



The Common at  
**Sinnott Farm**

[www.sinnottfarm.com](http://www.sinnottfarm.com)

Homeowner's Association for:

Quail Run | Spice Bush | Arrowwood | Spring Hill | Timothy Lanes

**The Common at Sinnott Farm, Inc.  
Executive Board Meeting  
December 7, 2016  
6:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**In Attendance:** Diane Prescod  
Myron Stewart  
Jeff Olmstead  
Cameron Toper  
Syed Hussain  
Chris Weiland, Vision Management

**Homeowners Present:** Richard Burt  
Michael Fallon  
Tony Rauche  
Robert Woods

**Board of Directors Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by President Diane Prescod at 6:32 p.m. All Board members were present.

Diane requested that the first item for discussion be the appointing of officers for the 2017 year. Prior to nominations being made, Diane gave special thanks to Jeff Olmstead, Myron Stewart, and Chris Weiland for their support and assistance both to the community and to her during her tenure as president. She then made the following nominations:

President – Jeff Olmstead  
Vice President – Myron Stewart  
Treasurer – Cameron Toper  
Director – Syed Hussain

Diane stated that she would be willing to serve as Secretary. Nominations were accepted by all. Jeff had one caveat, that being he would be away from January through mid-April. He would not accept the position unless all other members of the board agreed that it would not impede his ability to preside over meetings as well as the affairs of the association. Jeff further indicated that, should a homeowner meeting be scheduled during the months he was away, he would return to Connecticut for said meeting.

A vote was taken to approve the slate of positions as stated above and was unanimous. At that time, Diane turned the meeting over to Jeff as the new president.

**Homeowner Comment Period**

Jeff opened the floor to the four homeowners present. It was clarified that, going forward, the term “unit owner” as currently printed on the agenda will be removed and be replaced by “homeowner”.

One homeowner stated he was in attendance because he had heard that the annual meeting was very “active” and he was curious about what was going on. Jeff provided a short recap of the annual meeting stating that the 2017 budget had not passed, nor had a proposed special assessment. He further stated that two new members had been elected to the board, and there was a discussion of community concerns. A recap of the meeting has been drafted and when approved by the board, will be sent out to homeowners. Draft minutes, once approved by the board, will be posted to the website and will remain in draft form until the next homeowner meeting at which time a vote will be taken on whether or not to approve them.

Another homeowner stated that in the news section of the website, the information about the budget is confusing. Robert Woods read what is currently on the site and it was determined that there is a small typographical error that is causing the confusion. Jeff stated he will make the appropriate correction as soon as possible.

A question was raised regarding the item of “contractor selection” that appears under Executive Session on the meeting agenda. Jeff explained that the same four sub-headings always appear and serve as place holders if there is no business to conduct in that area.

This same homeowner raised the question of the meaning of “vote tallies” under “New Business” and Jeff explained that numbers given at the annual meeting that he had recorded did not add up. As secretary, he had addressed this with Chris and the item would be clarified at the appropriate time in the agenda.

The remaining homeowner simply stated that he wished to become familiar with the workings of the association and had decided to attend because he was shocked by behavior at the annual meeting.

### **Approval of Preceding Meeting Minutes**

Jeff asked board members if they had reviewed the minutes of the October 26, 2016 meeting and if there were any comments, concerns, or proposed edits. As there were none, Myron made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Diane seconded the motion, all were in favor. The minutes will be posted to the website.

### **Financial Report**

Jeff stated that going forward, as treasurer, Cameron will be responsible to provide this report to the board, however Chris will do so for this meeting. Jeff suggested that Cameron work with Chris to become familiar with the finances of the association.

Chris reported that there was not much activity – Russo monthly payment had been made and the water shut off.

There was much discussion regarding our bank and signature cards. Cameron and Jeff will be signatories on accounts going forward, along with someone from Vision so that they have access to information and can transfer funds should the need arise. Jeff stated that he will reach out to Penny Jackson to coordinate this effort.

It was decided that the checking account at Webster bank, which has a current balance of about \$8,000, would be closed and the funds moved to Union Bank. Union deals primarily with associations and offers benefits that many other banks do not.

### **Manager’s Report**

Chris reported that the MDC had finally shut off the water and that Russo had been waiting for this to happen prior to winterizing the irrigation system. Myron offered to contact Kevin at Russo.

The inoperable vehicle that had been parked in a driveway on Quail Run Lane has been removed.

There was a noise complaint regarding this same address. Chris reached out to the homeowner who apologized stating that it had not been guests, rather she had been returning home from work and had made two trips into her home leaving her car door open so the music could be heard. She stated she will take care that this does not happen again.

Chris had been asked to investigate possible locations for board meetings for 2017. Jeff explained to our two new board members that it has been past practice to hold meetings in directors' homes, however, there was some reluctance to continue that practice due to the unfortunate display of behavior that took place at the home of Harriette Howard during the October board meeting.

Chris reported that the community center is available but the charge is \$40 to use a room. The library is not an option as they sponsor a variety of activities and use their space often. Town Hall only permits civic functions. The police station has an auditorium or lecture hall style room that might be appropriate for a homeowners meeting but is not well suited for board meetings. Myron offered to go to the community center to try and work something out regarding the fee. Diane stated that she is unwilling to open her home to meetings due to disrespectful behavior displayed at Harriette's home. Cameron offered to ask his parents if the January board meeting could be held in their home. Myron also offered his home.

### **Service Requests**

There is an on-going issue with a street light on Spring Hill Lane. Chris has placed three work orders with Eversource but the technician assigned closes them out without completing the repair. Chris will continue to follow up with the homeowner who provided us with the information. A homeowner present at the meeting noted two additional street lights that are not working. Chris will investigate and place work orders as required.

### **Correspondence Report**

Chris reported that emails he had received had been discussed – the noise complaint and the streetlight issue.

Jeff provided a brief overview of an email sent by a homeowner regarding the annual meeting. He stated that the homeowner raised some valid points and questions and the board would consider them at a future meeting.

Diane provided Jeff with a copy of an email sent by Rod Norwood relative to the CGS regarding removal of directors elected by homeowners. At the annual meeting, a small but vocal minority of homeowners insisted on a vote being taken to remove the three directors whose terms continued through 2017. Chris informed them that this could not be done as it was not included on the agenda sent to all homeowners. One of the vocal homeowners read part of the CGS but did not include the portion that placement on the agenda was, indeed, a requirement. Mr. Norwood sent an email with the portion of the statute germane to the discussion and this was shared with all of the directors.

### **Old Business**

Proposed rules – Jeff provided a recap stating that the board did not vote to approve the rules as there was insufficient time to consider comments made by homeowners who attended the October meeting. He stated that the board would need to review the rules and perhaps make some edits or changes based on feedback and recommended that this be addressed later in the year. We have two new directors who may bring new ideas and opinions to the table.

Annual meeting – Jeff requested that this item be tabled and discussed under “New Business”

## **New Business**

The first item, new officer positions, was addressed earlier in the meeting.

Jeff opened the discussion of the annual meeting by requesting comments regarding the draft of the minutes that had been sent out to directors. Syed raised the issue of fewer homeowners being present at the end of the meeting than at the beginning. Jeff will add a statement regarding this in the minutes. Jeff explained that the vote tallies had been double checked by Chris and the numbers are correct in the minutes. Diane requested a few minor changes and edits. Once all discussed revisions have been completed, Jeff will post the approved draft to the website.

Jeff then requested that directors share any general thoughts regarding the meeting. Syed opened the discussion stating that he believes Spring Hill Lane does need repaving at some point and funding needs to be determined. He further stated that both Quail Run Lane and Spice Bush Lane had been repaved at the expense of the community so it is fair and equitable that when other lanes need to be repaved, it be done and at the expense of the community as well.

Cameron suggested that a Reserve Study be undertaken and that he has done some preliminary work on a budget to include funds for this without raising maintenance fees. Jeff opined that the board needs to take a very deliberate approach regarding what needs to be done supported by research as necessary. This needs to be an agenda item for 2017. Cameron stated that if the useable life of a road is about 20 years, Arrowwood was paved in 2000 so it is coming to the end of its useable life as well and we need to provide homeowners with the appropriate information so that they understand recommendations made by the board. Chris emphasized the importance of developing a plan now, even if the work does not take place for another 5 years. Syed concurred that if we can find savings in the budget, we need to plan now. Jeff concluded this portion of the discussion stating that we need to improve communication with the members of the community.

Jeff informed the board that he had written a recap of the annual meeting to send with the winter newsletter and asked for feedback. Cameron agreed with this idea but suggested using email to save on paper and postage as well as to be environmentally responsible. Jeff responded that we do not have everyone's email or permission to use those we do have so in the interest of time, he would opt for hard copies being mailed USPS. Syed contributed that by sending the newsletter and recap together, the board is demonstrating that we are listening to homeowners. Jeff asked Chris if other associations with which he works communicate to this extent and Chris responded that we do much more in that respect than most.

The draft of the newsletter Diane created was then discussed. Syed will move an icon, the placement of which Jeff found confusing. He will also add a statement about cleaning up after pets to address a concern brought to Diane by a homeowner.

Myron raised the issue of coupon books as they will have to be mailed out with the newsletter and recap. Jeff stated that we should eliminate them as most homeowners do not like them and they don't seem to be working for our community. Diane asked the cost benefit, if any, of eliminating them. Chris stated that he will have Mark prepare a statement for the first quarter maintenance fees that will be included with the mailing. Syed will address this in the newsletter.

## **2017 Budget**

Jeff opened the discussion by asking Cameron if he had any ideas relative to who will prepare the budget and under what timetable. Cameron stated he will work on it and Syed volunteered to assist. Jeff then proposed creating a one-time budget committee with the express purpose of creating the 2017 budget. The committee would consist of five individuals – two sitting board members (Cameron and Syed), Chris as property manager, and two members of the community who are not board members but

who had served as past board presidents. Syed wondered if it might be a good idea to open membership to anyone in the community who might be interested. Jeff responded that, although a good idea, it would slow down the process. Because it is critical that this issue be resolved as soon as possible, he suggested that the two community members be Rod Norwood and Bob Hanks and the goal being that a draft be presented to the board at the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Myron made a motion to create a budget committee, under the direction of the association treasurer, and consisting of two members of the board of directors, the property manager, and two members of the community. This committee will be charged with creating a budget to present to the board as soon as possible and will be dissolved once the budget is approved. Diane seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **Board Meetings for 2017**

Board meetings will continue to be on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. There will be no meeting in July 2017. Whether the board will meet in April or not has yet to be determined.

### **Covenants Committee Membership**

Jeff explained that currently, the committee is made up of two members of the board of directors, one community member who is not on the board, and Chris serves as interim chairperson. Robert Woods has raised this as a concern stating that if a homeowner submits a request that is subsequently rejected, there is no possibility of an appeal as it would be submitted to the same people who rejected it initially. Jeff has explained that an appeal can be filed and a request reconsidered if additional information is added, or changes made to the project. The newsletter requests volunteers for all committees, this one included. Jeff suggested that if there are no volunteers, that the committee be dissolved and the responsibility revert to the board.

### **Letter to Homeowners**

Diane drafted a letter to homeowners, copies of which were distributed to board members. The purpose of the letter was to provide homeowners with a copy of CGS pertaining to voting to remove members of the board as the issue was raised during the annual meeting. Diane wished to clarify for the community that our property manager was indeed correct when he stated that the item had to have been on the agenda sent to all homeowners prior to the meeting although a small, vocal minority of homeowners insisted that was not the case. It was decided that Jeff will incorporate this information into the recap of the meeting he is writing thus eliminating the need for an additional document.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Website Committee**

Jeff continues to maintain the website updating it with new information as necessary. He will post new board positions and change passwords. This information will be provided to board members so that all have access to protected pages.

#### **Welcome Committee**

Harriette Howard returned materials to Jeff. This committee seeks members.

#### **Bylaws Covenants Committee**

Previously addressed

#### **Beautification**

No report at this time

#### **Executive Session**

There was no need to adjourn to executive session as there were no items to discuss.

## **Wrap Up**

Diane stated her concern regarding homeowners attending board meetings and participating outside of the time set aside in the agenda for this purpose. She stated that not only is it difficult to take minutes when comments are off topic, but it impedes the board's ability to conduct the business of the association as per the published agenda. It was decided that a second homeowner comment period could be added later in the agenda to allow participation regarding items that are discussed during the meeting.

Jeff thanked Diane for her observation and comment as well as for her service as president during a very difficult year.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. Cameron will advise the board as to the availability of his parents' home for this meeting.

Cameron made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. It was seconded by Syed and passed unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Prescod  
Secretary**

