

## **Meadowlands Condominium Association**

### **Annual Meeting of Unit Owners**

**March 1, 2025**

#### **Meeting Overview**

The meeting began at 10:32 AM with board members and thirteen owners present, achieving a quorum with eleven signed proxies.

Board members in attendance: Norma Couture/Ray Harvey/Ralph Mancinelli/Ronald Saunders/Annette Sturtz

#### **Highlights**

- **Budget:** Our 2024 budget was on target, with a small overage of \$1,149.50 due to higher master insurance rates and trash/recycling costs. We ended the year with a cash balance of \$28,982.65, not counting our CD in capital reserves.
- **Loan Status:** Interest rates increased, but we are on target to pay off and retire the loan in 2029.
- **Insurance:** We had a settlement of \$37,500 for a “slip and fall claim” paid by master insurance, and we were able to reduce our master insurance deductible from \$25,000 to \$10,000, saving everyone money out of pocket.
- **Roof replacements:** Buildings 26 and 40 got new roofs, and the plan is to complete the roof on building 34 this year.
- **Maintenance Projects:** We talked about landscaping, road sealing, garage door replacements, and more.
- We approved the minutes from the last meeting without objection. Norma Couture gave a positive recap of 2024 with no major weather-related issues or tree losses. The only hiccup was a sewage drain problem at building 28 on Christmas Day, but we got it fixed quickly.
- Our resident Yankee fan, Ron Saunders (36C), was the victim of pink flamingo “flocking” by unknown owners while he was away in NY attending a game at the Stadium. Some disgruntled Red Sox fans would say this was justified!

#### **Annual Meeting Discussion**

*Approval of Meeting Minutes and Recap of 2024*

***MOTION: June Jones (40A) motioned to approve the minutes of the last Association annual meeting, which were included in the notice of this meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote with no abstentions or no votes. The minutes of the last annual meeting of the Association are approved.***

- Norma Couture recapped 2024, highlighting positive aspects such as no severe thunderstorms, winds, or flooding and no tree loss.

- The only issue was a drain problem at building 28 on Christmas Day, which was resolved after contacting eight different plumbers and finding one that came out. With added help from our landscape contractor, AGM, we were able to resolve the problem, which thankfully, was in the pipe right outside the building and didn't necessitate replacing large sections.

Q. "Was the drain problem covered by master insurance?"

*No – the blockage happened outside the building and was not covered by the master insurance on the buildings. The City of Keene is not responsible for the sewer lines within the borders of the Association property. The cost was covered by the Association, approximately \$5000.*

*Answering a follow-up question, "Can pipes be inspected so we don't encounter future problems with things such as tree roots?" We will explore that as a possibility for the future and the costs involved. We found that A or D units on the end are the entry point for the sewage lines and run under all the units in the building, so any blockage can happen along that route.*

- The slip/fall claim that was outstanding for the last five years finally came to a settlement, thankfully covered by master insurance for \$37,500. The board felt the claim was frivolous but felt we needed to defend the Association and the owners. It is now concluded.
- As for the front steps and railings, the black metal railings on old porches are being replaced as they reach the point of not being able to be fixed. Some parts are being reused to repair as necessary, but the general unavailability of parts makes it necessary to replace the metal railings with vinyl railings in some cases. Eventually, all porches will be included in the overall replacement plan.

#### *Financials (Annette Sturtz)*

- The Association stayed within budget except for two areas: insurance and trash/recycling. The overrun was \$1,149.50. Master insurance increased by \$534, and trash/recycling increased by \$615.50, partly due to the transition with trash collection providers, which Ralph will discuss.
- End-of-year reserves were \$28,982.65, not including funds held in a CD.
- The current bank loan saw an increase in interest rate this year. The balance is \$55,090.71 and will be paid off in July 2029.
- Administrative, operations, and capital expenditures were under budget.
- Unit 26A sold in 2024, which gave us a \$1000 addition to our capital reserves.
- The budget for 2025 was reviewed and was in line with the previous year, with no increases in HOA dues for the coming year.

***MOTION: Ratification of the 2025 Budget for the Association. A motion was made by Carol Hoffman (26D), seconded by Carol Kay (36B). The motion was unanimously approved by all with no abstentions or no votes. The budget for 2025 has been ratified.***

## **Building Maintenance – Ray Harvey**

*An overall review of maintenance and upkeep issues at the condo.*

- Spring cleanup and owner responsibilities were highlighted in 2024 by an extensive board member property walk-around, and we will continue that again this year. We identified areas needing improvement by the Association and clarification of homeowner responsibility and areas needing attention. Emphasis is always given to maintaining property value. Ralph will review the landscape plan for 2025 and the needed trimming and replacement of trees and shrubs.
- Refurbishing of the mailboxes was completed in the spring with a new coat of paint and a new secure box for HOA payments.
- Pressure washing is scheduled for three buildings in Spring 2025. We'll see what buildings are in most need as spring arrives.
- This year, building 34 owners will have to replace old skylights at their own expense during the roof replacement and can upgrade to vented skylights for additional cost. The original skylights present a problem of roof integrity once the roofs are redone; therefore, they need to be replaced at the same time to avoid leaking and roof compromise.

*Q. "How do you know the skylight is leaking?"*

*A. Condensation forms on the inside of the window and sometimes around the inside frame. Ultimately, the roofer will provide insight into the skylight condition. Skylights were part of the original construction and are 40 years old, way past their useful life.*

- Owners need to give attention to windows and doors that need replacement. If you take a pencil and push it into the corners of the window framing and the tip disappears, you know you have rot that goes far deeper than the window itself and needs replacement. We own our skylights, windows, and doors, and owners are responsible for replacing them when necessary.

## **Garage Doors**

- Garage door replacement was discussed, and replacement of all older wooden doors will be required by the end of 2025 at owner(s)' expense. Many of the doors are original and are far past their expected lifetime. The doors, currently the standard for Meadowlands, are no longer being manufactured, and it's important to maintain the overall appearance. The old tension springs present an imminent risk of injury and damage should they fail. The cost for the replacement of a garage door, including the support rods, is approximately \$2000. Owners will be provided the make and model that fits the condo standard and are free to contract a provider in the area they are comfortable with. New doors will provide significant insulation and may help owners to keep heating bills in check.

*Q." Is the garage trim the responsibility of the owner? During the winter plowing, trucks can cause damage."*

*A. We will talk with AGM, our provider, to be sure they are aware of the issue with plowing and repairing any damage. We will also review the by-laws and consult with Association counsel to clarify the issue with the responsibility for the exterior trim.*

**Property Management – Ralph Mancinelli**

Trash and Recycling

- In December, we concluded our transition from Waste Management to Monadnock Disposal Service for trash and recycling. Waste Management presented an unstable financial arrangement in that their terms allowed for increases at any time. In February 2022, we signed an agreement for two years, and in that time, they increased their pricing six times. By switching to MDS, we saved \$605 the first year, despite initial costs for transition, and locked in a monthly fee of \$430.02 for two years with a slight risk of price hike due to elevated diesel fuel costs. Trash removal will switch from Monday to Wednesday, and recycling will be every second and fourth Tuesday.

Landscaping and Winter Plowing

- AGM is our provider for landscaping/mowing, salting, and plowing. We have a firm contract with them for \$41,000. Our budget for 2024 was \$49,000, and that provides us with added room to tend to other issues on the property. Our contract timing is from April 2024 through March 2026.

*Q. “How many times did they mow? Because it was mostly dry this past summer, they stopped mowing.”*

*A. In 2024, AGM mowed 25 times and plowed 13 times (less than the agreement) but salted 60 times, which is significantly to our advantage.*

- In 2024, there was extensive landscape improvement. Flowers and gardens in common areas that were abandoned were rejuvenated. Front beds at building 26 were replaced with new shrubs. Mailbox beds overgrown with various plantings were replaced by flowering plants. Crabapple trees were pruned for a neater look. Additional landscape improvements included work behind 30D, where the shrub bed was overgrown. We also reclaimed the land behind 28D, 26C, and 40B. Work was also done behind building 28 where brush under the pine trees was cleared and areas made more accessible for mowing. Work continues on the removal of arborvitaes and the stumps that present a problem for sewage lines.
- Work needs to continue every year to keep up with the landscaping, and budgeted funds need to be provided to see continuous improvement and avoid overgrowth. Owners are also encouraged to tend to the areas around their property. In some cases, the Association needed to do a cleanup of properties that were left unattended.
- Work in 2025 will continue. The trees along Skyline Drive need tending to, and some trees on the property, such as the maple tree by building 34A, may need to be removed.

Roads

- The roads along the 34/36 buildings need to be repaired and sealed, including the driveways for building 36 units, A, B, and C. The driveways are in rough shape. Driveways will be dug

out, and a new base will be added with course asphalt and an asphalt finish. We had hoped to do a complete rebuild, but budget constraints only allow us to rebuild the driveways and seal the roadway. A full rebuild will be planned for the future.

- All roadways in the complex will also be sealed at that time to provide protection and ensure useability for years to come.

*Q. "Why aren't the 34/36 D unit driveways being done?"*

*A. The 34/36 road was last rebuilt in 2006, with other roads completed in 2015. In 2018, the catch basin at the end of the 34/36 road collapsed and was rebuilt with a new concrete frame, and the two D driveways were done at that time.*

#### Roof Replacement

- In 2024, we had planned to replace the two ends of building 28 and the end of 34D. Our roofing company presented a lucrative arrangement where we could finish two buildings, 26 and 40. We felt that bringing two buildings to completion presented a better alternative. In 2025, we have plans to complete building 34, including one porch at 34D, as well as repair work to the porch at 30B.

*Q. "Can you clarify the cost of the roof replacement?"*

*A. The total cost for roof replacement from 2020 to date is \$175,000, with \$38,000 planned for 2025.*

#### Master Insurance

- Norma showed a brief video from Melcher and Prescott Insurance describing insurance coverage.
- Premium amounts have been increasing steadily throughout the country, not just for us. Our premium for 2025 is \$25,780. We have been able to absorb the increase in the budget without raising HOA dues.
- The board recently approved a decrease in the deductible amount for water damage from \$25,000 to \$10,000. The insurer recommends higher level coverage, but each owner is advised that they, and their insurer, will be responsible for the first \$10,000.
- We had two water claims in 2020 which necessitated a rise in the deductible amount, WE have now reached a point where we can return to a \$10,000 level.
- Our insurer has paid approximately \$95,000 over the years, so our costs have been reasonable.

*Q. An owner complemented the board for its proactive repairs and updates, thereby keeping insurance premiums at a better rate. "Thank you for doing that!"*

*A. Thank YOU! We spend money but, in the end, see the savings.*

#### **Board Member Election**

- Two board member positions are open for election. Both positions' terms are from 2025 to 2028. The floor was open for nominations. Roberts Rules of Order are being used; therefore, no seconding of nominations are needed.

- Philip Jones, 40A, nominated Ralph Mancinelli for a continued term. Carol Hoffman, 26D, seconded. The vote was all in favor with no one opposed. Ralph begins his term immediately.
- June Jones, 40A, nominated Norma Couture for a three-year term. All voted in favor with no one opposed. Norma begins her term immediately.

### **Questions**

*Q. "Can you clarify the budget, line 36?"*

*A. Going forward, we are using straight numbers. We know we are starting the year with \$30,000 in our checking account, and we have \$30,000 in our CD. We call that our buffer. We always keep \$30K in reserve and work off the checking account funds, with the ongoing HOA dues funds, to get through capital expenditures. The buffer means we never want to be at zero at the end of the year.*

*Q. "Can we have work on the garage door done at our own pace? Using the dealers that were mentioned?"*

*A. Yes. You can have work done on your schedule in 2025. Both Keene Door and Home Depot were consulted on their pricing, which ranges in the area of \$2000, not including a motor, if needed. Talk to Ray or Ron for information on the particular model of door you should be purchasing. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure a special volume discount on the doors as that requires a large-scale volume purchase.*

### **Announcements**

- Volunteers are always welcome to work with the board, as many projects could use extra hands.
- Reminder on speed limits in the complex and moving your cars out of driveways during snowy weather.
- Please don't park on the street for more than a few minutes, if possible.
- Pay heed to recycling and breaking down cardboard for the dumpster
- Looking for more information? You can find the Rules We Live By, the by-laws, and the handbook, on the website, [MeadowlandsAtKeene.com](http://MeadowlandsAtKeene.com). There are plans to include monthly board meeting minutes there as well to give you an updated view of what's going on all the time.

**Thank you to all our volunteers and all of you for your participation today!**

**Meeting concluded – 11:41am**

Regular board meeting schedule resumes on March 12, 2025

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Ronald T. Saunders, Member of the Board of Directors, and Clerk*

*March 9, 2025*