

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, October 1, 2024

Type of Meeting: Virtual Monthly Meeting

Meeting Facilitator: Margot Dehn

Invitees: Board of Directors, Officers, & Committee Chairs

Attendees:

Margot Dehn

Kelli Emerick

Jenn Nance

Paul Munch

Mary Ellen Rotondo

Joan Shannon

Marc-Anthony Signorino

Matthew Weber

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Treasury Report

The checking account stands at \$15,072.91. The CD stands at \$14,320.68.

Paid membership is 68% (192 of 283 households). This is attributed to the communications (fliers, emails, curb painting notices, etc.) and all who contributed to get us to this point.

The CD at Truist matured on September 6, 2024. YTD interest paid was \$592.68. The CD was rolled-over into another 6-month period at Truist with a 4.06% APY. It may be possible to get as high as 5.10% APY at Barclays, but since we have only 30 days from 9/6/24 to make a decision, the Treasurer needs approval to make that change if the Barclays rate is, in fact, higher than the Truist rate - unless the board would prefer to keep all accounts at Truist regardless of rate. If no change is approved or made prior to the end of the 30 days, the CD will stay as-is for another 6-months. Matt will research this further, including assessing any potential charges/impacts by moving the CD, and if he believes a move is beneficial, he will bring this for an email vote by the board this week.

It was discussed the need to vote on approving the FY 24-25 budget no later than the October Board meeting, and a decision was made to do so at that meeting. Matt shared the updated budget with the board via email and answered questions that were asked. The majority of the board voted to approve the budget. After that approval some additional helpful suggestions were made by the board and implemented by the Treasurer. The file was re-shared via email. These changes helped explain the state of the finances better without making any changes to the in-flow or out-flow of funding.

Mary Ellen asked if the Board should maintain a certain minimum of cash on hand to help with emergencies. A motion was made to maintain a baseline threshold of \$5,000, and was unanimously approved.

Membership

Mary Ellen reiterated the news of achieving 68% membership for the VCA. She shared that all of the communications had really helped to show the value of being a part of the community.

She asked if we should explore setting a standard “renewal” cycle for membership. Ideas floated included pro-rating, timing communications, etc. The discussion was tabled and Margot offered to take the lead to develop an annual calendar to include not only membership drives, but communications, events, etc. Kelli Emerick, Mary Ellen Rotondo, Joan Shannon and Matt Weber will be a part of developing this calendar, which will be shared and discussed at the next meeting.

Mary Ellen also shared that we have at least six new neighbors who have come to the neighborhood. Joan Shannon is handling the welcomes for each of these households.

Marc-Anthony suggested that perhaps we could consider an “automatic” renewal option for individuals who pay membership by credit card. Margot volunteered to pass this idea along to Lisa for review.

Civic Affairs

No update at this time.

Communications

The dues increase and curb painting flier was distributed to all neighbors in September, with all thanks to Mary Ellen and our Block Captains.

Public Works

- 16 of Villamay's 25 stop signs were either repaired or replaced over the last two months. All requests are completed. In addition, thanks to Steve Markle's efforts, a new stop sign was placed on Belle Vista Drive at Burtonwood Dr. (There is an interesting story behind this “new” stop sign.)
- Dominion's Strategic Underground Program within the Villamay Community appears to be a permanent hold. Dominion's representative contends the program is not technically feasible in five areas unless Dominion receives an easement to place a transformer and/or a pedestal within each of these areas. Unfortunately, it is unclear if all these homeowners have been contacted and were unwilling to grant an easement. Dominion's rep says some homeowners would not respond to Dominion's multiple requests. On the other hand, at least two homeowners told me that they were willing to sign an easement, but Dominion's representative did not return to get the signature. Villamay's project will probably not budge out the hold status until Villamay can verify the easement status within each of the five areas of interest. This will decide whether each area will/will not be included in the program. In the meantime, Dominion's representative continues to answer phone calls, but he has moved on to other areas. This issue was on the agenda during the July and August meetings.

Paul recommended that we appoint a Villamay Board member to determine if we should do anything further to assist in the efforts for the project. Margot volunteered to assist with these efforts.

Security

No update at this time.

Community Parks

We had great happenings in the Park on Saturday, September 28. The weather was perfect for working in the woods! 18 people worked throughout the morning volunteering 53 hours and "rescued" 57 trees from invasive English Ivy and Porcelain Berry. By cutting back the ivy from their bases we give trees a bit more room to breathe, and help them better survive the craziness of our evolving climate. To date that brings our total to 417 trees that we have helped in this way. We track this data and update the Plant NOVA program on both tree rescues and the number of native trees and shrubs we plant in the park. All the trail water bars were also cleared out by our specialist with a hoe and a mission, so the trails should be in good shape.

In other news, last Tuesday a small native wildflower garden was planted with 36 native plants provided by the County near the old utility pole (soon to be cut off at 20 ft I am told) adjacent to the Playground. They join the other 300ish plants we have put in this area over the last 2-years. We will continue to foster native plants throughout the Bamboo removal area and hopefully encourage honey bees, butterflies, bats and birds to make our park their home or at least visit. I did see my first Monarch Butterfly in the Park recently as it stopped in to sample the flower on one of the Swamp Milkweeds we planted last fall.

The County contractor will be in the park later this fall to treat the clumps of Bamboo that have resprouted.

For the past year, Steve has been communicating with the Virginia Bluebird Society, and yesterday installed 6 Bluebird Nesting Boxes that they provided in and around the field area and Lamond House grounds. Now an official Bluebird Trail administered by the Virginia Bluebird Society, we will monitor it weekly during the nesting season and hopefully entice a nesting pair or two to take up residence. I have seen a number of Bluebirds in the park and hope the houses will increase their visibility for all. The houses all face east to help keep the rain out, since most of our weather comes from the west.

Finally, we took down and refurbished the three bat-houses installed in 2015 and relocated them to what we hope will be more suitable locations that our Little Brown Bats will find interesting. If ever in the park just after sun down you should see bats flying about, we have more than a couple that call the park home.

Thank you again to the 18 volunteers from Saturday, and please keep on the lookout for more opportunities to join in and help "Take Back Our Forests."

There is approximately \$6K left from swing set projects, and efforts are underway to evaluate the feasibility of installing a drinking fountain with a dog bowl feature.

Restrictive Covenants

No update at this time, however we discussed gathering and disseminating the guidance on solar panels to the BOD.

It was also discussed that we might want to review the covenants in general to determine where updates might be needed, and when/how we could enact these.

Social Affairs

Halloween festivities will be held in Gatewood Court, and Joan will contact the county in advance to have the dumpster removed/placed out of the street.

Other

Chris shared via Margot that we were having difficulty connecting with the contractor who was to do the curb painting. Chris is looking for suggestions of other contractors, and all are encouraged to send recommendations to him.

One suggestion was for him to review Angi.com to find possibilities.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Items for discussion/approval at November meeting

- 1) Fiscal Year Calendar Review (membership cycles, comms, etc.); (Margot)
- 2) Review of Solar Panels Covenants Guidance and Next Steps (Christian)