

**Village of Beck's Pond  
Homeowners Community Meeting  
Minutes of Meeting**

Date/Time: July 19, 2023; 6:30 pm  
Location: New Castle County Library – Bear

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- Cheryl Rice-Moore opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and introducing the Homeowners Maintenance Board members, Architectural Committee members, and special guests as follows:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attended</u>
Cheryl Rice-Moore – President	Y
Doug Kozak – Vice President	Y
Rich Lombardo – Treasurer	Y
Dixie Durgin – Secretary	Y
Shirley Stewart – Vice President Pro Tem	Y
 <u>Architectural Committee</u>	
Elaine Vanderhorst-Williams	Y
 <u>Special Guests</u>	
Councilman Dave Tackett	
Cable Davis, Assistant to Dave Tackett	
Officer Luis Echevarria, NCC Police Community Services	

2.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

Officer Echevarria reported that in the past three months, there were 10 calls made to NCC police from VOBP residences. None of these calls were of a critical nature.

Officer Echevarria described the role of the Community Services department in New Castle County, and touched on the many programs they have and activities their officers participate in. For details, refer to the website <https://www.newcastlede.gov/266/Community-Services-Unit>

Officer Echevarria also discussed the recent assault that occurred at Glasgow Park and deferred to Councilman Tackett for a more general discussion of park safety.

Contact information for Officer Echevarria: [luis.echevarria@newcastlede.gov](mailto:luis.echevarria@newcastlede.gov)  
Phone number to use to report community services issues: 302-395-8050

Responses to Attendee Questions

- The brush fires that occurred at the back of the VOBP community last February were set by a young individual, who has been caught. This information was provided by Councilman Tackett.
- Several attendees noted that some drivers are deliberately running the stop signs on Becks Woods Drive. Officer Echevarria asked that residents advise the police when this happens, including the time of day the offense occurred. This will enable the police to focus on specific time frames where they can station officers nearby.

- There have been no incidents reported in the VOBP community of the “criminal tourist” activity that has been occurring in New Castle County. Officer Echevarria noted that 6 to 8 have been arrested so far.
- If anyone is a victim of the TikTok “door kicking” challenge (or any other active crime), they should call 911, not the Community Service Department number.

### 3.0 NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Councilman David Tackett addressed the meeting, discussing how his office can help the community and took questions from the attendees.

- The retention pond at the corner of Becks Woods Drive and Mahopac Drive, while unattractive, is wetlands and what can be done about it is limited. However, Councilman Tackett will request that the area be fogged for mosquitos.
- Park safety is a concern in all parks, not just Glasgow Park. In addition to the Glasgow Park assault, there was a shooting that involved a graduation party that, becoming rowdy, was kicked out of a local hotel and ended up in the park, and at other New Castle County parks, a recent carjacking, and other illicit activity. There are both car and bike patrols in the parks, but they cannot be patrolled full time. Councilman Tackett is introducing a resolution to develop a plan to patrol and control park access. Security measures that might be considered include gates and cameras.
- Both Officer Echevarria and Councilman Tackett addressed a shortage of NCC police officers. There are currently 47 officer positions open, and after a recent hiring event, only one application was received.
- Councilman Tackett and his assistant, Cable Davis, did a walkaround the VOBP development with two of the HOA board members (Cheryl Rice-Moore and Dixie Durgin) last April, discussing the retention pond (see above) and the overgrowth and debris along the pond side of Becks Woods Drive.

#### Responses to Attendee Questions

- Big rigs that are parked on Becks Woods Drive cannot be towed. They are too big to tow, even if only the cab is parked. The police non-emergency number should be called so the rig can be ticketed. Board member Rich Lombardo noted that he has called the company that owns the rig, when known, and that the companies have generally been responsive.
- Board member Elaine Vanderhorst-Williams noted that when commercial vehicles (vans, pickups, etc.) have been parked in the development, she has also been calling the company that owns the truck. We may need to address this legally if it continues.
- Paper shredding events are held periodically at various New Castle County recycling centers, including the one on Corporate Drive in Newark. A complete schedule of recycling events (hazmat, shredding, etc.) can be found on the Delaware Solid Waste Authority website (<https://dswa.com/events/>)
- The tot lots located on Tuckahoe Lane and Chilmark Court are private property and cannot be monitored by NCC police. The Board may need to consider going “above and beyond” to implement security measures. However, if residents notice non-residents or active criminal activity in the tot lots, they can call 911 for assistance.

- Personal use of marijuana is now legal in Delaware; sale of marijuana in licensed outlets will start in late 2024. Attendees should research the law in more detail if interested.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Board Member Rich Lombardo reviewed the current status of income vs expenditures. *See the last page of this document.*

- Liens are in place on 22 properties with a total delinquent amount of \$66,690, while a total of 25 properties have not paid for years. The Board has voted unanimously to start the sheriff's sale process on these properties.
- The budget includes maintaining the seven storm drains in the development, for which we are responsible for keeping cleared. The County inspects these drains twice a year and fines can be levied if they are not satisfactory. Attendees were asked to please not sweep or blow grass clippings and leaves into the storm drains.

#### Responses to Attendee Questions

- One attendee noted that he has not paid his HOA fees, as he does not see any benefit. In particular, he feels that the snow removal is unsatisfactory as he often has to re-shovel after the plow has gone through. Board member Doug Kozak responded as follows. The resident seemed more amenable to the fee requirement following the explanation.
  - a) If snow removal is unsatisfactory, then the resident should contact a Board member as soon as possible. However, it may not be possible to improve due to the number of cars parked on the street.
  - b) HOA fees are used to fund what the development is responsible for maintaining, such as snow removal, storm drain maintenance, tot lot insurance and maintenance, and common area mowing.
- The bubble glass on the Tuckahoe Lane tot lot is broken. The Board will address having the window replaced.
- Homeowners who have a stream or streambed behind their house are responsible for maintaining the land and trees up to that streambed if it is within their property lines. If they are not certain, they can check the NCC Parcel Map to see their property lines in relation to the creek. If still unsure, they will need to have their property surveyed and the back boundary of their property clearly marked in relation to the stream.

#### 5.0 DEED RESTRICTIONS

Board Member Doug Kozak discussed some of the common questions and issues.

- Vehicles with expired tags are not the Board's responsibility. Any resident can call New Castle County police to request that such vehicles be ticketed. After a few weeks of non-response, the County will tow the vehicle.
- Owners were reminded to not park on street corners and common area grass. The Board is considering having boulders placed along the common area grass at the Becks Woods Drive end of Mahopac Drive to prevent continued disregard of this regulation.
- Dogs must be leashed when not on the owner's property.

- Vegetable gardens must be screened by shrubbery if visible from the street.
- Fences are not permitted unless they were not on the property when the house was first purchased.
- Trash cans should be kept in the garage if possible. If that is not possible, residents are asked to screen them with shrubbery. The Board is trying to come up with a workable solution for everyone.
- Color codes for siding, paint, brick, mortar, etc. are posted on the VOBP website under VOBPMA Color Codes. If in doubt, contact the Architectural Committee first.
- Doug noted that a homeowner had contacted him about whether expanding the house would be permitted. Doug noted that while homeowners will not be permitted to change the footprint of the house, they could change the interior (such as finishing off the attic) without Board approval.

#### Responses to Attendee Questions

- The question of who maintains trees that are overhanging the street (such as those at Tuckahoe & Mahopac) was raised. The basic answer is whoever owns the trees. Common area trees are maintained by the development. Trees outside of owners' property lines are the responsibility of the County, keeping in mind that minimal maintenance is done on designated wetlands.
- The request to have two community meetings per year instead of one was made. The Board will discuss the request at the next Board meeting.

#### 6.0 WELCOME PACKETS

- Board Member Shirley Stewart noted that welcome packets have been distributed to all new homeowners as well as to some who requested them. Any new owner who has not received one should contact Shirley.
- Shirley also asked for a second volunteer to assist her in distributing these packets, as they are hand-delivered by two people, and one of the current two may not be available.

#### 7.0 BOARD ELECTIONS

Elaine Vanderhorst-Williams noted that the Board is working on preparing for Board elections.

#### 8.0 SPEED ENFORCEMENT

Dixie Durgin noted the following:

- DelDot has approved our request for a solar-powered "your speed" sign to be installed on the northbound side of Becks Woods Drive in the cleared area underneath the power lines.
- Representative Valerie Longhurst is looking into having a crosswalk created on Becks Woods Drive to give walkers a safe place to cross where the sidewalk ends on one side of the street and picks up on the other side (near Mahon Lane).
- All residents should have received the DelDot ballot requesting a vote on whether speed humps should be installed on Becks Woods Drive in the development. Residents were encouraged to vote.

- Representative Longhurst will be hosting a meeting of all Becks Woods and Village of Becks Pond residents to discuss the ballot results and next steps. The meeting will include staff from DelDot.

#### Responses to Attendee Questions

- Can we look at having Mahopac Drive turned into a one-way street? Councilman Tackett agreed to look into whether this would be permissible.

### 9.0 SURVEY

Board member Cheryl Rice-Moore requested volunteers to help with the community-wide survey.

### 10.0 GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Can a street light be installed at the back of the cul-de-sac on Ellendale Court? Councilman Tackett will look into the cost.
- The Ellendale cul-de-sac is very overgrown and needs to be cleaned up. Board member Rich Lombardo indicated that we could have the County do that, as it is not development land.
- Shrubs on the north side of Becks Woods Drive approaching Ellendale Court need to be trimmed, as it is hard to see when turning onto Becks Woods Drive. If the shrubs are on private property, then the homeowner needs to do it. If on the County portion of the road, then the County needs to do it.
- There are two basketball hoops on Ellendale Court – one on the grass, the other in the street. Board member Doug Kozak agreed to drive by and take a look, but basically there is not too much we can do about them. There are no rules against basketball hoops on an owner’s property (grass or driveway). If a basketball hoop is on the street, the street belongs to the County. Per NCC police, the only time they can do anything about hoops on the grass is when the hoop is heavily weighted down so that it is difficult to move, or when those using the hoop refuse to yield to traffic.
- It was noted that the cleared area that fronts Becks Pond on Becks Woods Drive is extremely messy, but there is nothing that we can do about it. The County is responsible for that area and since it is a designated wetland, there is little that they can do as well.
- Tuckahoe Drive is scheduled for repaving – will residents be advised before this happens? Yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

**Village of Becks Pond Maintenance Association  
2023 Budget and Actuals as of July 1, 2023**

	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
<b>INCOMING: HOA FEES</b>	<b>\$33,600.00</b>	<b>\$24,494.45</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$30,891.00</b>	<b>\$20,319.40</b>
<b>NCC COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$2,016.00</b>	<b>\$2,016.00</b>
<b>WEB SERVICES - HOSTING</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>POSTAGE</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>	<b>\$48.40</b>
<b>OFFICE SUPPLIES</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>	<b>\$160.00</b>
<b>BUSINESS LICENSE</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<b>LIENS PLACED</b>	<b>\$1,200.00</b>	<b>\$6,512.00</b>
<b>TOT LOT INSURANCE</b>	<b>\$1,983.00</b>	<b>\$1,983.00</b>
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>	<b>\$11,500.00</b>	<b>\$5,055.00</b>
<b>GROUNDS UPKEEP</b>	<b>\$1,242.00</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>
<b>ENTRANCE SIGNS / MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$600.00</b>	<b>\$215.00</b>
<b>TREE REMOVAL</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>	<b>\$400.00</b>
<b>SNOW REMOVAL</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$650.00</b>
<b>STORM DRAINS</b>	<b>\$6,500.00</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>

<b><u>JUDGEMENTS AND LIENS</u></b>	
<b>22 LIENS IN PLACE TOTALING</b>	<b>\$66,689.75</b>
<b>STARTING SHERIFF SALES</b>	