October 1, 2024 The Bluffs HOA Annual meeting minutes

Holland Library

Full HOA Board of Trustees in attendance

13 (thirteen) HOA members attended

6:00 PM J Stead called meeting to order

1. **Opening statement**. President stated that Agenda items would be revised to enable items that require discussion for later in meeting
2. **Trustee tenure**. The President announced that the three-year tenure of the current Board expires this year. The current Board has agreed to continue. However, any HOA member interested in serving may self-nominate no later than October 31, 2024. A vote will take place in December 2024 and proxies will be distributed to mailboxes prior to that election and proxy forms will be distributed in November. Please follow directions carefully.
3. **Fines** President reported that fines for infractions will be initiated.

As presented at the June 7, 2023 Annual meeting, Gene Abercrombie, lawyer representing the Bluffs HOA, stated that the requirements for levying fines must:

1. clearly define the bylaw infraction in question
2. actions/inactions that constitute a violation
3. state the amount being levied
4. state deadline for late/no payment consequences

A $100 fee will be levied for dumping in path, ditch, pond and any green space. Grass and leaves are to be collected and disposed of by owners

1. **Presentation of Expense Report**. The report is available on the website. There followed discussion of highlights of the report along with the President's summary of the history of dues with emphasis on the impact of not raising dues for 17 years. (handout of the impact will be on our website by December 2024)

Additionally, condo owners historically paid by unit rather than as individual owners. These factors resulted in an inability to fund needed neighborhood infrastructure as the neighborhood aged. The main consequence was the necessity for the 2024 $700 assessment for roads and other maintenance and funding of the reserve which in 2023 amounted to $0.00.

Members requested an accounting of how the assessment has been spent to date. Although the plan was previously detailed, an accounting of spending to date will be posted (check website).

In order to avoid future assessments, The Board recommends enacting planned increases of annual dues over the next three years. Said increases would allow the HOA to begin to build up the Reserve account which is required by law to be available to the HOA for future infrastructure needs. The official Board proposal will be forthcoming in preparation for a vote in December 2024. Meeting date to be announced on the website. Proxy forms will be distributed.

1. **Discussion of Reserve**. Questions arose regarding the process for establishing a goal amount. The President explained that in order to obtain an accurate goal amount, it is recommended that a Reserve Study would need to be initiated; costs begin at $1500. Options for funding include increasing annual dues or continued assessments.

Members asked the Trustees to research the feasibility of having HOA insurance cover future infrastructure damage and/or catastrophic occurrences. The main concerns for our neighborhood are water and sewer lines that lie beneath The Bluffs Rd. These lines were installed by the builder rather than the city, so the HOA is responsible for any repairs. The other high-cost concerns are tree trimming/removal and maintenance of stonework at entryways and the cul-de-sac. The wall stonework was incorrectly installed, and water infiltration and tree roots have put pressure on the wall structure resulting in noticeable “bowing” both forward and back. It is unknown how long the existing walls will stand. (Information obtained through various contractors)

1. **Emailing the Board**. Mr. Day initiated a discussion regarding his feeling that “his thousands of emails have been ignored”. The President explained that the board had received his emails and they were not answered, after the first few, because “you don’t listen”. The Board makes a concerted effort to update content regularly. Mr. Day’s particular request, two days before the meeting, was for the Declaration of Restrictions and the current Expense Report to be brought to the meeting because there were things he wanted to discuss, both of which could have easily been retrieved by him from the website. Again, he was directed by the President to explore the website for information and answers. Mr. Day expressed disappointment that those particular documents had not been printed out for him for discussion at the meeting. The President stated that he needed to come prepared to meetings, and she further reiterated that continued printing of documents is a costly expenditure that has been eliminated via use of the website. (he was reminded that emailing a request with two days’ notice is inappropriate and that the trustees are not his employees but rather volunteers)
2. **Dogs** Mr. Day went on to express his disapproval of expenditures for the green space adjacent to his home. His complaint centers on the fact that dogs use that space as well as his yard. Members chimed in that use of the space by dogs is one purpose of said space and that dog urination and feces in front yards is a neighborhood-wide problem.
3. **Discussion of the shed removal**. Mr. Day stated that the shed was legitimately erected, that Mrs. Sally Belcik, Board president at the time, approved it. This statement was vehemently refuted by Mrs. Belcik herself in a recent conversation with the president. Next, he questioned the need for shed removal, and he also questioned intended use of the property upon which it sits, citing additional mowing costs etc. This refers to Lot D, green space.
4. Mr. Day questioned the **2024 Lewandowski property survey** of Lot D.

(NOTE: the purpose and result of the survey were previously outlined on the website at the time of the January 2024 survey)

The President mentioned that the prospective owners and realtor were informed that a survey had been scheduled to resolve the issue of the shed and property lines previous to the sale taking place.

Mr. Day questioned whether the cost for the survey was a legitimate use of HOA monies. The President reminded him that “his family” was supposed to pay half and that the bill had been submitted to them (referring to the seller) but that they never paid. Mr. and Mrs. Day both responded that their last name is Day.

Mrs. Kamm, co-owner of 2110 Austin Bluffs, stated that they no longer have any intention of removing the shed and that they would prefer to end all future discussion of same.

Note, this topic was initiated by Mr. Day and it was not on the agenda nor was it up for discussion.

1. **Discussion of mailbox design** relative to bylaws. Mr. Day accused Trustees of favoritism in targeting only certain homeowners for non-compliance. (notices of need for repairs/painting were distributed by J. Stead on an as needed basis along with offers to assist with same; several neighbors subsequently volunteered help when requested) Members offered their various experiences with painting vs natural aging (stated in bylaws) as well as referral to a carpenter who builds to meet safety and design standards. His information can already be accessed via the website.

**Declaration of Restrictions, Article II, Section 2.10** **Mailbox and/or Paper Delivery.** The Developer (which now refers to the Master HOA) shall have the exclusive right to determine the location, color, composition, size, design, lettering and standards and brackets of any mail and paper delivery boxes, provided, however, all mailboxes shall in any event be located per the applicable U.S. Postmaster's directions. The owner of a residential lot shall maintain the mailbox and/or paper delivery box and replace when necessary with a mailbox and/or paper delivery box of exact type, look and quality.

1. **Volunteer recognition**. Attendees were asked to vote for a neighbor who exemplified volunteerism. A monetary award (consisting of neighbor contributions, not HOA funds) was then given to the winner, Karen Greene. She said it will be donated, in the future, toward an HOA project.
2. **Other**

* Announcement of Declaration of Restrictions Committee: the following members were asked to be on the committee, accepted and worked on the combining of the Plat 1, Plat2 & Plat 3 Decs. The Trustees are currently reviewing a draft.
  1. Jeff Colturi
  2. Nick Oweis
  3. Joseph Avery
  4. James Sattler

**\*\*\***The President mentioned that our attorney, Gene Ambercrombie, had stated to her how impressed he was that as a community we were able to vote to amend our Decs without the need of legal services. She said that he mentioned that, that just doesn’t happen. The President stated that since we were able to do that, we can also get the Decs combined and amended in the same manner.\*\*\*

* 2131 St Andrews Bluffs, 2141 St. Andrews Bluffs, and 2143 St Andrews Bluffs have not paid the $700 assessment as of 10-1-2024 (total of $2100).
* 2034 Austin Bluffs has not paid annual dues nor the special assessment for 2024, and a previous lien was revised to add those delinquencies. ($1000 plus late fees in addition yrs. 2022 & 2023 annual dues and late fees) This definitely has a negative financial impact for the neighborhood
* Islands will receive permanent plantings in Spring 2025
* Cul-de-sac shrub roots have been and are still pushing out the stonework. Consequently, shrubs will be removed and the current plan is to use planters sited on top of pea gravel or similar.

J. Stead called adjournment at 7:05 pm

**Respectively submitted by Stead, Secretary,**

***STAY CONNECTED***

***FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/groups/SpringfieldBluffs***

***HOA WEBSITE: www.the-bluffs-master-hoa.com***