

Oakton Mill Estates HOA

BOARD QUARTERLY MEETING – APRIL 26, 2023, 7 pm Oakton Library—In person & Zoom

In attendance: In person—Andrea Woodhouse, Iman Elbakry, Rebecca Greene, Ed Hanlon, Chris Lanks, Nick, David Buss, Lucas Black, Via Zoom—Rob Halbach

Treasurer’s Report (Rob via Zoom):

- Summary of HOA finances: 72 of 82 homeowners paid their dues this year. No fines until 30 days past due. Rob will reach out to anyone who has not paid.
- No major expenses, the majority of expenses for the year are landscaping-related.
- Savings account is \$39,000 and there is \$13,000 in the HOA checking account because of dues coming in.
- Lucas asked whether a CD is a possibility, going to a local bank for a CD, or money market guarantee for 4%. Checking account is Spark Capital One business account currently. Rob will check with Bob Doyle about this.

New Business:

- One new agenda items added to the list: the Melanie Court stop sign is completely overgrown, needs to be trimmed by the landscaping company. The monument area will be dealt with by landscaper, and we can also ask the landscaper to go to Melanie Court. Contract has not yet come in the mail for landscaping, but will ask landscaper to trim Melanie Court bushes by the stop sign.
- Board vote yes for Rebecca Greene for HOA Secretary, and Ed Hanlon as Backup Secretary.
- Update on insurance: Regarding the issue that the attorney raised, we need to check insurance policies. HOA has two insurance policies, a directors and officers policy and a commercial general liability policy. For the directors and officers policy, Sara the lawyer wants a full copy, there’s a 60 page statement that Ed will get from insurance company; Sara needs a copy of it. Sara will look for certain clauses and will make sure coverage goes to non-monetary claims, coverage for all committee members and volunteers. Rob will look through the documents for the full copy as well. For the commercial general liability policy, we did have the full 60 pages. Sara said it looked good but there is no fidelity or crime coverage in it. She gave us a formula to figure out how much coverage we need, and Rob calculated \$42,000. All were in agreement to get the fidelity and crime coverage.
- Facebook group—the question has come up as to whether the neighborhood wants to have a Facebook page. All were in agreement to have a Facebook group. Rebecca Chanin noted she is willing to be the Facebook coordinator; all Board members present agreed that Rebecca should be the coordinator, with Jessica Liu as Rebecca’s backup if Jessica is willing to do so. The next question is do we want guidelines for rules of behavior on the Facebook page. Christine thought there wasn’t a need for guidelines on behavior since we would only open the page to HOA members. Rebecca Chanin provided proposed guidelines. The March 15 email shows those guidelines. Rebecca suggested we open a private group instead of a public page. Ed thought Rebecca’s guidelines were reasonable:

Kindness first, group membership requirements, everyone on the page needs to be an owner. Iman said she likes the idea of a private group to improve communication and ask for recommendations.

- Homeowner's Directory: The Board sends a big thank you to Judy and Christine for creating the Homeowners Directory. The Board agreed to provide a gift for Judy and Christine as a token of appreciation for doing the directory. The Board agreed to provide a \$20 gift card to Dunkin Donuts. Ed will buy and give the two \$20 cards to Dunkin Donuts to Judy and Christine, and would give the receipt to Rob.
- The Board agreed that safety notifications, when needed, would be sent out via broad email safety notifications when needed. Ed will inform the neighborhood and send an email blast to everyone, and will also put it on the Facebook page.
- Quarterly newsletter—Ed has been getting messages from a few people asking if we have notices about dog plastic bags on the side of the curb and well as noise issues. These issues could go in the newsletter. We would need a newsletter coordinator. The Board noted that if we do the Facebook group we may not need a newsletter, and we could also have an email newsletter/ email blast instead of a paper newsletter. The Board agreed to set a goal that every 6 months we try to send an email newsletter blast to the HOA, with one newsletter after the annual meeting and then one mid-year update. The Board agreed that a twice a year update would be enough for the email newsletter, if people have complaints they can be encouraged to write them up or take steps to be proactive, they can respond to the email.
- Status of shed and garage project
 - Chris, David and Ed are the team on the garage/shed/Governing Document Amendments' project.
 - Since we were having difficulty receiving feedback in a timely manner from Bill the previous HOA attorney Board members agreed we should move forward hiring with the new attorney, Sara Ross. The day Chris, David and Ed met with her they gave her a retainer check.
 - Sara reviewed some of the documents and some of the comments that Bill had given us. She agreed with Bill's approach to have a consent form and the 3 questions—standalone, shed, garage next to it or garage behind it. Sara said no need for a notary signature on consent forms. She also said electronic voting was fine. Sara agreed our HOA can email and regular mail the documents, and that we don't have to do certified mail. Sara agreed lot owners can regular mail, hand in or scan in their signed ballots/consent forms. Sara agreed that after receipt of all the ballots, the Board must keep track of every single lot, and tally each of the questions and the consent questions. Sara is also allowing us to ask lot owners to consent or not consent with a particular amendment rather than taking an 'all amendment or nothing' approach.
 - Sara said that there's not as much of a hurdle for doing a Zoom type meeting for a Special Meeting, whereas the previous attorney Bill said there were certain hurdles that had to be met. Sara agreed we don't have to do a separate meeting room to hold a Zoom meeting. Sara said the Board must do a 'board resolution' for an electronic meeting resolution if a zoom meeting was planned. Sara forwarded a base resolution form that our HOA can use; the Board agreed to

tackle this hurdle before we set up the Special Meeting. Ed agreed to update the draft resolution and send to the Board for its adoption.

- Iman asked what is the Special Meeting for, the Special Meeting is the day we have lined up for all the owners to vote. We're allowing people the option to send in their vote ahead of time but it must be received before the Special Meeting. At the Special Meeting, we will vote in Nick and David onto the board, and then the second item is to do the shed and garage vote. To do a Zoom meeting we would have to do an electronic resolution form, we'd have to have another place to set the zoom meeting up, we need to develop a resolution, plan to do Zoom.
- Sara thinks she should attend the Special Meeting in case legal questions come up, it would be reassuring for home owners to know that we've gone through these channels. Sara can also record documents with the county. The lawyer charges \$370/hour. She can record the final documents, if consent form is signed and there are amendments the consent form must be recorded. All are in agreement that Sara record the documents with the county if the amendments/votes are passed by the HOA.
- For the consent form, we need to add the tax parcel ID and lot numbers. There is a chart that lists this. Sara said the chart looks good, Ed cross checked it with a chart the county provided. Sara said maybe it would be preferable not to include names, since some people don't want owners' names on the chart for privacy reasons. The Board agreed it was acceptable to not include owners' names on the chart for privacy reasons.
- Some lots are owned by multiple people. Ed asked Sara if it was okay with sending the ballot to one owner on the spreadsheet, because sometimes there are different addresses for co-owners. The goal is to get one vote for each HOA Lot. Since there needs to be a coordination on that to make sure there aren't different responses per lot owner, Ed asked Sara if it was ok to send the ballot to one owner and let them coordinate the other lot owners.
- Ed asked Sara if it was ok if a ballot was received with just one and not all Lot Owners listed in County Records as owners of the Lot.
- Ed asked Sara if the owner of two unbuildable lots receives one consent form, two consent forms or no consent forms.
- Ed asked Sara which address to mail to if county records provided an address outside of the HOA for a lot owner.
- Andrea offered to make labels. Rob can print labels for the dues, they print on a sticker. Can Rob forward it to Ed and Andrea, Rob can print them and give them to Ed. We can stuff envelopes. Who will stuff envelopes—Chris, Iman and David will do this, invite board to house and stuff mailers. During discussion it was noted that the list of HOA Lot Owners that require U.S.P.S. regular mailing may be small since most HOA lot owners provided their email addresses in the directory for HOA use.
- The Board agreed to hold off sending the Special Meeting notice until mid-July, so that a Special Meeting can be held in mid-September. All agreed the goal would be July 15 so that makes September 12 the day of the meeting.
- Ed noted he would send a separate email to Board members and Sara on availability to attend the September 12 Special Meeting, or another mid-

September date. The Board agreed to hold the Special Meeting in the Oakton Library on a day the library was open to the public.

- Ed will send a reminder email to HOA lot owners a few weeks before, and post the reminder on the HOA Facebook Group. David will be the primary speaker at the Special Meeting.
- All Board members agreed it would be a good idea if the Board has a second ‘tallyier’ of the votes. Iman and Chris agreed to help tally the votes.
- A question arose re: collecting ballots--how do we know that the person collecting ballots isn’t signing them themselves. To stop fraud after the meeting is over Ed will develop and make available on our HOA website an Excel chart noting all HOA lots and addresses that we emailed/mailed ballots to, and noting which HOA lots and addresses a signed, valid ballot response/vote was received and tallied. During discussion it was noted the Board would do the best we can with this and have to trust that people will do the right thing. The Board will keep tabs on who voted and who didn’t, and the ‘tally chart’ would note which lots voted. An additional option was discussed and agreed upon that the Board would also send a separate email to just those lots who voted, noting their lot was tallied as submitting a valid vote.
- Ed asked whether the Board should ask the HOA social committee to buy/bring refreshments/food to the Special Meeting. The Board agreed no food was necessary at the Special Meeting.
- Regarding the topic ‘What the Board would like to accomplish during 2023’, the Board agreed to hold off identifying additional priority items to focus on as priority topics to work on until the shed/garage/Governing Document Amendments project, Special Meeting, and voting tally work was completed. A few topics were briefly discussed as possible additional projects for 2023, with no resolution to act on these additional topics:
 - Iman asked about a tree policy—what are the goals, no trees falling on homes, a summary of responsibilities.
 - Iman brought up a trash-related issue, that trash overflows now that trash only comes once a week, trash flies into other people’s lots. The board discussed an option to negotiate with waste haulers for better service and price.
- Ed mentioned noise issues, with pool parties and outdoor gatherings. Melanie court is having noise concerns, one house is having outdoor parties with an outdoor boom box, one house has barking dog. The county has regulations, any policy should account for regulations. One approach is to send a broad notice to everyone, nicely worded, an email that summer is coming up, and it is important to respect neighbors’ enjoyment of peace and quiet, and that Fairfax County has a maximum decibel and noise time. Ed agreed to send such a notice out to HOA lot owners.
- Ed agreed to send the Board the website address, user name, password, and description summary of the “HOA Leader” homeowners association website that Bob Doyle signed us up for several years ago for a \$100/year subscription fee. Ed noted he would ask Board members how interested we are in in this site as Board members by checking our usage with each other between now and our next Board meeting scheduled for 7/25/2023. Ed said that if we find at our 7/25/2023 board meeting that we’re really not using this, we can cancel then.

- Ed agreed to ask the HOA landscaper to trim bushes near the stop sign at Melanie Lane and Melanie Court that Christine mentioned were on HOA common property and have not been maintained. Andrea noted she knows the location.
- Next meeting: Board Meeting—July 25, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm
Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Greene, HOA Secretary