

Minutes of the Walnut Grove Homes Association November 2019 Board Meeting  
11/13/19, 6:30 p.m.  
Start Company Realtors, 702 N High Point Rd, Madison, WI 53717

**Attendees:** Katherine Bidwell, Susan Ames, Kathy McComb, Hayden McCann, Liz Fenster, Pam Conrad, Elizabeth Albano, Doug Hyant, Molly Hyant, Davey Phillips, Birgitta Larson-Gamez.

Meeting called to order at 6:34pm by K. Bidwell.

**October Meeting Minutes:**

- October meeting minutes taken by B. Larson-Gamez distributed.
- D. Phillips moves to approval meeting minutes. M. Hyant seconds motion. Minutes approved unanimously by all present.

**Treasury Report:**

- Presented budget year to date and budget for next year.
- Presenting at January member meeting budget vs. actual for 2019.
- One observation- water and sewer costs went up a lot. Budgeted \$3,500 for 2019 and went up almost \$1,500.
- A lot of expense comes from storm drains. We pay for the circles and greenways, not the streets.
- P. Conrad will follow-up to find out more about circles before looking into cost accuracy.
- L. Fenster received enough income from ads to cover the cost of the newsletters and directories.
- Electrical was a surprise cost. Did pay an electric bill that P. Conrad followed up on about a damaged box.
- In bylaws says we are supposed to charge fees for taking out leins on houses who have not paid fees yet. We have been doing this.
- Very low balance in bank, \$2,000.
- Balance is lowest it's ever been. Want to raise upper level due caps, which need 50% approval for. Have only done maintenance on Greenways, need to eventually be repaired.
- Show what expenses would be in 5 years, 10 years etc. How much utilities have increased. Last time dues were raised was 2005, now doing it 15 years later. Need to look at what 15-20 year cap should be.
- Outline cost is projected to be x based on sewer, lighting, greenways repair, so need to adjust cap to yz.

**Greenways**

- Biggest expense will be replacing the greenway paths in the next 10-15 years. Pathways will be about 50 years old. D. Phillips approximating \$250,000 in the expense to replacement for all of them. Maybe can be done in phases or maybe more cost effective to do all at once.

- All Greenways except half of greenway D were sealed this year, but will need to be redone. Our paths will need to be taken out and redone. Will check with University Ridge about cost of redoing their pathways recently.
- Other big expense will be replacing lamp posts. Every year have to be changed up because damaged by kids. Lamps themselves need to be changed.
- Have mature woods on greenways, have to be managed or removed. Want to replace those with other things. Try to remove the invasives and replace them with native plants. That's another expense that we didn't have at the beginning because didn't have large trees. Mature trees are what pulls into area.
- If we take the original dues as \$40 and increase based on cost of living, right now should be about \$200. We don't need \$200 right away, but eventually will, so would need the ability to raise up to that point.

*Question:*

When we went through dues cap raises in 2004/2005, how much resistance was there back then? How hard was it?

- It was a lot of work. You have to account for young families coming into the community and predicting going to have some resistance from more established members. But neighborhood is changing over. Will show dues of other surrounding areas.
- D. Phillips idea to have a legacy fund to take care of expenses in the future. need to have legacy fund the take care of expenses in the future.
- Show what we are going to need in the next 15 years and map out what dues need to be to get us there to cover expenses.
- L. Fenster- based on this years actualized cost vs budget, we would be at \$130 per person. If we change the cap, we need the bylaws redone. Needs to be revamped.

*Question:*

P. Conrad asked, can anyone do this pro-bono from an attorney perspective?

- - Maybe a lawyer in the Walnut Grove community that is willing to help us.
- L. Fenster idea- UW business division with free consulting offered.
- L. Fenster pointed out right now condos pay less dues, but nothing in writing condos should pay less than houses.
- Biggest jump is \$75 to \$130. Also setting expectations to potential process.
- Set up legacy fund- cannot be allotted and used for something else. Used for the Greenways in 10+ years. Also idea to be able to donate to the legacy funds to keep the area nice.
- Need to ask a lawyer how legacy fund would work. We are basically a non-profit, but we don't have tax ID number.
- D. Hyant offered to draft communication around it.
- Need to look out to 2025 and what that fee would be so don't have to raise the dues cap again.

- Board will pitch the dues increase as a whole at the annual meeting.
- Have petition forms ready at the annual meeting.
- Present 3 different options and one recommendation.
- Based on actualized spending, came to \$130 fee for this year without anything on the budget. Short this year about 2,000.
- Suggest first year have \$130 for fee and then increase from there. Would need to put in target/plan of how much raising each year and what should be in 10 years to put in the bylaws.

*To Do:*

- Work on finding attorney in neighborhood. D. Hyant offered to speak to lawyer.
- Question for lawyer is can we have people digitally sign?

*Legacy Fund Subcommittee:*

- Have a smaller focus group to describe how the fund would work at the annual meeting.
- Subcommittee: Doug, Molly, Liz, and Birgitta

**Social**

- Prior social budget was \$3,000 but was cut in recent years to \$1,000.
- Proposing increase budget per household by \$8 or \$2500.
- Social is how we help people connect in our areas.
- Vote as board to raise budget for social?
- Develop a plan if we raised the social budget to \$2500 (\$8 from dues goes to social), where would the dues go.
- If we do a greenway crawl and doing 5 events a year, we should have a plan for the breakdown of cost.
- Look into other ways to get income- ex. Ads in our newsletters, garden tour.
- Idea to charge fee at some events or potluck where based on your last name you bring dessert, appetizer etc.

*Reminder:*

- Previous meeting Derek asked for room in budget for new signs for events (ex. Garage sale).

**Block Captains**

- Nothing to report.

**Communications**

- Sending email to block captains and will clearly say who needs the paper version. Need new block captain for Gammon.
- B. Larson Gamez said she can do Gammon.

- Mayor's neighborhood roundtable attended by D. Hyant. We are going to be updating website with newsletter. A little behind getting updated minutes on website.
- Posting new updates from city on website. K. Bidwell will send updates to D. Hyant
- Doug also posted flood warning information. Will continue to post interesting information.

K. Bidwell closed the meeting at 8:05pm

Next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at Stark Company Realtors.