

The Common at Sinnott Farm
Bylaws Committee

Meeting #1 of 2013 Minutes

Date : September 7, 2013

Place: 22 Arrowwood Lane, Woods Residence

Attendees: Leslie Woods, Ann Hanks, Jeff Olmstead, Aija Zigmunds, Louise Moran, and managing agent Pat Williams

Call to Order

The first Bylaws Committee meeting of 2013 was called to order by Chair of the Bylaws Committee, Leslie Woods at 10:40 a.m.

Welcome and Committee Introductions

Leslie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and saying how grateful she is for the support and the time of the committee members. She requested that Louise Moran continue in her past capacity and take minutes of the meeting, and Mrs. Moran agreed. The group went around the table and introduced themselves (members listed above).

Scope of Work

Simply put, the purpose of the Bylaws Committee is to (1) review the Bylaws and Rules of the Association and (2) to make recommendations for changes that would best serve the members of the Sinnott Farms Community. Mrs. Woods clarified that we, as members of the Committee, do not have any power or authority; we just make suggestions that are then shared with the homeowners through Notice & Comments. After that, the Executive Board considers the recommendations of the Bylaws Committee and listens to the comments of the homeowners before any modifications are made.

The Scope of this meeting is primarily to brainstorm and determine what needs to be done. The Bylaws Committee met two years ago with the goal of clarifying and simplifying the Bylaws of the Association. It made some recommendations and the Board approved them. Now it is time to review the Bylaws again, recognizing that there is still confusion and that some homeowners have expressed dissatisfaction with a few of them.

The Board recognizes that the Bylaws are a public document that explains policy for the homeowners. Realizing that every homeowner owns his/her own home, the Board expects the homeowners to be able to live comfortably abiding by the Bylaws. We want the Bylaws to be fair, simple, and clear — “something easier to live with.”

Mrs. Woods stated that the goal of today's meeting is to identify the areas that need more consideration and to assign one or two of them to individual members of the Committee for closer examination. Those members will then report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Review and Discussion

Mr. Olmstead pointed out that it is important that all the Committee members are using the same and the most up-to-date version of the Bylaws before they begin their close examination. It was agreed that the most current version (February 21, 2012) is posted on the Association website.

Amendment A-1 Tag Sales was the first amendment to be discussed, revealing that some people thought that it might micro-manage the events in slightly too much detail. Mrs. Hanks was assigned this amendment to review.

Amendment D-1 Plantings, Landscaping, Outside Structures, and Fencing was the second amendment discussed by the group. Ms. Zigmunds pointed out the importance of the homeowners understanding that they cannot cut down trees on their property without seeking permission of the Board. However, to specify that the rule applies to a particular tree over a specific height is becoming too detailed.

The question arose as to how the breach of such rules should be handled. Mrs. Woods replied that the homeowner in question would receive a notice/warning. Then, the homeowner would be entitled to a hearing, and, if in breach of the Bylaws, a fine would be issued for every day back to the day of violation.

Other concerns regarding this particular Amendment D-1 included the timeframe for the conclusion of projects, the use of the words "enclosed" or "enclosures" in reference to animal runs, and the addition of seasonal "play things."

Mrs. Moran was assigned this amendment to review. At this point of the meeting, Mrs. Woods suggested that we stop discussing the amendments in such detail and move on to the next agenda items. As "homework," she asked all members to take a good look at the Bylaws that we have in place. If they have any questions, to refer back to the Declaration, and then to be prepared to bring concerns to the next meeting.

Discussion of Combining the Bylaws and Covenant Committees

Because currently the Executive Board serves the role of the Covenant Committee as well, any disagreeing homeowner has no recourse to appeal a Board/Covenant decision. For this reason, it has been proposed that the Board no longer serve as the Covenant Committee and that the Bylaws Committee take on that responsibility, making the Bylaws Committee and the Covenant Committee one committee. A brief discussion followed regarding how much such a committee would be empowered to

enforce the Bylaws. Association Managing Agent Ms. Williams said that, if an action is strictly within the Bylaws, the Committee would have the right to enforce it.

Mrs. Woods called the vote: Do we want to recommend to the Executive Board that we combine the Bylaws Committee with the Covenant Committee to form the Bylaws and Covenant Committee? The vote passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Leslie adjourned the meeting at 12 noon.

Next meeting: Saturday, October 12, 2013, at 10:30 a.m. at the Woods Home, 22 Arrowwood Lane

Respectfully submitted,
Louise D. Moran
10/7/13