

Highland Trails Homeowners Board Meeting Minutes 03/26/2013

The meeting was held at the home of Tom and Sandy Jones.

In attendance were: Ed McNichol-President, Tom Jones-Vice President, Kim McNichol-Treasurer, Lisa Ward-Secretary, Sandy Jones-Member at Large and Charles Andersen-Architectural Control.

The meeting was opened by President, Ed McNichol. It was announced that the annual meeting will take place at Mill Creek Elementary on Thursday, April 11th at 7pm with the doors open at 6:30.

Legal Issues

We began by discussing legal action that will now be taken for non-payment of dues. All legal fees incurred while taking this action will eventually be recouped...unlike when a lien is placed and outstanding dues can only be collected for three years. At the time of this meeting, 6 homes are delinquent and owe outstanding dues amounts and four of these homes are on the threshold of lawsuits. It was pointed out that we need to be consistent in taking legal action whether we personally know the homeowners and their circumstances or not. The newly adopted policy is that we will file lawsuits against the homeowners personally and not just place a lien on their homes as we have done in the past. Since our last meeting we had our law firm draft demand letters that were sent to the 19 homes who were in arrears at the time and 13 of those paid in full. It seems that the threat from a law firm is a very effective tactic and one we will continue to employ.

Budget

The topic of budget was next on our agenda. A copy of our budget actuals was handed out. The Board discussed the fact that we employ a "needs based" budget and that we determine our annual dues amount based on anticipated expenses plus reserve contributions divided by the 126 houses in the development minus the # of houses that we feel will not pay. However, it was determined that when stating the way in which we arrive at our dues amount that we not divulge anticipating that some homeowners will not pay their dues to avoid adding fuel to the fire at our meeting.

The reserve study was discussed. The benefit of a reserve is that when we must incur a large expense we can afford it without having to do a special assessment. It was agreed that the concept of a reserve fund is sound and the plan that was initially agreed on was to have an extra \$15,000 in reserves for 2014. The goal of the \$15,000 by 2014 is unrealistic since we spent the majority of any extra funds on our large playground last year. However, Kim feels good about the budget currently and with the direction we are going in building up the reserve fund and in determining the dues amount for 2014. We may touch on this reserve fund situation at the annual meeting.

Landscaping

Landscaping in Highland Trails was discussed. Ed pointed out that overall, our current landscape contractors have been very responsive when concerns are brought to their attention. We need to maintain constant communication with them and relay our level of expectation. The grass in the common areas is not being mowed properly and this must be corrected. The condition of the asphalt on our trails was discussed. There are a few different ways we can go about dealing with this issue. Ed pointed out that we could either post signs that point out the potential dangers (due to roots buckling the trails) or highlight with bright paint all the areas that currently have large cracks, or we can fix them. It was decided that we will get quotes and obtain consult regarding the best course of action. We will ask Greg Schmidt, our Landscape board member, to obtain quotes. We also came to the conclusion that we will have to make the repairs in phases and pay as we go.

Neighborhood Events

It seems apparent that no one is coming forward to coordinate the Easter Egg hunt so this event will not take place again this year. The Garage Sale will be the first Saturday in May as per usual.

Incidents and Issues

Ed would like to review these for the past year at the annual meeting. It was pointed out that a fairly large portion of our budget has gone to correct tree issues in the development over this past year; some of which are still ongoing. At the suggestion of a homeowner at the last annual meeting, we have begun to call on Code Enforcement for the City of Mill Creek for several issues and this has proved to be tremendously effective. It takes the onus off of the Board when dealing with city enforceable issues.

Fliers will be handed out for the annual meeting and the sandwich boards will be placed as a reminder.

Architectural Control Committee

Our fencing policy was discussed as there is a home in the neighborhood that recently erected a new fence that protrudes past the front of the house. This is a clear violation of our rules as it states that the fence can come to the edge of the home but no farther. Ed said that he would write a letter quoting the rule and asking the homeowner to move his fence back to be in compliance.

Homeowner and Board member, Charles Andersen, presented a rendering of the front of his home in which he wishes to build a low stone wall and to extend his driveway slightly on one side. He also revisited a fence that he wishes to build along the side of his home. Given the changes that he made in order to be in compliance with our covenants, his proposal was approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm..