

Mill Village East Condominium Association

Annual Meeting (Held over Zoom)

November 5, 2020, 7:15 pm.

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:20 pm. A quorum of owners was present.

Owners in attendance: Christine Bergeron, 1A Evans Lane

Jenny Hebert, 1B Evans Lane  
Cheryl Bucala, 3A Evans Lane  
Amy Gazin-Schwartz 3B Evans Lane  
Elyssa Klement, 4B Evans Lane  
Patricia Taylor, 6B Evans Lane  
Richard Hillier, 5B Evans Lane  
Kathy Jaycox, 10B Evans Lane  
Mary McKenna, 24A Mill Village Road  
Sandy Perron, 26B Mill Village Road  
Deb Underhill 26A Mill Village Road

Also attending: Jeanne Harlow, Argus Properties, Manager.

Owners Absent: Doris Clemons, Steve Luzi, George and Joan Noyes, Jacqueline Hanlon, Joyce and Malcolm Cicchy, Elizabeth and Tom Peterson, Carol Lewis, George and Susan Trenholm, Tara Wilson.

**Minutes:** Minutes accepted as written.

**Financial report:** Jeanne explained the month to date and year to date financial tables. MTD= what was spent this month (for this report, the month of October); YTD = Actual expenses, January-October. YTD Budget = What was budgeted for each line item for the year. The comparison column gives an estimate of where we should be in comparison to the budget.

A question was asked about the "miscellaneous income" line. This represents the beginning balance when Argus Properties took over from the previous manager, plus a check from the insurance company for repairs to Unit 5A, which had a flood caused by a toilet overflowing. That repair work is nearly completed, and final payment will be made to Quality Restoration, the company doing the repairs, once the repairs are completed (More on insurance below).

Jeanne reported the state of the association is good. All fees are paid, landscaping projects have been completed. Two septic systems had problems, one with an alarm, and one with a clogged filter. The alarm problem was repaired, and the filter cleaned and is being monitored.

Richard reported he has been in periodic contact with Kevin Scarborough, of the Deerfield Highway Department, about work to ensure driveways on Mill Village Road, south of Evans Lane, will not have standing water and ice this winter. Mr. Scarborough has assured Richard the repairs will be made, but the department has had many projects this year. Richard will continue to contact him.

We have a contract to replace the deck at 1A Evans Lane, as previously agreed.

**Insurance:** Jeanne explained the nature of insurance, and why the association's insurance policy is paying to repair damage inside Unit 5A. Previously, homeowners insurance policies could be written to cover everything 'studs in', or only from interior of walls. This caused confusion, and the Insurance industry eliminated the 'studs in policy' replacing it with an all-in policy. Our insurance policies for individual units should now be HO6 policies, covering our personal property, and upgrades we have made in our units that change what was originally there, and liability for injuries inside our units. We should also have 'small building' endorsements, which cover the \$2500 deductible part of the Association's insurance.

There was some discussion about how much building coverage our homeowners insurance has. Jeanne suggested consulting our insurance agents; it is unlikely we need as much as \$50,000 - \$100,000 coverage, partly due to the changes the Insurance industry implemented.

In order to ensure that all owner's insurance policies have coverage for the \$2500 deductible, and to comply with the provisions of our condominium By-laws, all owners are asked to forward, or to have your agents forward, a copy of your homeowners policy to Jeanne Harlow at Argus Properties by December 15, 2020.

**Budget:** Jeanne went over the proposed budget for 2021.

Notes on Income: Monthly fees will remain the same.

Those owners who have not finished paying the roof loan assessment will continue to do so (the loan was paid off using the collateral account held by Mutual of Omaha, saving about \$800 in fees, but owners are still liable for their portions of the loan payment).

Garage rent remains the same.

Notes on expenses: Our Title V inspections were done in 2019, so routine inspections do not need to be done again until 2022.

Landscaping includes twice yearly mowing of the hill behind 24/26 Mill Village Road, as well as work on trees and shrubs. Snow removal is an estimate, and actual expenses vary each year depending on how much it snows.

Insurance renewed at the same rate. The line item of \$2500 for insurance deductible is there to demonstrate we can pay the deductible if something happens to the outside of a unit (tree falls on roof, etc.)

Legal and professional fees: money for filing of documents with the registry (Trustees election, any by-law revisions). Some money was added for legal expenses related to the proposed Dollar General store (see more discussion below).

\$14000 is budgeted to add to the reserve. Jeanne says the reserves seem to be in good shape for an association our size. She suggested we might want to contract for a Reserve study, where engineers, accountants etc. would look at the association, its buildings and facilities, and recommend a 10 year plan for capital expenses and how much reserves we would need. She thinks it would cost around \$3500

**Trustee election:** Kathy Jaycox and Sandy Perron stepped down as trustees. Kathy had been a trustee for a couple of year; Sandy for 21 years, the entire life of the association. Christine Bergeron and Deb Underhill volunteered to be nominated as Trustees; Richard Hillier, Cheryl Bucala, and Amy Gazin-Schwartz agreed to continue. All five were voted in as Trustees.

**Discussion/other issues.**

There was some discussion about changing policies with regard to maintaining and planting shrubs in front of units. Several owners were told when they moved in that shrubs were their responsibility. In recent years, several units have had shrubs replaced by the association. Sandy and Amy explained that years ago when we had to replace both the septic systems and the roofs in a relatively short period of time, routine maintenance was delayed. This resulted in a lot of maintenance needs, and put stress on the Association budget; as a result, we had to prioritize maintenance over landscaping. In the last few years, as we have caught up with and kept up with maintenance, it has been possible to devote some money to landscaping. As of now, we do an annual walk-around to see what maintenance is required, and designate landscaping projects/ front gardens for attention depending on how much they need work. We can do one or two a year. If owners cannot attend the walk-around they are encouraged to contact the Board or property manager to request that their bushes be trimmed, or replaced if necessary. We will include that information when notices are sent in the Spring about the annual walk-around.

Further discussion was held about the possibility the Town will approve the Dollar General. While we hope they will not do that, many are concerned about the impact of the development on our property values and other issues. As abutters, we have standing to appeal a Zoning Board decision approving the project, but that will be expensive. The Deerfield for Responsible Development group has hired experts and a lawyer, and will find out if that lawyer, Michael Aleo, would be able to represent us and DRD in any appeal, and how much it will cost. Jeanne advised us to consult a condo attorney about how to set up any payments for a lawyer – if payments were to come from Association reserves or other funds, it would probably require a vote by all owners.

Jeanne announced that Argos Property Management will be closing down at the end of the year, and they will no longer be able to manage our association. The trustees are contacting other management agencies to find an appropriate new manager.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Gazin-Schwartz