

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Type of Meeting: Monthly Meeting-Virtual

Meeting Facilitator: Chris Goode

Invitees: Board of Directors, Officers, & Committee Chairs

Attendees:

Christian Adams

Margot Dehn

Kelli Emerick

Chris Goode

Steve Markle

Paul Munch

Mary Ellen Rotondo

Marc-Anthony Signorino

Matthew Weber

Jeff Winbourne

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Treasury Report

The checking account stands at \$9,904.05. The CD stands at \$14,320.68. 197 homes have paid dues, which represents 70% of the neighborhood.

The checking account amount includes payment of the recent curb painting.

Membership

Discussion was had whether it would make sense to approach homes who did not join (86 homes).

Civic Affairs

At an expanded Mount Vernon Citizens Community Association meeting in October, Jeff gathered information on proposed safety improvements for the GW Parkway. The continued increase in vehicle volume and speed on the Parkway, recent accidents and increased nighttime drag racing were discussed, and have resulted in a range of proposed policy actions. These include introducing legislation in January to authorize the use of speed cameras, continuing to make safety improvements at the Belle Haven and Belle View intersections, improving signage and possibly decreasing to a single southbound lane from Old Town, and starting sweeping operations on GWMP, which have been suspended since COVID.

Jeff recommended that the community monitors all traffic plans in our area, as there will be impact to the neighborhood. Specifically, concerns surround our neighborhoods' ability to enter onto Ft. Hunt Road.

In addition, Jeff reported that the MVCCA has re-established its Public Safety Committee, in partnership with the police department. Activities being undertaken include a license plate reader program and the ticketing of illegally parked trucks on Richmond Highway.

Security

Scott worked with FFX county on the car break ins a few weeks ago. He has requested patrols for the neighborhood.

Discussion was held about whether to establish/reestablish a neighborhood watch, aka what Marlan Forest is doing. Chris will learn more from their neighborhood board and report back.

A recommendation was made that we investigate putting up signs notifying others of cameras in use/neighborhood watch signs at the entrances.

Communications

No update at this time.

Public Works

Villamay's Strategic Underground Program on life support and probably will be canceled. The Program Manager for Dominion's subcontractor notified Public Works on November 5 that, "As we began this project in October of 2023 and have kept consistent contact with customers by sending reminder communications, and two requests for necessary transformer location easement signatures, we are still lacking the necessary easements to move forward. As there has been more than a year in this commitment with no easement progress, we will be canceling the project." Currently, there are 64 residents eligible for the program and 11 residents without support for a ground transformer. The easement surveys began during February. Without the VCA Board's intervention, Villamay's program will be canceled.

The Board decided to take the issue to Stork's or Surovell's office to help get Dominion's assistance to push this forward. Paul will lead the efforts in this area.

No Emergency Actions During October through Early November.

Community Parks

Since the last Board meeting, 59.3 hours have been expended in the park bringing total hours logged to 9,943.8 since May of 2000.

On October 21 the FCPA Contractor IPC was in the park treating bamboo regrowth and non-native wisteria and other invasive plants with herbicide. Subsequent inspection shows that it was an effective application.

Also, in October there were 21 native trees and shrubs planted, bringing the total to 367. There were 13 additional trees rescued from English ivy, porcelain berry, oriental bittersweet and Japanese honeysuckle vines, bringing the total to 430 trees "rescued" within the park. Near term efforts to continue to rescue (cut ivy off of trees and leave an ivy free ring around trees - a window or donut). These additions were logged to the Plant NOVA Trees/Rescue Trees website.

Two unauthorized trail cameras were discovered in the park off trail adjacent to the creek (kids playing found one, and Steve found the other). With FCPA approval, Steve removed one; other removed by persons unknown. FCPA reported that they may have been installed by a bow hunter in anticipation of being able to perform a deer herd cull hunt in the park, but FCPA confirmed that Gil

McCutcheon does not qualify under that program since it is too small with houses too close to park. FCPA has installed trail cams to monitor neighbor dumping (mostly leaves and yard waste) into the park in efforts to deter "encroachment." Those found dumping in the park can be cited by Fairfax County Police, fined up to \$2,500 and receive a jail term of up to a year.

Since May, nine 5-7 hour watering sessions have been conducted using hoses provided by FPCA and water provided by Newman Family and the Heinzman/Bodanyi Family. Most plantings seem to be doing well, even during the intense drought conditions present. (Not reported at the meeting, but Steve is working with FCPA to obtain a water source within the park using residual funds from the Swing Set Project (~\$6K). More information to follow as this effort matures.)

Social Affairs

The Halloween event was successful, was well attended, and included many new neighbors.

Upcoming activities include Holiday Caroling and the home decorating contest in December.

Restrictive Covenants

A discussion was had regarding solar panels, which are technically a structural change, although VA statutes do not allow covenants to prohibit installation of solar panels.

That said, since the addition of solar panels is a structural change, homeowners need to follow the covenants process. When a homeowner first approached the Board to install panels in 2020, a special committee was created and established key conditions for approval:

- The solar panels are flush with the roof and not mounted on any structure that interferes with the panels being flush with the roof; and,
- The solar panels are of a design and color that is consistent with and to an extent blends in with the existing colors of the roof; and
- The solar panels are in working order and do not evidence any visible decay or deterioration associated with a degradation of functionality; and,
- The solar panels will in fact be in use and functioning for the purposes for which they were designed; and,
- The solar panels constitute a reasonable size and the character of the roof remains largely preserved as a roof, and not a solar collection structure.

Kelly asked for an overview of the process homeowners follow with respect to the covenants. Individuals submit plans either prior to construction, or when construction seems to be underway.

Marc-Anthony recommended that we send a reminder to all neighbors, and asked for clarification for what an HOA is vs. a Community Association. Christian explained that we have a horizontal property restriction which runs with the land, which means it cannot go away, and is enforceable in circuit court.

We share information on covenants with realtors, in our association handbook, in welcome letters, and in occasional newsletters. We need to include this reminder in an upcoming newsletter.

We also need to clarify in the letter to realtors that this is a “horizontal property restriction” which needs to be disclosed by a realtor. Margot will obtain a copy of the realtor letter, and Mary Ellen will undertake distribution of these letters to realtors.

Covenants do not cover house colors, driveways, windows, but do apply if there are structural changes.

Other

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.