 years of age) are not allowed guests as a safety measure.

- As a reminder we allow 5 guests per unit per day.

Society Board Elections – Deica Ruiz, Committee Chair

The deadline for submission of applications to run for the Society Board was April 15. We have ten candidates running this year, five incumbents, and five new candidates. There is a Candidates Night scheduled for May 22 at 7:00 pm in the Heritage Room when, in addition to hearing from the candidates in person, residents can ask questions of the candidates. Ballots will be mailed to all unit owners in early to mid-May, and the plan is to have the ballots arrive in mailboxes around the time of Candidates Night, so owners can have an opportunity to hear from the candidates before voting. Election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on June 19. We look forward to seeing many of you on May 22nd. And a big thank you to Anna Milani, our Society Office Administrator, who has done the lion's share of the work on this project, and there's more work to come.

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

The Committee has investigated different sources of energy. We have eliminated geothermal for LL because the cost is going to be prohibitive and take close to 30 years to break even. We are still collecting data on solar panels and are researching if government grants and rebates are still available. The split system similar to what Park Place has installed is the best alternative for LL.

Somers Town Update – Bruce Prince

- Dish Network is starting a mobile phone system and has been adding telecommunication towers throughout Somers with Town approval.
- The deteriorating building on Route 100 next to Froggy's Deli has been removed and will be replaced with a storage facility. Originally the Town Planning Board had requested sidewalks be added to this project but then realized they would be useless in this area, so instead the developers have allocated those sidewalk funds to be used for sidewalks in the downtown area for a crosswalk between DeCicco's and Putnam County Bank.
- The Somers Fire Department, which owns 10 acres of land near the State Police Barracks, has given two acres to the Town of Somers for the rebuilding of the Police Barracks.

Welcome to HH Committee - Dorinda Haskel, Chair

Sunday, September 29th is the Welcome to Heritage event held in the HR. We encourage old and new residents to attend and hear about our Clubs and Activities. We always have something new happening, it'll be nice to meet your neighbors and the people who are volunteering their time to run our Clubs and Activities. More details to come.

Health & Safety – Flo Brodley, Chair

- Our first program of 2024 was on Sunday called CarFit. Thirteen residents had a personal safety check by technicians from Mercy University to see if their seating was safe and comfortable in their car. Amid thanks for this excellent program were comments such as they helped on how I got into my car; I don't have to struggle with my seat belt anymore; I see better now that I'm sitting closer; fixing my mirrors makes me see better, no blind spot; and my favorite - I found out where my parking brake is! We thank Dean Kathleen Golisz and her team for coming to Heritage to conduct this unique and important program.
- The four-hour professional **Healthcare Provider CPR with Certification** class, taught by Somers EMT Steve Pilla, EMT-P/CIC will take place on Thursday, April 25th at 5 pm and will provide a two-year certification; the cost is \$60. The class has a few spots open so get your registration in now. Our annual Community CPR class will take place on September 12th so watch for the notices.
- H&S's program on Wednesday, May 8th is called DOROT, a seminar by this long-standing non-profit. Their programs, in-person and virtual, are dedicated to fostering social connections using art, music, cooking, education, games, discussion of new ideas, and more.
- Nurse Ellie Eidam continues to provide Blood Pressure screenings in the Game Room on the second Friday of each month. You may bring your home blood pressure machine to be checked out for accuracy.

- The free File of Life kit may be picked up at the Security, Society, or Activities Offices.

Security – Rob Casasanta, Prosecur

- March stats: 36 security calls, 76 medical emergencies, 2 car accidents, 59 service calls, 5 parking violations, 11 maintenance calls, and 7 fire alarms.

Operations Report – John Milligan, Property Manager

New ID Card System

Our old and outdated ID card system has been replaced with new hardware and software, including new card readers at the doors of the Fitness Center. The old ID cards are no longer valid or functional. It will be necessary to obtain a new ID card, a process which will take no more than a few minutes. Dates, times and locations for obtaining new cards will be posted. 2024 pool stickers will not be distributed this year by individual condos. The only way to obtain a 2024 pool sticker is to apply for and obtain a new ID card.

Paving/Drainage

- Our paving and drainage contractor recently completed drainage work in the Activities parking lot, intended to minimize or eliminate the running water which has been a continuing issue.
- There are also wet conditions at the three-way stop, and drainage work will begin at that location shortly. Given that this intersection is very busy, extra caution will be necessary as this work gets underway.
- We are hoping to start and complete a significant paving project this spring. The intent is to have this work completed before the pools open on Memorial Day weekend.

Pools

- Our maintenance staff along with our pool maintenance contractor will soon begin to get all five pools ready for the 2024 season. Thirty new lounge chairs have been delivered, and placing a towel over the pool chairs and lounges will minimize the staining which takes a lot of our staff's time to remove and, after time, requires replacement of the furniture itself.
- Our 2024 pool permits have been issued, lifeguards are being hired, and it is anticipated that most lifeguards who will be staffing the Heritage pools already have experience at Heritage.
- As a reminder, Pools 2 & 5 will open this year at noon instead of 10:00 AM on weekdays. Another reminder is we fully expect that both Pool 4 and Pool 3 will be operational throughout the 2024 season.

Tennis/Pickleball

- Weather permitting, we expect that during the week of April 22 the four turf courts, including brand new Courts 1 and 2, will be made ready for play. The initial reconditioning process, which includes the spreading of additional sand, is not possible until the courts are completely dry.
- Our contractor has examined the court cracks on portions of pickleball courts 3 & 4 and has a repair methodology in mind, but this will require warmer weather to repaint.

Meadowlark Park

- Thanks to our amazing maintenance staff, led by our facilities Manager par excellence Marcus Lovell, Park Place is getting a complete makeover and an all-new color scheme of grey with white trim which we hope freshens up the look of that building.
- A significant trail extension is planned for this year and as soon as the weather cooperates the completion of a major loop on the west side of Meadowlark Park will allow walkers to take the Warren Street trail and connect to a trail leading to an overlook with a breathtaking view of Pool 1, the playground, and the Activities area.
- As to the playground, we have fluffed up and added a little bit to the mulch and have cleaned out and added some fresh sand to the very popular sandbox. Shortly we should have a disc station installed near the playground, and tetherball and horseshoe pits are ready for use right next to Park Place.

- The lower parking lot will become a pedestrian plaza on the evenings the food trucks are stationed there, therefore no cars are allowed to park there during those hours. The same will hold for the Concert in the Park.

Shuttle Bus

We expect delivery of the new shuttle bus within the next week, and it typically takes a week or two to switch out the cameras and GPS equipment. It is a sleeker and more modern design than our current buses. It will be put into service sometime in May.

Lake Lodge

We are contacting several roofing contractors for quotes to replace the larger (and remaining) flat roof section on Lake Lodge. It is included in this year's budget, and we would like this work to commence this spring. This is part of a continuing effort to update, repair, and replace our infrastructure and when complete the Fitness Center, Lake Lodge, and Maintenance Garage will have received brand-new roof surfaces.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2:44 pm. Motion passed. The next Board meeting is on May 22nd at 1:30 pm.

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