

Summary - Life in Suissevale Survey

Background and Method:

Suissevale is a community on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire comprised of 426 homeowners and 120 land owners. For one week from September 10 through September 17, 2018 respondents took a survey about their knowledge, needs, and opinions of the governance of the Suissevale community. The survey was taken online via a website, Facebook home page and group page and by email to 200 recipients. About 100 responses were compiled.

Key Overall Conclusions:

Based on responses, the POASI Board of Directors is not providing adequate communication on its actions and plans and has been treating many members in a less than respectful manner. For example, on communication, 89% of respondents do not know how much money has been used to defend lawsuits and 96% of respondents want more information on past, current, and pending lawsuits. The Board is isolating themselves and becoming vulnerable to others communicating their message via word of mouth or other websites.

Property owners are satisfied with dues they pay. However, a large majority do not know how money (particularly reserves) is allocated or budgeted and for what purpose. Members want to be able to vote on major budget decisions. Most members cannot physically attend BOD meetings and want a way to have meetings recorded.

According to respondents, the biggest issue facing Suissevale's future is the water system. On the income front, they want marina fees to be set at market prices.

Indicated action:

The Board needs to treat property owners' questions with respect and respond to all questions in a respectful and business-like manner. Information on major budget decisions and meeting notes, should be posted in a timelier fashion, so members can know about budget decisions without being required to attend meetings. Long range plans and reserves should be posted on the POASI website, so members understand the future of Suissevale and associated costs/fees. The water issue needs to be addressed, as most homeowners want resolution to this issue (and many want to be charged for their individual water usage).

Key Findings:

Awareness of Board Actions/Financial Health

A large majority (91%) felt knowledge of Suissevale's financial health is either extremely important or very important. Yet only 33% felt they are aware of Suissevale financial health.

Most respondents receive their knowledge about information on Suissevale from friends (57%), followed by the Love Suissevale website (46%) suggesting that the official Suissevale website is

Summary - Life in Suissevale Survey

not providing all the information people want. 41% of the respondents used the POASI/Board website. 31% of respondents got their information from meetings.

BOD Treating Members with Respect

When asked if they had dealings with the POASI Board of Directors and if they treated with respect, only 23% said “Yes”. 37% of the respondents said they were not treated with respect. A sample of their comments are as follows:

- “during meetings attended certain board members did not allow members with questions to fully address their issue.”
- “seems like an ‘old boys’ situation where the incumbents take care of each other without much regard for others.”
- “Board members, for the most part, refuse to listen to suggestions, refuse to consider other viewpoints and they are very secretive of what they do.”
- “We have been treated unfairly concerning our water service and billing.”
- “from my experience and perspective, the BOD doesn’t treat any with respect. They only care about their opinion.”

Several respondents mentioned being treated rudely while making presentations to the Board. 39% of the respondents have not had dealings with the board, so they could not give feedback.

BOD Voting/Attendance/Recording

Only 60% of the respondents voted in the last election. However, 92% plan to vote in the upcoming election in 2019.

When asked about their ability to attend board meetings, 29% of the respondents had attended 5 or more board meetings in the past 5 years. But a full 36% had attended 1 to 5 meetings and 35% had not been able to ever attend a board meeting. Based on that information, it is not hard to see that 87% of the respondents would like to see board meetings videotaped or phone-conferenced so they can be viewed more conveniently.

BOD authority

72 % felt large purchases over \$5,000 should be discussed and voted on by the community with only 20% feeling this should be left to the board.

Lawsuits

96% of the respondents would like to be informed of past, current, and pending lawsuits. A full 89% did not know how much Suissevale revenue has been used to defend in lawsuits.

Summary - Life in Suissevale Survey

Marina Pricing of \$1,000

16% felt the current price is fair. 32% felt the price should be raised to \$2000 and 53% felt the cost should be determined by market price. Although not in the majority, it seemed as if current dock holders or wait listers may have weighed in saying the cost should be less than \$1000. Here are their comments:

- “less than \$1000. There are no services or cost to Suissevale.”
- “by-laws state marina is to be self-supporting so fee should come down to \$500.”

Suissevale Dues/Reserves

53% of respondents felt that dues charged is a fair amount. Only 43% are satisfied that the dues are being used for the good of all Suissevale homeowners. Further, only 31% of respondents are aware of how their dues are allocated. 84% of respondents were not aware of how Reserves are budgeted and for what purposes. Here are comments given when asked if “your money is being used for the good of all Suissevale residents”:

- “We are subsidizing the Marina for the few who have access to it.”
- “Marina members get more for their money. For life!”
- “I suspect there needs to be more transparency from the board.”
- “Money wasted trying to dig wells without proper research.”
- “Those who own wells and on town roads should get a break on dues.”
- “Needs better attention on roads, roadside clearings. Beaches/marina conditions.”
- “As a part-time resident, I get less services than full time residents but pay an equal amount in member fees.”
- “Common property needs to be shared fairly and more transparently.”
- “The BOD provides no detail in it’s spending nor does it disclose any bills, statements, or invoices. ALL of which should be shown to members.”

Issues Facing Suissevale

63% of respondents thought the water system is the biggest issue facing Suissevale in the next 5 years. 16% felt roads are the biggest issue and 15% felt renters’ impact of amenities is the biggest issue.

Open Comments

At the end of the survey respondents were given a chance to leave comments. Below are some of the comments as written:

- “I feel the board members should have term limits.”
- “overcrowded beach and parking. You can’t get a picnic table unless you get there unreasonably early.”

Summary - Life in Suissevale Survey

- “Renters! Last summer our locked kayak was damaged by someone who cut through and took it out for a night time ride...”
- “Would like individual water meters and have each homeowner pay their own water as Balmoral does...”
- “My biggest concern is the respect renters have for our property and how many people they are bringing to the beach area.”
- “how docks pass from party to party. Visibility need on this process and how it affects the waiting list members. Some are passed to family members not on the waiting list. There are many examples of inherited passing through Trusts.”
- “I think that members should be advised that the 1.2 million dollar loan application was not approved by members. It was turned down by the bank after they checked our legal documents and they decided the BOD did not have the authority to commit members to that loan.”
- “Would POASI owners be better served with a manager or management company instead of at board of directors?”
- “renters put a strain on beach amenities.”
- “No speed limits or stop signs up - Speeding cars running bikers off the road.”
- “The way Suissevale handles first right of refusal.”
- “Board meetings should contain more information about what goes on during the board meetings than is presently included. There should be notes on discussions and everything else that is discussed during board meetings. Any presentations or project details should also be included so members can see what the Board is working on. No more secrecy.”
- “There should be water meters on every home so each person pays for their actual usage instead of most of us subsidizing the year round tenants.”
- “Tell us all exactly where OUR money is being spent.”