

**Middleton Estates Community Association**  
**Carlisle, PA 17013**  
**Monthly Board Meeting**

**Date:** May 10, 2022

**Time:** 6:30 pm

**Location:** Stuart Community Center

**Board Members in Attendance:** Jan Verow, Jennifer Callahan, Jordon Michaels, Jim Porter, Shana Strohecker.

**Board Members Absent:** Katie Landis, Joe Tubioli

Meeting called to order by Jan at 6:32pm.

**April Minutes:** Shana moved to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2022 meeting. Jordon seconded. Minutes were approved.

**Open Floor:**

Open Floor began at 6:32 p.m. No members were present. Open Floor ended at 6:32.

**Committee Reports**

**Recreation** - Jan distributed photos, provided by Joe, of the proposed site for a community garden and discussion ensued. Topics included being sure that it was not on private property (it appears that the proposed site is not), the options for the garden itself, i.e. dug out, raised bed, etc. There was additional discussion concerning the maintenance of the garden and whose responsibility that would be. Concerns were raised about weeding, watering, a water supply, the garden becoming overgrown and unattractive if not properly cared for, etc. Additional decisions needed to be made about whether this would be a flower garden, a vegetable garden or some combination of the two. One issue is that while the garden is considered to be a good idea, it might be too late in the season to make the additional decisions and preparation that is needed and that while this idea has general support, it might be something best left to next spring.

The discussion of the garden also led to suggestions of other alternatives for next spring. One was to plant a few butterfly bushes in the area near the bulletin board. Another was planting a pollinator garden on a portion of the ballfield.

Shana reported that the recreation committee is working on ideas for a community event. More details will be provided in the future.

**Budget/Finance** - No budget report was available but an updated report on overdue association dues was provided. The overdue balance increased by about \$200. Methods of reducing this amount were discussed, including letters to those in arrears offering a payment plan, suggesting the ACH option for payment and sending coupons to be used as reminders. Jan will talk with Marc about this.

It was also suggested that printable monthly coupons be made available, possibly on the website, for the benefit of those homeowners who might find them helpful as reminders.

**Architectural & Maintenance** - Jan reported that the flag at the entrance to the community has been replaced and that the old flag has been turned over for proper disposal.

Jan reported that the three replacement trees had been planted on the day of the meeting. She has been given instructions for their care from the landscaper and will distribute them to those impacted.

Jan is going to prepare and distribute flyers regarding mulching dates and requirements.

Over the years the weeds behind the south homes have begun to encroach up the bank and into private yards. The landscaper will clear these weeds by using a Brush Hog on the bank at some point in the future.

The park was last power washed in 2017 and is past due for cleaning. We agreed to set a clean-up day for Saturday, June 11 with a rain date of June 25. Jan offered to supply the water for the power washing if we get enough hoses to reach from her home to the park.

Shana will research companies that might be interested in offering driveway sealing for those homeowners who want it, in hopes of securing a discounted rate based on volume. Jennifer will do the same with a dryer vent cleaning company.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Fir Tree Treatment**—Jennifer reported that the second round of treatments for the diseased fir trees along Spring Road has taken place. The cost was \$400 per treatment which would result in an annual cost of \$1,600. The treatments will only delay the spread of the disease but will not stop or reverse it. It was suggested that alternatives be considered and this will be discussed at future meetings.

**Trailer Parking** — Jan reported that, in response to a complaint, she sent a letter to a homeowner that had a trailer parked on their property in violation of the BYLAWS. The trailer has been removed. A “thank you” email was sent to the homeowner.

**Basketball Hoop** — Jan reported that our landscaper is exploring the cost to replace the basketball hoop in the park area. Further details will be provided. Since the Association is a non-profit organization there might be local business willing to act as sponsors. Shana and Jennifer will explore this.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Meeting Structure/Length** — It was suggested that the monthly Board meetings be extended to 90 minutes. The basis for this is that we are usually rushing to get things done and often adjourn meetings with agenda topics left undiscussed. These topics are sometimes time-sensitive and should not be put off until the next monthly meeting. After some discussion of alternatives it was agreed that meetings will be scheduled for 90 minutes beginning with the June meeting. Shana moved to approve the extension, Jordon seconded and it passed by unanimous vote.

**Member Participation at Meetings** — One of the items mentioned in recent surveys was that members do not get much communication from the Board. With this in mind we discussed ways to encourage more attendance at monthly Board meetings. One suggestion was that we restructure the meetings so that members can be present for the majority of the meeting as opposed to only the few minutes of Open Floor as is now the case, and posting the agenda in advance on the website. When the Board has to discuss confidential topics such as specific rule violations, late dues, or other items that might identify specific members, the Board could adjourn the public portion of the meeting and hold an executive session for only Board members.

Additional discussion of this topic will take place at future meetings.

**Enforcement of BYLAWS** — We discussed the fact that Board members should be familiar with the bylaws and other governing documents of the association. Jim gave examples of prior meetings he had attended when inaccurate information about enforcement was provided and another meeting at which a former Board member did not appear to have read or be familiar with the BYLAWS.

We also discussed the fact that clear violations should be acted upon on a timely basis and should not require a vote of the Board in order for action to take place.

**Letters Regarding Violations** — Jan reported that she was preparing to send 3 violation letters to members. One had to do with items stored in the driveway, one with cigarette butts being tossed off a deck (a fire hazard) and another regarding a boat and trailer parked on the property. She has also reached out to a landlord whose tenant recently cut down some trees on association property.

**Fire Pits** — Questions had arisen regarding the use of fire pits on patios. Although newsletters from several years ago warned that this is prohibited, it is not mentioned in the bylaws and research could not identify any Board action on the topic. North Middleton Township code was also reviewed and there is not anything in it that makes such use of a fire pit illegal.

**Common Wooded Area** - Regarding the common area behind the south side of the community, Jan was asked by a homeowner if they could cut and dispose of dead, fallen trees and it was agreed that they could. However, no cutting of standing trees is permitted. The decision to allow fallen tree removal was based on the knowledge that Copper Head snakes are living in the woods. The landscaper reported seeing an adult Copper Head, last spring, on one of the patios abutting those woods. Fallen trees, vines and brush provide a natural habitat for those snakes.

**Newsletters** — We agreed that newsletters needed to again be distributed on a regular basis. Jordon offered to review past newsletters and offer his assistance.

**Technology** — We discussed tweaking the website to make it more user friendly and effective as a tool to communicate with members. The responsibility requires a Board member with the skillset and time commitment required to keep the site current. Increasing the number of Board seats from 7 to 9 is an option. The BYLAWS (Article 7, Section 1) require a Board of 3-9 members. Our Board currently consists of 7 members.

**Miscellaneous Items**— In considering the composition of the Board it was noted that Katie has been absent from 3

consecutive meetings. The BYLAWS, (Article 9, Section 1(f)) allow, but do not require, the Board to declare her position vacant and to appoint a replacement. Jennifer is going to contact Katie to see if it is her intention to continue on the Board.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next Board meeting is currently scheduled for ~~June 12~~, though an alternative date is under consideration due to board members availability.

July 12 - 6:30-8:00 P.m.

June Meeting was Canceled

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.  
Submitted by Jim Porter

HOA e-address: [middletonestatesboard@gmail.com](mailto:middletonestatesboard@gmail.com)  
Treasurer's e-address: [mecatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mecatreasurer@gmail.com)  
Mailing address: Box 248, Carlisle, PA 17013  
Website: [middletonestateshoa.com](http://middletonestateshoa.com)