**Tuscany Homeowners Association Meeting Minutes**

**6/22/2019**

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| **Tuscany HOA Officers** | **Architectural Control Committee:** |
| Mark Ricard – President 690-9998 | Randy Gonzales 707-2450 |
| Mary Gilmore – Treasurer (619) 647-3177 | Brian Macaluso 690-6660 |
| Alaynna King – Secretary (504) 669-5186 | Chick McCloskey 641-4511 |

**Attendees:**

Mark and Dede Ricard

Chick McCloskey

Charles Roper

Keith Towler

L.V. Cooley

Jason and Sabrina Leng

Clint and Kimberly Farmer

Jim Carothers

Randy Gonzales

John and Andrea Carter

Nick and Melissa Perry

Simone Galatas

Brian Macaluso

Ben and Carrie Schott

John Square

Don Andre

Meeting was called to orderat 10:03 am by President Mark Ricard.

Mark asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion was made by Randy Gonzales and seconded by Brian Macaluso. Unanimously accepted.

## Property Management

Robert Phillips of New Orleans Property Management Company was introduced. He is from New Orleans originally and returned here after Katrina. He previously served on a board of a self-managed association as President in Atlanta. When the Board hired a property management company, he eventually went to work for that company and after returning to New Orleans, started his own business which now manages 34 communities with close to 9,000 homeowners.

The purpose of hiring a property management company is to eliminate neighbor against neighbor. His company employs 18 people: 10 managers and 8 administrators. One person would be assigned to our account and would attend all general and Board meetings. The company handles all complaints, enforcement issues, dealing with vendors (landscape, utilities, etc.), collection of dues\* and payment of HOA invoices. They will also represent the neighborhood with Parish officials for issues such as drainage problems. They ensure that neighbors are all treated consistently and without favoritism. The Board still makes decisions on the management company’s recommendations. The management company has a 24-hr. call-back policy. Volunteer Board members don’t have that requirement.

\*Dues could be paid by credit card, check or ACH (automatic payment from your bank account on the date you indicate before the due date).

Our account administrator would drive through the neighborhood twice a month to identify violations and would follow up with letters to the homeowners. (The Board is notified of these and could also approve them, but not necessary). There is a proposed fine structure for violations: $25 for first violation that would escalate depending on the violation and length of time in violation. Some examples are trash can left out on street, trailers in driveway or cars parked in front of house, unkempt gardens (weeds and/or high grass), cars on cinder blocks, boat storage, etc. Any fine structure to be implemented must be first be disclosed to all residents.

His company uses attorney Charles Sutton for filing liens, which if unpaid, would go before a judge (for amounts less than $5,000). Their success rate at collecting fines for liens is very high, much higher than for a volunteer Board, since the letters are coming from an attorney and the goal is to collect before the outstanding amount reaches $5,000. Fees for filing liens are still paid by the HOA, but when the lien is collected, the HOA is reimbursed. (The Board could pay separately for the services of an attorney for this purpose without using a property management company, but the attorney fees would be higher as the management company has negotiated a lower rate with this attorney).

The fee for use of the property management company is $7/house/month, which is $84 a year per house, in addition to the usual $300 HOA annual fee. The property management’s fee can’t be raised without approval by the HOA. The $7/house/month fee has held steady for the last 2 years for all of NO Property Mgmt’s clients. There is a one-year contract with a 30-day cancellation for either side (the Board could fire them, or they could fire the Board for noncompliance with their recommendations). They currently only manage Oak Harbor in Slidell, but they manage 44 communities in Covington/Mandeville and the other ½ of their business (totaling 98 subdivisions) is on the Southshore.

There was general concern that the Board could overrule the management company’s recommendations. In that case, Robert said his company would cancel the contract and no longer work for the HOA. A discussion ensued regarding any time limits specified in the covenants for violations such as cars parked on street, RVs or trailers in front and not behind fences, etc. Dede did a quick review of covenants online and could not find any window of time specified for these. Mark stated the Board is currently working on revising the covenants, eliminating portions that don’t apply to our neighborhood (that were meant for other subdivisions), putting in more details where needed and easing other restrictions. Changes to the covenants would require approval by 2/3 of the lot owners.

A vote of 51% of lot owners in good standing would also be required to approve hiring the company. Melissa Perry asked if the vote would be transparent or if it would only be conducted via email. Mark said the vote could be done in person/by proxy, or if done on email, Reply To All to ensure that all votes are seen.

## Treasurer’s Report-

Mark made the report as Treasurer, Mary Gilmore, is out of town. (Mark also stated Secretary Alaynna King was unavailable and Dede Ricard had volunteered to take minutes). There are only 2 lots with unpaid dues (1 has been unpaid for 6 years). Our current balance is $21,947.

# OLD BUSINESS

**Drainage, street dips and potholes**

A drainage engineer from the Parish came out and marked spots with problem areas. He’ll make recommendations but funds must be appropriated by the Parish. John Square asked about the canal behind his house – the land under his fence is eroding into the ditch. Mark will send out Parish contact information to all residents. According to Brian Macaluso, our neighborhood isn’t draining as indicating on the approved plans for the neighborhood, and it’s now having to be reworked.

## Solicitations-

Mark has placed a small No Soliciting sign in the garden at the front entrance and said the Board would look into a larger sign. Many residents voiced the opinion that the small sign is fine, but it should be relocated to be slightly more visible and there is no need for a larger sign. Mark will reposition it away from the plants to make it more visible.

Brian mentioned the idea for a locked sign that could include No Soliciting as well as other neighborhood announcements, but the general consensus was that was also not needed since we put out separate signs for HOA meetings, we use email and have the Facebook Group for Tuscany Estates-Slidell to communicate with residents.

## Street Signs-

The sign man painted the metal grapes to add to the street signs, but Mark found that they were still rusting. He painted them all over with acrylic and installed them on the signs using nylon bushings and washers. He asks that neighbors let him know if they observe any rust forming.

Mark also state the base of the street signs are showing signs of damage from weed eaters and dog urine and that the Board is discussing installing collars around the base of all of the posts.

There was a general discussion about dog poop not being picked up by dog owners (still) and neighbors are asked to PLEASE pick up after the pets AND not allow dogs to urinate on mailbox posts OR street posts. This caused both to rot! Mark has previously sent information on how to repair/repaint mailbox posts, but he will resend to ensure everyone has the information.

## Decorations –

Neighborhood decorations for Christmas and Fall that are used at the entrance are currently being housed in three locations. The Daleys have volunteered to store it all in their attic, but it needs a floor installed and they haven’t had a chance to work on that yet.

## Street lights -

It was the desire of the Board to have consistent lighting and globes on all poles in the neighborhood. Mark contacted Cleco and found out the cost for replacing glass globes on light fixtures on Tuscany to match the newest one would be $500 each and the HOA would have to pay. Needless to say, that won’t happen, so we’ll have to live with what we have.

Any resident can report lights out to Cleco online (here is the website: (hold Crtl key and click mouse to open, or copy and paste) <https://www.cleco.com/-/report-streetlight-dusk-to-dawn-light-out>). Information required to report: your name, home phone and email address. Report the closest address to the pole and provide the Number from sticker on the pole for easier identification.

## Electrical issues at front entrance-

All issues have been repaired.

# NEW BUSINESS

**Covenant issues-**

As stated above in the discussion the Property Management company, the Board is currently reviewing and will be proposing some revisions to the covenants. Most will proposing to ease up on some areas. If the Property Management company is approved, there may be no need for an Architectural Committee. If that would be the case, the change would need to be made in both the Covenants and the ByLaws. Mark stated the Board would have its recommendations on new covenants ready for the HOA to review by the next meeting in October.

## Cloudy windows –

This is caused when the argon seal in the double-pane windows has been broken due to high winds causing the glass to rattle, or pressure fluctuations due to tropical weather. The glass can be repaired without having to replace the entire window. Mark and Chick walked the neighborhood with a rep from a window repair company who helped identify the windows with issues. The company didn’t offer a price for the repairs but did say they would offer a discount if multiple families used them. The architectural committee will be notifying all homeowners with defective windows facing the street that they will have a certain timeframe to have them repaired/replaced. If not, they will face fines and/or liens.

## Contractor lots and liens -

A contractor continues to store equipment on his empty lots. The HOA has fined him $100 each month until this is corrected. We are also moving ahead with filing a lien on that lot. We previously have filed liens on his properties and the Title Company handling the closing when a house is finished is supposed to contact the HOA to see if there are any outstanding debts. In one case they did not, and the lien was discovered when the next owner attempted to sell their house. The amount due was $100 and was not the fault of the homeowner, so the Board did not enforce it.

In discussing the neighborhood with prospective property management companies, one company pointed that there are currently 10 active liens, but we should only have two. Liens expire after 2-3 years. The board is researching how to get this straightened out.

## Nominations for Board member/Architectural Committee –

Voting will take place at the next meeting (10/19/19). Nominations are being accepted NOW for all positions. These residents submitted their names for nominations:

* Kimberly Farmer for President or Secretary
* Melissa Perry for President, Treasurer or Secretary
* Dede Ricard for Secretary

A full slate of nominees will be presented at the next meeting. If you would like to be considered, please email Mark Ricard (ricardma2@yahoo.com). If you would like to nominate someone, please get their approval and send in their name.

## Park Improvements -

Don Andre asked if the fence at the park should be owned by the HOA to ensure uniformity as it is aging in some places and other areas have new fencing. The residents present unanimously agreed that the HOA should not get involved in the fencing as it is the right of the owner as to whether they have a fence at all.

Simone questioned the idea of any further park improvements, such as a pavilion, as an unnecessary expense as the park is so rarely used by residents and this would cost all residents more money. It was agreed that if a proposal for improvement is made, it would have to win a majority vote of all homeowners.

## Facebook Group-

If you are on Facebook, please search for TUSCANY ESTATES SLIDELL to become a member. This is a closed group so that only residents can share information here.

## Upcoming and past events –

Dinner at Italian Pie took place last week. Lunch at Antoine’s Restaurant is Saturday, July 20 - $20.19 menu with .25 martinis. If interested, please email Dede Ricard.

Motion to adjourn was made by Clint Farmer and seconded by Randy Gonzales.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Notes taken by Dede Ricard for Alaynna King 6/22/19.