



The Common at
Sinnott Farm

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Homeowner's Association for:

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

**The Common at Sinnott Farm, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting (Virtual)
October 10, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

In Attendance: Patrick DeLorenzo, Vice President
Wayne Wnuck, Treasurer
Diane Prescod, Secretary
Julius Prescod, Director

Absent: Jonny Baranowski, President

Westford Management: Mason Brennan, Property Manager

Homeowners Present: Deanne Lawrence
Jim Lyman
Clark Winchell
Lisa (Terlecky?)

Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order by Vice President, Patrick DeLorenzo, at 6:06 p.m.

Minutes:
Diane reported that the minutes of the July 11, 2024 meeting were approved via email and posted to the website.

Financial Report:

Income – The total amount of delinquent dues is quite high (\$10,134.00). The Board is working with Westford to ensure that our processes for collections are followed. Income from late fees, fines and collections is currently over \$3,000. These sources are not budgeted for, it is difficult to predict what amounts will be and when they will be received.

Expenses

Administrative – Management fee is set by contract, on budget. Office expenses (i.e. postage, copying) lower since Westford took over, on track to be under budget. Accounting fees on budget; no legal fees to date. Total administrative expenses at year-end expected to be at or under budget.

Contract Services – Landscaping and snow removal set by contract, on budget. Fertilization will be over by about \$1,300 due to treatment added for Deerfield and approved by the Board at the April 2024 meeting. The YTD expenditure for tree work is \$659 over budget. No further tree work is planned for this year but unexpected damage will be addressed as necessary.

Insurance – YTD expenses shown as \$5,254 but refunds for premium overpayment and cancelled policies don't appear to be reflected. Total cost for year expected to be about \$3,900 which exceeds budget by \$1,000.

Electricity – Year-end expenses expected to be a few hundred dollars lower than the \$2,500 budget.

Reserve Transfer – Transfers to Reserves are on track and expected to equal budget of \$21,322 or 24% of annual budget.

Overall – Year-end net income after expenses is projected to range from +\$1,000 to -\$1,000.

Committee Reports:

Beautification Committee – Deanne Lawrence, chair, reported that seasonal flowers have been planted in beds around the Sinnott Farm sign and each lane. She and the Board thanked members of the committee as these plantings are done at their personal expense. She further inquired regarding the invoice sent for the care of the lilacs this past spring. Diane reported that the invoice had been sent to her and that she had forwarded it to Westford. Mason stated he remembered seeing it but did not know whether or not it had been paid but would look into it.

Bylaws/Covenants Committee – Diane Prescod, chair, reported that the Committee had been busy, nine (9) requests received for a variety of small projects. She extended thanks to Jeff Olmstead and Louise Moran for their prompt reviews and responses to each request.

Welcome Committee – Jeff Olmstead, chair, was not able to attend the meeting, however, he sent the following report to Diane: There are two new community members, one on Quail Run Lane and another on Arrowwood Lane. He reached out to the new resident on Quail but did not hear back so he sent a copy of the Welcome Pamphlet. He also reached out to the new residents on Arrowwood. Because extensive work was being done on the home and they had not yet fully moved in, a later visit was agreed upon, but in the meantime, the Welcome Pamphlet was sent.

Website – Julius Prescod, chair, reported that the minutes of July's meeting and the Fall 2024 newsletter have been posted. Renewal for website is coming up in March 2025 at a cost of \$451.74. This can be done in 4 interest-free payments of \$112.93 each if we prefer but we have to find out if the payment must be all made in 2025 or if it can be spread out over the two years. This will have to be included in the 2025 budget. The website has been updated with the information for our new contact person at Westford and Julius has added an informational video on vehicle safety. Wayne, Patrick and Deanne thanked Julius for his work on the website.

Unfinished Business:

-Pond Committee Report – Tabled at this time because Jonny is not in attendance. Patrick suggested that an Executive Summary to include the Committee's recommendation would be helpful. Mason will contact Jonny regarding this request.

-Questions regarding communications costs to homeowners – Diane reported that Jeff Olmstead was kind enough to research this on behalf of the Covenants Committee and the short answer is yes, all costs for communicating with homeowners regarding fines and/or late fees should be passed on to the homeowner and not paid by the Association.

New Business:

-Attempted car break-ins – This happened a while ago on Quail and was included in the fall newsletter. Please just be vigilant, don't leave valuables visible and garage vehicles if possible.

-Management Company Search Update – Diane and Patrick have contacted 8 or 9 companies and have only received one response from Westford. Patrick stated that part of the issue is likely that we are not a condominium association and management of our community is a bit different. More updates to come.

-Community Walk-abouts – Diane reported that these used to be done by the Covenants Committee but if Mason, as Property Manager is doing them, the committee does not have to do them. Mason was asked to send Board emailed reports letting us know when he was on the property and any issues he identified.

-Newsletter – Community Input – A suggestion was made to ask community members if they had anything they wanted to contribute to the newsletter. This information will be posted to the website with instructions to email Diane with any contributions.

-Budget Draft 2025 – Wayne reported that he had worked with Mason to create a draft and that revisions do need to be made. He stated that we have three (3) major expenses that compose 2/3 of our budget – Landscaping and snow removal, the management fee, and insurance. The contract with SJN ends on 10/31/25 but has been a fixed amount for the past four (4) years so will likely increase. This will have little impact on the 2025 budget because it will only be two (2) months of payments at the new rate, but it will impact the 2026 budget. The contract with Westford ends on 1/31/25 and this fee is likely to increase as well as is the insurance premium. The draft keeps \$20,000 into Reserves. Given all of the above, it is likely that we will need to increase maintenance fees by about 4-5% which will be the first increase since 2022.

-Alterations Request Process – Diane explained that the process is easy – simply log on to our website, click on the “For Homeowners” tab and “Alterations Request” will appear as the first item on the list. Click on that to find and download the form. Once the form is completed, email it to Diane who will send it to the committee members. Homeowners can generally expect a reply within 2-3 days.

-Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) -This is a federal law enacted in 2021 that is intended to target tax fraud, money laundering and the funding of terrorism. HOA's got pulled in because of the way it was written – we are a “reporting company” under the law. Board members are required to submit personal information which is due by January 1, 2025. Each Board member will load his/her personal information to a portal managed by a third party and Westford will transmit the data but will not have access to it. There are fines for non-compliance so we are enlisting Westford to facilitate the process for us at a cost of \$495. We will wait until after elections in November to have Board members submit their information because one change is free but there is a charge of \$100 for each additional change. Mason will check whether this fee will be charged in 2024 or 2025. He added that there are lawsuits that have been filed to exempt HOAs from this requirement but it could take time.

Administrative Items:

Management Report –Mason did a site visit today and will be doing them monthly. He will discuss fall clean up with SJN to ensure we are prepared for winter. The community received an email today regarding the fertilization of common areas that will be done tomorrow.

Correspondence –Nothing of note.

Resale Report- This was not included in the Board packet, however two have been done. Mason also reported that he is following our protocol and contacting Jeff Olmstead, Welcome Committee, when a home is sold.

Annual Calendar – The Annual Meeting is fast approaching -the notice mailing will be sent on November 7th. On October 17th, Mason will send out a notice that the terms of two Board members expire this year and anyone interested in serving should send his or her information to him. He will send a draft of the notice to the Board prior to sending it out.

Owner’s Forum:

-Deanne asked if we are asking for different services in our RFPs than what we already have. Patrick responded that we did add some requests for the Board Treasurer, specifically that s/he be able to see and approve all expenditures.

-Deanne asked if there would be a substantial increase in the management fee. Wayne answered that it is expected to be about 2-3%. She then asked if that cost was included in the management fee increase to which Wayne responded in the affirmative.

-Jim Lyman thanked Diane for a good job on the newsletter, especially the portion about speeding. He asked about speed limit signs for Deerfield and Mason stated he would put in a request to the Bloomfield DPW.

-Deanne asked about road improvements for Ryefield. Patrick replied that we still don’t know, however Ryefield may be “on the list” because of the markings that have been made around the catch basins.

Executive Session:

Wayne made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session, seconded by Julius, passed unanimously. The Board adjourned to Executive Session at 7:25 p.m. and ended Executive Session at 8:01 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned with a motion made by Wayne, seconded by Diane, and approved unanimously at 8:02 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Diane Prescod
Secretary**