



The Common at

Sinnott Farm

www.sinnottfarm.com

Homeowner's Association for:

Quail Run | Spice Bush | Arrowwood | Spring Hill | Timothy Lanes

P.O. Box 681
Bloomfield
Connecticut 06002

**The Common at Sinnott Farm, Inc.
Annual Meeting
November 17, 2016
7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Board Members in Attendance:

Diane Prescod, President
Myron Stewart, Vice President
Jeff Olmstead, Secretary

Representing the management company:

Chris Weiland, Vision Management

Call to Order: Diane Prescod called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm by welcoming all homeowners in attendance.

Roll Call: Jeff Olmstead noted that attendance at the meeting would be recorded via a sign-in sheet at the door. All meeting attendees were asked to be sure they had signed in.

Proof of Notice: Jeff Olmstead read a prepared statement indicating that the required Proof of Notice for the Annual Meeting had been sent to all homeowners according to the Association's Declaration, the Bylaws and applicable state law.

Approval of the November 19, 2015 Minutes: The draft minutes for the 2015 Annual Meeting had been included in the mailing of with the Meeting Notice to all homeowners. Diane asked homeowners if they had any questions or comments, and there were none. Rob Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Chris Rohrs. The minutes were approved.

Richard Burt addressed the Board members regarding the October 26th Board meeting. He asserted that a motion was made at that meeting by a homeowner that the Board did not act upon or vote upon. Diane Prescod responded that the appropriate time for homeowner questions and comments was later in the meeting as indicated in the agenda.

Mr. Burt later attempted to make a motion to remove the three Board members whose terms are continuing through 2017. He and Bobby Woods cited the Connecticut statutes regarding provisions for removal of directors and insisted that the motion be recognized. Chris Weiland stated that a motion to remove directors could not be made at the meeting unless it was published as an agenda item prior to the start of the meeting. The motion was not recognized by the Board and a vote was not taken. [Subsequent review of CT statutes confirmed Chris Weiland's assertion that the motion was improperly raised, and should not have been recognized].

Report of Officers and Committees

Year in Review / 2016 Goals: Diane Prescod reviewed the goals that the Board had established for itself early in the year and gave a brief summary of accomplishments relative to each goal.

1. Assess the condition of catch basins – decide upon action to be taken

Accomplishments: A review of catch basins in the community revealed the need for repairs, mostly on Arrowwood. Bids were solicited for catch basin repair and a company was selected to perform repairs in 2017. Funds have been set aside in the 2017 budget for this project.

2. Examine the expense of sealing streets that had crack sealing done last year, decide what action needs to be taken

Accomplishments: Information was gathered regarding the condition of our lanes and timelines for road repair or replacement. The Board determined that Spring Hill is approaching the end of its useful life and is in need of repaving within the next couple of years, with Arrowwood to follow. Funds need to be identified for these major expenses.

3. Hold a community picnic that will hopefully become an annual event

Accomplishments: A Community Gathering was held at the town park off Deerfield Road in June with over 35 residents in attendance.

4. Create a Beautification Committee to address landscaping issues in areas not addressed by Russo

Accomplishments: The Beautification Committee was formed, with Penny Jackson as chairperson and including Julius Prescod and Myron Stewart. The committee and other community volunteers cleared a path by the pond that had become overgrown and has also pruned shrubbery and weeded in other areas of the common property. In addition, the landscaping around the Sinnott Farm sign at the entrance to our community was weeded, trimmed and improved with plantings.

5. Bring work of Bylaws/Covenants Committee on revision of Rules to a conclusion

Accomplishments: The Board voted in early October to present a comprehensive revision of the Association's Rules to all homeowners for review and comments. However, at a Board of Directors meeting held on October 26, 2016, the Board decided not to vote on approval of the Rules pending full consideration of comments received from homeowners at the meeting. The Board will resubmit the Rules document to the Bylaws/Covenants Committee for possible revisions.

6. Improve the accuracy, timeliness and relevance of material posted on our website – and post missing meeting minutes, reports.

Accomplishments: The website is being updated regularly with minutes of the Board meetings, announcements and other news for the Association.

Year in Review / Other Accomplishments: Myron Stewart reviewed other Board highlights of 2016.

- The number and amount of past due maintenance fees remains low, with only one homeowner presently in arrears. The finances of the Association are being managed prudently within the budget framework.
- Ongoing communications are conducted with Russo Lawn and Landscape to ensure that common property is being properly maintained to expected standards of the Association.
- The Bylaws/Covenants Committee conducted a spring walk-about of the community with participation of the management company.
- A quarterly Newsletter continues to be published and mailed to all homeowners.
- The Board has been proactive in managing water usage in the common areas in an effort to reduce water expense.
- Homeowners now have the choice of remitting payment for maintenance fees electronically via ACH transfer or by mailing a check along with payment coupons provided by the management company.
- The Board worked closely with APM, the Association's previous manager, and Vision Management to facilitate a smooth transition to the new management company.

Myron Stewart then discussed the relationship with Vision Management, and described the many ways that the management company has assisted the Board of Directors for the benefit of everyone in the Association.

ByLaws/ Covenant Committee: Jeff Olmstead provided a report for the Bylaws/Covenants Committee. He described the functions and activities of the committee, and reported on the accomplishments for the past year.

Jeff also provided more detail on the decision of the Board to not vote on acceptance of the comprehensive Rules revision that had been developed by the Committee and presented to homeowners for review and comment. In summary, there were only a very few and minor suggestions for specific changes to the proposed Rules. However, some homeowners expressed concern about the scope of the proposed Rules and the tone it seemed to set for the community. Because many of the comments were received on the evening the Board was scheduled to vote on approval, there was not enough time to properly evaluate the comments and decide on what changes, if any, needed to be made. As a result, the Board decided to not vote on the proposed Rules and instead have the Committee evaluate possible changes for consideration by the Board.

Finally, Jeff indicated there were changes in the make-up of the Committee during 2016. Two homeowners, Leslie Woods and Ann Hanks, resigned during the year. Jeff thanked them for their service to the community, and noted that Leslie in particular and contributed a lot of time and effort in her role as chairperson of the Committee for a number of years. The Committee is currently composed of two Board members, a resident that is not a Board member, and the Association's property manager. The Committee is looking for additional volunteers.

Welcome Committee: Jeff Olmstead presented the report for the Welcome Committee. There have been 8 new homeowners in Sinnott Farm so far in 2016, following last year when 7 new homeowners moved to the community. This has strained the ability of the Committee volunteers to make personal visits to each new homeowner, but efforts were made to contact everyone who has moved in and to welcome them to Sinnott Farm.

Website Committee: Jeff Olmstead presented the report on the website. He noted that he had assumed responsibility for the Association’s website from Bobby Woods during the year, and thanked Bobby Woods for his past work in maintaining and managing the website for many years. Jeff indicated that the goal of the Board is to make sure information on the website is accurate and timely, and invited homeowners to provide feedback or suggestions for the website to him.

Beautification Committee: Diane Prescod delivered a brief report for the Beautification Committee, noting that accomplishments of the committee had been previously highlighted.

Election of Inspectors of Vote

Diane Prescod asked for volunteers to count ballots in the election of directors and the votes on the 2017 budget and a separate special assessment. Deanna Lawrence, David Moss and Jeffrey Bobrow volunteered and were selected to tally the ballots.

Financial Report and Presentation of the 2017 Budget

Financial Report for 2016: Jeff Olmstead presented the financial report for 2016. He noted that the Association is expected to come in over budget by \$1,846 by end of the fiscal year. The projected expense for various line items was reviewed, including discussion of the cost of the management company, administration costs, the expense of water, and the unbudgeted expenditure on legal work for the Association. Numerous questions and comments were fielded from homeowners about these and other line items.

Jeff also explained that we have two banking relationships. The first is with Webster Bank, and the second with Union Bank. Union Bank manages the operating funds for the Association, while Webster Bank holds the bulk of the Association’s reserves and a CD. The current fund balances are as follows:

Operating Fund	\$ 8,967.62
Reserve Funds	66,364.25
Certificate of Deposit	<u>25,751.98</u>
Total	\$101,083.85

Finally, Jeff noted that the Capital Expenditure Fund of the past has been combined into the Reserve Fund to simplify management of the Association’s finances. Also, the Certificate of Deposit is considered to be part of the Association’s reserve fund.

Presentation of the 2017 Budget: The upcoming budget as developed by the Board of Directors was presented by Jeff Olmstead. Jeff described some of the highlights of the 2017 budget, including the proposed \$15,500 line item for repair or replacement of damaged catch basins. The proposed budget would maintain the quarterly maintenance fee at \$255 per homeowner.

Special Assessment

Myron Stewart reviewed the proposed Special Assessment that is needed to prepare for the future repaving of Spring Hill Lane, and to maintain our reserve funds for subsequent repaving of Arrowwood Lane.

Myron explained that Spring Hill Lane in particular is the oldest lane in the community that has not already been repaved, and that it is in bad repair and approaching the end of its useful life. A number of homeowners questioned this evaluation and challenged the need for repaving at this time. Other homeowners expressed their opinions that maintaining our lanes is a responsibility of the Association and cannot be avoided or deferred indefinitely.

The vote on the Special Assessment was postponed until after the nomination of new directors.

Nomination of New Directors

Diane Prescod noted that there were two upcoming positions to be filled on the Board of Directors, and asked for nominations from the floor. No one had volunteered for the Board or otherwise been nominated prior to the Annual Meeting.

The following individuals were nominated:

Syed Hussain
Deanne Lawrence
Leslie Woods
Richard Burt
Cameron Toper

Voting Results

Election of Members of the Board of Directors: The two nominated individuals who received the most votes will become new Directors on the Board. The new Directors are Syed Hussain and Cameron Toper.

2017 Budget: The budget proposed by the Board of Directors was rejected. There were 11 votes in favor, and 40 opposed. The Association will continue to operate under the 2016 budget until such time that the Board develops and presents a new budget for consideration by homeowners. A special Homeowners Meeting will be required in the coming weeks or early in 2017 to vote on a new budget for the coming fiscal year.

Special Assessment: The Special Assessment proposed by the Board of Directors was rejected. There were 15 votes in favor, and 36 opposed.

Homeowner Comments & Questions

There was an extended period of homeowner comments and discussion regarding a variety of topics. Some comments were offered during the Financial Presentation, and then continued during the Homeowner Comments and Questions portion of the agenda. Others chose to offer their comments during the time in the meeting reserved for homeowner participation. All homeowner

comments are summarized here, regardless of when they were made during the course of the meeting.

- The need for a professional management firm was questioned, especially considering the expense involved. Various homeowners and Board members explained why the management firm was valuable to the Association and argued that it was a necessary part of managing the community.
- Concerns were expressed specifically about Vision Management, and lack of responsiveness to homeowner questions, calls or emails. Board members acknowledged that this was unacceptable, and also encouraged any homeowners to contact a Board member directly if they are not getting a timely or satisfactory response from the manager.
- Some homeowners said that communication needs to be improved. A number of homeowners indicated a preference for the use of email, rather than the USPS, to deliver information and materials to members of the community. Others asked that the website include more information for reference by homeowners. The Board committed to exploring the use of email for Association communications.
- Some homeowners expressed concern about the need to maintain our roads, and stated that it is imperative that the Association find the necessary funds for repaving our lanes when this work becomes necessary.
- There was discussion about expenses and the overall cost of running the Association. Many expressed an opinion that reductions in the budget can and must be found. Examples of line items that were identified were Administration and Water. Several homeowners said that the coupon books used for maintenance fees were unnecessary and should be discontinued to save money.
- Numerous opinions were expressed regarding water expense and the Association's watering practices, especially considering the current drought conditions. Many believed that irrigation of the cul-de-sacs should be curtailed next year or discontinued altogether in order to save money.
- Questions were raised about which portions of the common property were being fertilized, and also what type of material was being put down on the roads for removal of ice and snow.
- A number of homeowners questioned the need for catch basin repair and replacement, and inquired about details such as who made the assessment of the condition of the catch basins, what specifically the problem(s) were, how many bids were received and what is actually involved in repair and/or replacement.
- The Association's banking relationships was questioned, particularly why the Association is now doing business with a non-local (Atlanta) bank. Chris Weiland explained that Union Bank is a specialist in Associations and provides many benefits to its customers that are not available from other institutions.

- Finally, a deep dissatisfaction was expressed by some homeowners regarding the Association and how the community is being run. Specific complaints were made regarding the Board of Directors and the perceived lack of responsiveness to homeowners in the community.

Prior to closing the meeting, a motion was made by Rod Norwood that a vote to replace all 3 directors whose terms end in 2017 be added first to the agenda of the next Homeowners Meeting, preliminary to a vote on the 2017 budget. The motion was seconded by Richard Burt. The motion passed by a show of hands, 14 in favor and 8 opposed. The actual number of votes recorded represents the tally of members still present at that time. Many homeowners had left the meeting after the votes on the budget and special assessment, and after the election of new directors.

Motion to Adjourn: A motion to close the meeting was made by David Moss at 10:15 pm and seconded by Deanne Lawrence. The motion passed and the meeting was immediately adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Olmstead, Secretary