

December 2021 Annual Owners Meeting Minutes

Date: December 6, 2021

Location: Virtual (held online via zoom)

I. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 6:10pm

Trustees Present:

Amy, Jared, Amelia

Owners present: Chris, Patricia, Beth, Tara and Lee, Janet, Felix, Andy, Morgan (on behalf of Kevin)

Present via proxy: Nancy (Jared) and Nathalie (Jared)

KPM members present: Donna and Gretchen

Introductions: New owners are introduced to each other. Welcome Tara, Lee and Morgan!

II. Review 7 acceptance of Annual Owners' Minutes

Motion to approve last years' minutes: approved by show of hands.

III. Property Manager's Report

a. YTD Financials

Donna explains the difference between operating account and reserves account to new members. Nb. no funds from other condos are commingled: they each have separate bank accounts. Each line in the budget links to a hard copy of a bill ; all trustees see the accounts. Donna explains that the association needs to have at least 10% of the budget going into the reserves on an annual basis. It is a fiduciary responsibility to collect funds for future projects.

Pat asks for the current balance in the reserve: Donna responds that in November it was \$37, 492 (but approx. \$25,000 is set aside for painting).

b. Proposed Budget and Vote / Discussion of Reserve Planning for Capital Improvement

Donna then explains that if there is 0% raise in condo fees, there is not enough money to put 10% into the reserve accounts. She would recommend at least 5% and also recommends 8%.

Donna also asks all owners fix dripping showers, faucets, etc. to make sure we aren't paying more for water as a condo association than we need to.

Insurance:

Amelia asks how the insurance rate going down next year should be balanced against the proposed condo fee raise. Donna notes that it is important to build the reserve back up in any case. This reserve has been impacted by the large projects we've caught up on recently: the basement, the roof and the exterior painting.

Janet asks when we will be eligible for lower-priced insurance; Donna responds October 4 2022. Donna explains to new owners that the association had two large claims in the past few years (including the fire). Because we were dropped by Quincy insurances after these claims, we were also dropped from the standard market. Hopefully we can re-enter the standard market next year, and the approx. \$24,000 annual fee would drop to an approx. \$13,000 fee. (Though we won't see the savings until October 2023). Later in the discussion, Felix returns to this point and asks if all owners have proven that they have owners' insurance since it is important to have on hand when the negotiation happens.

Comparison of our condo fees to others:

Janet raises the concern her fees seems more expensive than other condos in the area. Donna says that she knows, as a manager, that any condo association that has lower than \$300 fees tend to be in financial trouble. Most condo units in the area are \$300-500 per month, depending on size. Chris notes that he looked around at many properties since he did research when buying and found that 53 Clark has a very reasonable fee by comparison; this is why he chose to buy as an investment in this building.

Jared explains to new owners that many large projects that have been done in the past ten years and notes that going forward the building is in very good shape. We can now look to building reserves and maintaining the building.

Motion to raise Condo fees:

Amy makes a motion for a condo fee increase of 5%; Jared seconds.

Vote: Donna notes that there is a majority—5% condo fee raise passes.

Continued discussion to see if a further vote might be taken: Felix and Janet note that they would prefer a 3% fee raise. Pat notes that she would prefer an 8% raise in order to build the reserve after so many capital projects. Andy notes that there is significant inflation; prices are going up, and that 5% would barely cover this. Since there is not another motion, the 5% fee raise stands.

IV. Old Business

a. Association Insurance; as we already covered, we need one more year without a claim—
Donna emphasizes that everyone should remain alert to potential problems such as fire hazards.

b. Donna notes that Dryer Vent Cleaning (one such fire hazard) happened; it was expensive, but the number of birds' nests etc. meant that it was very important that it was done. The condo unit covered some of the cleaning this time since they were a fire hazard; work inside units is considered owner responsibility.

Going forward KPM will ask that everyone have dryer vents cleaned annually, and will send out a form to this effect. Amy asks that people get a contractor (eg Dustbusters) who specifically deal with vent cleaning rather than a general contractor.

c. Exterior Painting is scheduled for Spring.

d. Legal issues on table:

1. Paying for legal costs of amendment to make unit numbers match deed numbers.
--Tara explains that this was a big problem during her sale. Trustees agree that this should be addressed, but it seems best to pay for painting before taking this on.
2. Clarification of expenses between Phase 1 and 2. Donna summarizes the difference between the Phase 1 area of the building and Phase 2. We agree that it seems best to wait on this non-urgent question.

e. No Smoking Amendment:

A vote was made in 2016 to make the building a non-smoking building. The former manager did not file the claim with the town and the former secretary did not hand over the minutes; therefore we do not have the vote on file. Janet reminds everyone that at the previous meeting, the vote was to pass a ban on cigarette smoking, but there was not a vote to ban smoking marijuana. Board agrees.

Jared and Amy suggest that we should set aside another meeting to discuss this, since there are so many new owners.

Pat asks if a lawyer has already been paid to look into this non-smoking amendment. Donna notes that a lawyer was paid to look into where the condo stands re. the city of Northampton, and to draft the amendment, since it was previously voted on. Pat asks for more discussion about this, especially the amendment. Jared responds that since the community had thought that it was already approved, the trustees agreed to ask a lawyer to see where we stood re. the town and draft an amendment. Pat wonders whether this can be further discussed now.

Felix wonders whether we need another lawyer: since there are new owners, there may be new opinions. He notes that it would help with the insurance next year to have the non-smoking policy.

Andy notes that the document drawn up by the lawyer with large fines invites opposition and hostility, especially with regard to smells, and there are also questions about who can identify smells (which may require an expensive special contractor), and thinks that the enforcement of this rule would be problematic.

→ Action: Schedule a meeting to discuss this further.

V. Owner Concerns

Masks

Amy asks neighbors and visitors to wear a mask inside in common areas (it will not be enforced; just as a courtesy.)

Recycling and Trash

For new owners, Amy describes schedules for trash.

Recycling: every 2 weeks on Mondays.

Trash: every Thursday.

Donna asks that everyone breaks down their boxes.

Janet asks whether recycling should be picked up more often than trash; Tara agrees. Amy wonders about hygiene; says we should check prices. Currently we pay \$247 for both.

Beth says that people must break down boxes and that it must not be in bags—renters should be informed.

Janet notes that pick up every two weeks is not enough, because there is more recycling than there used to be. Pat wonders if sometimes the dumpster is blocked sometimes because of illegal parking, or whether some new people don't understand where not to park. Janet asks if we can have a sign ("required clearance for dumpster"), or if the recycling and trash can be switched. Stephanie wonders if there is a slightly larger recycling dumpster we could ask for.

Actions:

→ Send out a reminder notification about collapsing boards and no plastic bags

→ Check to see if there is a larger dumpster available (if not, we will return to the question of pick up)

→ Check with USA how much clearance they need

→ Install sign to say "No parking on Mondays and Thursdays: Required Clearance For Dumpster Needed"

VI. New Business

a. Parking

Pat explains discussions with non-owners about illegally parking in the lot.

Discussion about stickers/tags for cars—some owners ask for this; Donna asks for a show of hands; there is not a majority, since Amy notes that it's hard to see these in the snow; Tara supports the idea but notes that stickers do expire; tags are better; Jared notes that he is not in

favor of tags since they are difficult to manage and guests also use the lot. He notes that the only time it's a problem is during a snow emergency.

Beth asks for clarification: do all units have two spots? Andy notes that according to the deed, nobody has a parking place as part of their deed. Chris says his deed *does* have 2 non-designated spots on the deed. Janet says she also has a spot in her deed, but it's not designated.

Jared thinks unlisted cars should be towed during snow emergencies. Andy notes that towing creates bad blood if owners are towed.

Jared wonders if moving the camper may create more spaces; Andy is happy to move if necessary.

Donna notes parking spots could be expanded later when there is more funding available by paving the back of the lot—a future capital project?

→ Action: KPM will check list of vehicles and send list of vehicles to trustees who will help to keep a check during snow emergency. People not residing at 53 Clark Ave will be towed.

→ Question of creating further parking slots will be kept on table in the long term.

b. Gardening Committee

Discussion of forming a committee in order to form ideas for landscaping, make recommendations to the board on what could be done, and perhaps get cost estimates, so that when we have finished painting we will have a plan on hand and some price estimates. Implementation of plans will likely have to wait until after the painting, but those interested should contact Amy.

→ Action: Contact Amy to join the gardening committee.

VII. Election of Trustees

a. Amy, Amelia, Stephanie and Tara elected to Trustees.

The association thanks Jared for his extraordinary service to the board over many years. He will be missed.

Next meeting:

4/6/22 2pm on Zoom

10/5/22 (budget review) 2pm on zoom

12/5/22 (Annual Owner's Meeting): 6pm on zoom

Meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.