

Demory Farm Board of Directors HOA Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 1/18/24 at 7:00pm

Location-American Legion, Charles Town, WV

Board Members Present	Board Members Absent
Dennis Woolwine Jason Wyatt Lanae Johnson James Yarnell Tom Yeager	

Attendance-24 residents representing 15 homes

Call to Order: Jason called the meeting to order at 7:05pm

Welcome message-Jason Wyatt

- **Jason welcomed the parties in attendance and explained the format of this meeting.**
 - Please save questions for the end
 - This was not an in-depth “annual,” HOA meeting.
 - Jason explained the evolution and differing perspectives of the newly elected board.
 - Board members introduced themselves and stated our time in Demory Farm (DF) and our role on the board.

Treasurer’s report-Tom Yeager

- **Tom gave a basic overview of our current finances.**

Recent accomplishments-Jason Wyatt

- **Jason went over the recent accomplishments of the board**
 - Transition of Bank Accounts
 - Transition of web domain
 - Redesigned website
 - Facebook group admin with new board
 - PO box
 - Snow removal and landscaping contracts
 - Architectural Review Form updated
 - Onboarded Attorney
 - (working on) onboarding CPA
 - (working on) New Homeowner Welcome Kit
 - Liability insurance purchased for the common areas and the board

Active Projects-Jason Wyatt

Board/HOA Meeting Schedule

- Board Meeting schedule
 - Quarterly
 - Jan, April, July/Aug, Oct
 - Annual meeting in ~June

Taxes

- Taxes / Financials
 - Working with a CPA
 - We shouldn't owe, but need to ensure annual filing obligations are met

Bylaw Cleanup and Enforcement

- External Management to Assist with Community Needs
 - No increase in dues specifically for this
 - Ensure fair and consistent enforcement of bylaws
 - Collect unpaid dues of appx \$20k
 - Consultation / Establish Processes
 - Variety of enforcement and financial situations that need action ASAP
- Fees and Fines Schedule
 - Defined/documented fees and fines
 - When fees/fines are incurred
 - What actions are taken
- Possible Removal of Handbook

Online Payment Option

- Online payment option
 - We have multiple options we're looking at right now
 - External Mgmt.
 - Accounting System (Zoho)
 - United Bank
 - Webhost

Facebook Group

- Facebook Group membership criteria, rules, etc.
 - 16 and up with parental permission
 - Up to date on dues
 - Some people neighboring the community
 - Purpose/guidelines
 - For community to connect/discuss

- Notices of interest (ex. Trash schedule, Boil advisory, etc)

Community Improvements

- 30yr Financial Plan Drafted
 - Reserve Fund
 - Road Maintenance
 - Bus Shelter
 - Walking Path
 - Community Entrance Sign
 - Investments
 - Improvements
 - Few examples (this is not everything, there are other ideas too)
 - Weatherproof Community Message Board
 - Signage (speed, pedestrians, no soliciting)
 - Landscaping/Signage next to speed bumps

Committees-Jason Wyatt

- Volunteer opportunities
 - Architectural Review Committee
 - Currently the board
 - Election Committee
 - Community Events Committee
 - (potential) Covenant Committee
- How to contact us
 - Board@demoryfarm.com
 - Website 'contact us' form
 - Facebook group
 - *Email is best for direct communication*

Recent Issues

- Chicken Coop
 - Have been in contact with the owners.
 - Note that we are working to address this and the other situations in our community that require bylaw amendments or enforcement.
- Fireworks
 - Be safe, be smart, be respectful.
- Wildlife/Rodents
 - Numerous sightings of foxes, racoons, mice. Prior bear sightings.
 - Animal Control and DNR
 - Be mindful of food scraps, leaving trash out extended period time, etc.
 - Reports of food in/near yards and walking path

- Trash left out for multiple days

Homeowner Comment (start time-7:30pm)

Question 1 -Resident concerned about the recent snow removal and the icy conditions.

- HOA board to consult with Greenscapes on how they decide on how to treat the roads & possible options, weather dependent.
- It was noted that ice melt does not work in bitter cold conditions so it would be a waste of money (we pay ala carte for snow removal) to have that done if the temperatures are too low.
- Recommendation to check on using cinders.

Question 2 -What can an outside management company do that we cannot?

- A 3rd-party management company has the experience and resources to handle our wide variety of issues, including collecting the \$20k in back HOA dues and bylaw enforcement.
- The sheer volume and backlog of things that have not been enforced is too much for the board to handle on their own, in a timely manner, for the time being.
- No face-to-face interaction for our small community.

Question 3-How does hiring an outside agency not cost the residents more money?

- We are using the approx.. \$5k we used to pay Chris Ott for managing the community and subsidizing the rest. For example, we have enough cash on hand to safely invest a portion in safe investments like CD's. The interest from our investments will cover the additional expense.

Question 4 -Do we expect to be able to collect on the \$20k in overdue HOA dues?

- Yes, we are hoping to collect as much as possible using the experience, processes, and legal backing within the external management company.
- We keep everything collected. The external management company does not get any percentage of those funds. This is included in their contract with us.
- We discussed getting all homes in compliance with the bylaws.
- We discussed being able to make faster progress using an outside company.
- We discussed the contract length (1-year increments) and the ability to exit free and clear from the contract with a 30-day notice to terminate contract, if need be.

Question 5 -Do we have any intention to add more streetlights?

- Resident explained how dark it was in the corner of Killian.
- Past board leadership explained it was cost prohibitive to add lights. We have inquired before about adding a light at the mailboxes.

Question 6 -What does enforcement from an external management company look like?

- 3 Strike rule in 30-day increments. Letters sent to the resident to get in compliance and an opportunity to explain their situation to the board.
- As a board we understand we will see circumstances that will fall outside of the bylaws and will adjust enforcement accordingly.
- The board owns the relationship with the external company – they work for us.
- A fee and fine structure is currently being developed by the board. It will not affect anyone that occasionally gets a notice and gets into compliance. Meant for repeat offenders and anyone that simply ignores the letters.
- The letters of a compliance issue will come from the external management company, but the board will be aware of them ahead of time.

Question 7 - Who would do inspections?

- Both the board and the external agency would conduct inspections. Residents can also self-report if they see an infraction.
- At any time, the board can see and report a bylaw infraction.
- The external management company would perform a monthly inspection.

Question 7 -Who decides to employ an external agency to manage our community?

- The current HOA board will vote on whether we will go with an external agency to manage the community as allowed in our HOA bylaws.
- Jason reiterated the existing back log of things that we need professional assistance with.

A resident at gave her opinion on the external management company. She gave her personal experience from a past neighborhood where she lived. She advised it is nice to have the extra “reminders,” to stay in compliance and it was nice to have every home held to the same standards.

A resident gave positive feedback on trying the external management company. They advised they have always been against it based on fear of how much it would raise HOA dues.

Another resident gave positive feedback on trying the external management company. They advised they have always been against it too but trusted the HOA board to make the decision.

Jason Wyatt reiterated that we wouldn’t go this direction if everyone was against it but that we take in all the considerations of the community and would only act in the best interest of the community.

Question 8 - What's being done about the chicken coop?

- The HOA board explained they have been in contact with the owners.
- It was noted that this is a clear violation of current HOA bylaws.
- It was noted that the HOA board is putting together a process to change existing bylaws.

Question 9 - Was the budget approved to hire an external agency to manage the community?

- The board can hire an external agency as an operational cost of the community.
- A resident noted that the extra expense could go towards the road project
- Someone noted we have never had an approved budget. The overall budget would be discussed more in depth at the annual HOA meeting,

That was the end of the formal questions, but the road project discussion led to other topics being discussed:

- We discussed that HOA dues will eventually need to be raised to fund the road projects.
- HOA dues have never been raised since the community was started and have not stayed in line with inflation. \$420 annually, per home, is not enough to cover the road maintenance projects.
- We want to ensure any dues increase are very gradual; and avoid any “special assessments” for road maintenance.
- The board will begin gathering estimates for road maintenance (knowing that as time goes on the cost will increase) as we continue to build out the long-term financial plan and budget for the neighborhood.

Jason wrapped the meeting up by advising that we had consulted an attorney, and the HOA has always been valid since inception. In other words, all residents have always been obligated to pay dues on time and follow the HOA bylaws.

Jason thanked everyone for coming out and the meeting concluded.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Jason, seconded by Dennis, motion approved. The meeting adjourned 8:20 pm.

Next Meeting: April 2024, exact date, time, & location TBD.

Minutes typed by Dennis Woolwine