

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

Date/Time: October 3, 2022; 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 and Architectural Committee members as follows:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attended</u>
Cheryl Rice-Moore – President	Y
Doug Kozak – Vice President	N
Rich Lombardo – Treasurer	Y
Dixie Durgin – Secretary	Y
Shirley Stewart – Vice President Pro Tem	Y
 <u>Architectural Committee</u>	
Elaine Vanderhorst-Williams	Y
Tom Brown	Y

- The Village of Becks Pond has joined the Friends of the Bear Library. Cheryl introduced Eric Kuhn, the manager of the library, and Connie Malin who is the president of the Friends organization.
- Cheryl also introduced Valerie Longhurst, 15th District Representative in the Delaware House of Representatives. Representative Longhurst is a resident of the Village of Beck's Pond and is a valuable resource who can help guide the Board in addressing community issues that fall under county or state control.

2.0 REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Attendees were referred to the official website VillageOfBecksPond.us (capitals for ease of reading and are not required to view the website). Users can download a number of reference materials in PDF form from this website, including Bylaws, Deed Restrictions, paint and siding color codes, useful phone numbers, and much more.
- Attendees were also referred to the community's Facebook page "HOA Village of Becks Pond".

3.0 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Richie Lombardo reviewed the current status of income vs expenditures. Although significant progress has been made in collecting delinquent homeowner fees, liens have been placed on 22 properties that are several thousand dollars in arrears. If a property against which a lien has been registered is sold, all or a portion of the delinquent fees will automatically be deducted from the proceeds of the sale at closing and will be awarded to the Community. *See attachment at end of this document.*

Richie further indicated that the Board is also pursuing other methods of recouping delinquent fees rather than having to wait for a property to be sold.

4.0 BOARD ACTIVITY AND OPEN ITEMS

- Tot Lots and Common Areas

The tot lots have been cleaned, repaired where necessary, and mulched. This will be done at least once a year; more if necessary. Signs have also been posted to identify the restrictions (no pets, children must be attended by an adult, etc.). Common areas have been cleaned up, mowed, and cut back where possible. These areas will be monitored and cleaned up as necessary.
- Car Maintenance in Driveways

Attendees were reminded that car maintenance is not permitted in driveways. *Post-meeting clarification: per the Declaration of Restrictions, Item 10, tire changes and battery servicing are permitted; all other maintenance is prohibited.*
- Trash Collection and Trash Can Storage
 - a) Quotes were obtained from several trash collection companies to see if a favorable rate could be obtained for the community. The goal was to reduce the number of trash trucks traveling through the community. Unfortunately, the quotes received were not advantageous and the vendors were not willing to commit to the prices quoted for any length of time.
 - b) The Board recognizes that the main difficulty in trash can storage is the lack of options available to those who live in inner units. Therefore:
 - Those who live in end units must keep their trash cans out of sight, whether behind the house or in the garage.
 - The Board is considering a structure for the inside units to camouflage trash cans. The Architectural Committee must approve building these structures before construction begins. Upon approval, the Architectural Committee will provide plans that will detail the dimensions, materials, and paint.
 - c) Attendees were requested to place their trash in bags before placing it in the outside trash cans, and to ensure that the lids on both trash and recycling cans are firmly closed to avoid attracting rodents and raccoons.
 - d) Attendees were also requested to keep their trash cans clean to prevent odors. If a resident has a neighbor who consistently has "stinky" or overflowing trash/recycling cans, they should report this to the Board, who will work with our County representative Dave Tackett to have the NCC investigate and handle the issue, as it is against County ordinances.
- Development Street Issues
 - a) Tree Trimming: the Board had New Castle County trim and/or remove overhanging trees and tree branches on the pond side of Becks Woods Drive. A local contractor was brought in to trim branches in the Community's common areas, and to remove the tree that fell on the mailbox on Tuckahoe Lane.
 - b) Parking: attendees were reminded that parking is not allowed on sidewalks grassy common areas. Signs will be posted to this effect. The Board is currently researching a parking decal system.
 - c) Abandoned Vehicles: New Castle County Police towed three abandoned vehicles from the Community at the Board's request.
 - d) Speeding: speeding on Becks Woods Drive and Mahopac Drive is an ongoing issue. Rep. Longhurst indicated that DelDot needs to survey owners before

determining whether speed bumps/humps and speed limit signs can be installed. Rep. Longhurst volunteered to contact DelDot on our behalf.

e) **Street and Sidewalk Blocking**

- o Attendees were reminded that parking on sidewalks and in common areas is prohibited.
- o Attendees were reminded that basketball hoops are not permitted on the street or the sidewalk; they must be in the resident's driveway or grass. New Castle County police will be notified of repeat offenders and these offenders will be fined.

▪ **Snow Removal**

An open item from last year's fall Community meeting was the poor snow removal work on Becks Woods Drive in the Becks Woods community (not VOBP). However, it was noticed that the Becks Woods contractor did a much better job last winter so no action was taken. The situation will be monitored and, if necessary, the Board will contact the president of the Becks Woods HOA.

▪ **Property Lines**

Several owners have asked the Board how to identify their property lines. The Board does not have exact property dimensions. Owners were directed to refer to the property survey that should have been part of their closing package. They can also access the New Castle County Parcel Search for a development map that will give them a general idea. If exact property line definition is required, residents will need to hire a surveyor.

▪ **Wetlands**

Richie Lombardo advised that, per New Castle County, if branches or entire trees in a wetlands area are leaning towards a resident's house, then the resident can have the branch or tree removed. If the tree is leaning towards the wetlands, then it cannot be touched. Residents should always have a licensed contractor handle tree or branch removal, not just for safety reasons, but because that contractor will know whether the work can legally be done.

▪ **Owners and Renters**

- a) The Board conducted a door-to-door survey over the summer, attempting to collect contact information for each property. Flyers were left at each residence where no one was home. So far, we have contact information for only about 50% of the 192 units.
- b) Shirley Stewart has developed a welcome packet for new homeowners, and has distributed this to all new owners she could identify within the past few months. Assistance with this effort going forward would be greatly appreciated!
- c) Attendees were reminded that rental units must be registered with New Castle County.
- d) A community survey is being developed on Survey Monkey. A link to this survey will be emailed to all residents who have provided an email address (see (a) above). This survey will help the Board identify priorities for the coming year.

5.0 PREPARATION FOR BOARD ELECTIONS

Elaine Vanderhorst-Williams read the portion of the Bylaws pertaining to board elections. The Board is actively discussing how/when to handle the nominations and elections. Residents will be emailed asking them to nominate themselves if interested in serving as either a Board member or participating in a sub-committee.

6.0 QUESTIONS

The following questions were raised during the meeting. Responses are shown in italics.

- a) Does the Board obtain bids each year for common area maintenance (grass cutting, tot lot maintenance, snow removal)? *No, the Board has so far not requested any official bids. We have been happy with the services that have been performed. However, this topic will be raised at the next Board meeting.*
- b) Can the snow plow contractor be asked to not dump snow on top of the storm drain on the Redden Court cul-de-sac? *Unfortunately, this is the only area that is not part of one of the properties on Redden Court. He would have to dump the excess snow on someone's front lawn.*
- c) Can a speed limit sign of 10 mph be placed across the street from 205 Becks Woods Drive? *The speed limit and placement of speed limit signs is under DelDot's jurisdiction. The request can be made but their decision cannot be guaranteed.*
- d) There is a street light that has apparently been hit and is leaning. What can we do about that? *Delmarva is responsible for maintaining street lights. There is an ID number on the base of each light. Make a note of that number and either contact Delmarva or one of the Board members to report the problem and it will be taken care of.*
- e) What are the rules for having dogs at your residence? *Dogs are permitted. They must be kept on a leash at all times when not inside the residence. Other than that, local, county, and state ordinances apply.*
- f) Will Homeowners fees be increased in 2023? *We have no plans to do so.*

Village Of Becks Pond MA

VOBPMA	2020	2021	Headers
Discription			
Collections	\$20,320.85	\$23,811.72	\$39,151.68
Expenses	\$19,423.74	\$23,024.88	\$29,409.48
Storm Maintenance			\$1,125.00
Insurance			\$1,957.00
Postage			\$196.53
Delmarva			\$110.00
Simply Landscaping			\$7,995.00
GG Landscaping			\$1,100.00
Joann Landscaping			\$4,700.00
Liens Placed			\$6,216.00
NCC Service Charge			\$2,016.00
Snow Removal			\$3,525.00
Star Arts Inc			\$229.00
Tot Lot Signs			\$115.00
Web Renewal			\$99.95
Library Membership			\$25.00