**2024 Annual Homeowners Meeting Minutes**

The meeting took place at 7:30pm on February 7, 2024.

EWCA President Frank Sheridan welcomed the homeowners in attendance.  Each board member introduced themselves to the 16 households in attendance (three additional proxies were submitted).

Frank first thanked the EWCA Board for their volunteer service this past year in terms of maintaining the minutes, approving ARC changes, coordinating sellers’ packets, handling maintenance and keeping the website up to date.

Also Frank thanked Rep Alan Alonso for the Blake Lane Traffic Study and Richard for maintaining the signs on EWCA common ground.

**2023 Budget Review and 2024 Budget Proposal**

Treasurer Claudia DeCicco provided the annual Financial Report as follows:

Three (3) homeowners failed to pay their dues, for the first time in HOA memory.  Actual 2023 expenses exceeded HOA income by $266.  The deficit was largely due to an unusual demand for tree removal – we spent $4,800 when we budgeted $1,300.  This expense was mitigated by unexpected income of $5,000.

The EWCA Proposed 2024 budget is $8,184.50 and is based on how much we take in with homeowners’ dues.  The annual increase in dues, according to the charter, cannot exceed 5% per year.

2024 income of $100 in disclosure packets is estimated from what we received in 2023. The annual picnic is budgeted at less by reducing our entertainment options.  Scheduled maintenance is also reduced by reducing maintenance of the meadow. State fees and legal expenses continue to be low at $205.

The EWCA board approved the budget during the January meeting and requested homeowners to endorse the approved budget.  Richard and then Mike seconded endorsing the budget; the proposal was unanimously approved by the community.

Homeowners’ questions regarding the budget:

Please explain Edgelea Woods common property: The common property comprises 6.5 acres of forested area that runs on the north side of the association where we maintain a trail.  It was originally set up in 1976 as common land for the community’s enjoyment.  Some maintenance is required; we collectively manage the trail with fresh mulch and trash cleanup.  Boy Scouts a few years ago set up stairs up to our meadow area where there is a picnic bench.  We keep insurance in case someone should get hurt there.  The EWCA board asked for, and received, feedback on whether maintenance was important or whether picnic entertainment was important. Many homeowners were in favor of dropping both; one strongly wanted to keep each.

**2024 Board Elections**

EWCA President strongly encouraged homeowners to join the board and asked for nominations or volunteers.  None came forward.  Frank made a motion to reelect existing Board members.  All homeowners in attendance voted in favor of keeping existing slate of Board members, yes.

**Review of 2023 Board Activity**

President Frank Sheridan reviewed the Board’s 2023 activities as follows:

The EWCA employs a landscaping company, whose owner used to live in the neighborhood, to do common ground maintenance.  Separately, tree removal is handled.

The Board spent significant time in 2023 managing an important ARC violation. The details were as follows:  ARC application was made 8 years ago to take one of the existing houses and make it much larger than our current profile.  The idea didn’t suit the neighborhood so the ARC went through 5-10 iterations to find a solution that would suit our neighborhood.  In principle, the ARC wants to encourage expansions, which are great for the neighborhood, but to keep to a scale that makes sense for everyone.

Approval was granted in 2021.  Early in summer 2023, we began to get complaints that actual construction was larger than the plans that were approved.  Unfortunately, the house was already well under construction.  We had a meeting in June 2023 so we brought together the homeowners of the house plus the neighbors to try to reach a good faith agreement where we could stop enlarging the house while also moving towards finished construction. This happened, including a stop to further building as well as putting up appropriate shrubbery with contiguous neighbors that would satisfy the adjacent properties.

We received $5,000 to cover association expenses, only some of which went to legal fees. The remainder of the money is there for additional legal fees if needed, such as to change the ARC process and the contract/agreement that the homeowners submit will be a little more binding.  We cannot dictate terms to homeowners who are not in compliance.

Our docs were drafted in the 1970s when there was a growing reluctance at that time to allow associations authority to affect homeowners’ ability to manage their property.  We have revisited the idea of how much authority our homeowners want to delegate to the board, which has traditionally been not much authority.  The only other EWCA recourse was to sue the homeowners and try to tear down the house, but the legal fees would have far exceeded $5,000. The EWCA in the future will require homeowners who want to make changes to their home’s structure to sign an agreement with the parameters of what the ARC approves.

**Traffic Update**

With the Residential Traffic Appraisal Program (RTAP), we worked at obtaining a traffic assessment before school in Crossbow Court.  Weirdly as busy as traffic was last year, there was much less in 2023.  So this slowed the process down to get a qualifying count. The October 2023 count failed to meet the threshold; we’ll try again in May.  If we qualify, then we can begin the process again. Ideally, we would like to prevent cars from making a right hand/left hand turn into the neighborhood from Edgelea during specific hours. Fairfax County does not currently have that signage approved or available, which makes the process more difficult.

**The Occasional Car Thief**

The car “change and valuables” thief was again active; a laptop was stolen in October.  They come 2-3 times per year. Please lock your cars at night and do not leave valuables in your car, so we stop feeding these thieves’ habit.

**MetroWest Development**

The EWCA Board has always opposed the MetroWest development, approved in 2006. Population density is high enough.  Now, buildings 6 and 10 are approved, which include 14,000 square feet of retail.  However, this compares to the proposed 100,000 square feet of retail plus 300,000 square feet of office space.

**New Business:**

The EWCA Board always values Input from you – what should we be thinking about? What would you like us to pursue or to do/not to do?

Crime lately seems questionable.  Two to three months ago, a family on Edgelea experienced a theft of a child’s bicycle stolen from inside their open garage.

No other new business was introduced.

**Question & Answer Session:**

Afua Oguah: Afua shared that she missed the last meeting, but their neighbor Keith had mentioned that there was discussion about clearing the path near our house behind Oleander to join the trail.  She informed the board that she and her partner discussed this possibility and they are fine with this project.  If we clear a path, there might be better drainage and clearance around the back yard.  Frank noted that Boy Scouts often do projects like this and suggested we could organize clearing that land.

9701 Oleander: excavation is ongoing as the house is being expanded out the back of the house. The ARC has approved the project.

Any change on the abandoned house on Oleander? They maintain the yard. The house is caught in a sibling squabble but until they run afoul of the County Blight guidelines, there is not much the board can do. Falling gutters in the back might meet the threshold. The EWCA has circumscribed powers to take action against any home not in compliance with basic standards; therefore, what the board does is typically done by persuasion.

Peggy: If you see an issue in the neighborhood, it is useful to report it.  For example, their neighbor across the street was asking about a white minivan parked for a long time in front of their house. They came and put a ticket on the van (with expired registration from 2021) and had no parking permit. Once another homeowner called, the police took action so it is sometimes helpful to have more than one household call to resolve a situation.

Repair of sidewalks? – if there is a tripping hazard or some other issue, you can submit a sidewalk hazard complaint on line with FFX county. Here is the online form: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/report-walkway-problem>

The meeting concluded at 8:02pm