

MFMC BOARD MEETING

February 3, 2019, Troop 2 Station

Present: Mike Maricheh, Nita Kaufman, Roger McClurg, Phil C, Sue Giaccone

Meeting brought to order at 7 pm by Mike.

NEW/EXISTING BUSINESS:

1. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BALLOTS AND VOTING

- Michael thanked residents for attending the meeting and voting.
- Michael explained that Delaware recently approved voting by e-mail and he was hoping that this would increase the participation by making it easier for homeowners to vote. This year's ballot contained an email address for those who wished to vote by email. As of the meeting only 18 votes by e-mail had been received. Residents were able to vote until midnight of February 3.

2. REQUESTS TO JOIN THE MANSION FARM BOARD

- Michael asked the attendees if anyone would be interested in serving on the board. The board has room for several more members.
- Mike Neil who lives on Monticello Drive expressed an interest in joining the board.
- He gave his contact information to Nita Kaufman and was told he would be contacted once our next meeting date and place was established.

3. SUMMARY OF CONCERNS FROM MEETING IN SEPTEMBER

- Three main concerns were raised by Residents in last meeting in September: Geese, Renters, and Ponds.

4. POND HAWK TO INSTALL A SOLAR POWERED AERATION SYSTEM IN POND ON DYNASTY

- The board compared two companies and decided to go with Pond Hawk. They are a local company and hire local employees. Compared to the competing company, who installed the county maintained pond

aeration system on Honora, Pond Hawk had several advantages. Their cost was better, their warranty was longer (3 vs. 2 years) and the footprint of the mechanism is smaller and easier on the eye without exposed wiring, and much quieter than the competing system.

5. POND HAWK PRESENTATION

- Sandra Burton, owner of Pond Hawk gave a presentation on the history and functionality of their system.
- The company installed 1st version of their aerator in 2009.
- There is no exposed tubing and wires.
- The system survived Hurricane Harvey.
- The system is environmentally neutral, solar-powered with no electric power required.
- Without aeration, gas build up continues and muck build up continues, resulting in the need for dredging.
- Keeps down production of algae without the use of chemicals.
- System installed on bottom and bubbles emit from below without the need for a surface fountain. The diffusers are industry standard - are the same as those used in sewage treatment.
- Product is considered environmentally friendly by several companies, including Audubon.
- Pond Hawk got a patent and trademark in 2014 on their system.
- The system is wind resistant up to 120 miles per hour.
- Another plus – compared to the system used by the county pond – is less noise. It operates at 42 decibels.
- No retrieval costs for winter.
- It does not run 24 hours and is energy efficient.
- Nearly maintenance free. The cost for the first three years are included in the original price. Some maintenance required at our cost in the 4th year.
- Warranties: 3 years of full warranty. At year 4 for \$375 they will exchange pond equipment with either new or refurbished gear. 25 years on the Solar Panel. Full sun not required.
- Pond Hawk system eliminates fish kill and is a good long term investment vs. a short term fix.
- It will take about a year to improve the look of the pond.

- The company will install some educational signage behind post office boxes.
- The size at the top of the unit is 6 ½ ft. above ground.
- There will be some odor detected as the gases come to the surface.
- Birds will not be discouraged.
- Company has been in business since 2013. No intention of going anywhere. However, their equipment is serviceable by other companies.
- Dredging may need to occur at some point. The cost to dredge would be \$14,700 per pond. Currently our ponds are on the list for New Castle County to dredge the ponds within the development. The timing for this to happen appears to be not in the near future, due to back log. This system may delay or even eliminate the need for dredging.
- Mike gave the title of “Pond Monitor” to Tom Martone, who lives near the Dynasty pond and will be better able to observe the success of the new Pond Hawk aerator over time. He will report results to Mike directly of any changes he sees as the aerator begins to work.
- Michael may ask for a credit from the County to help offset the cost of the solar aeration equipment.

6. DISCUSSION OF GEESE CONTROL IN PONDS

- Board has contacted Solitude, who maintains the ponds currently, for a quote to install monofilament lines across the ponds as a deterrent to geese.
- One resident asked what the effect of the monofilament would have on other birds that visit the pond areas. The board could not provide information about how the monofilament would affect other birds in the area.
- Flight Control Plus is a product that can be used on lawns and areas around ponds. The effect is that causes stomach upset and discourages geese from the area.
- It needs to be reapplied after 2 or 3 cuts. So cost wise, it would cost about \$18,000 to 21,000 per season to apply throughout the common areas.
- Another option discussed was putting oil on the geese eggs to prevent them from hatching. A state permit is required.
- Some ponds have installed plastic swans to discourage geese. This is an option that can be looked into.

- All in all not much was immediately decided about curbing the geese population but we will continue to look into it. Many of the options suggested and explored can have the effect of chasing the geese away from the ponds and onto homeowners lawns, which is not an optimum outcome.

7. RENTER ISSUES

- One homeowner has complained there is a homeowner using their single family home as an Air BnBs.
- Unfortunately, neither the county code nor the Mansion Farm Bylaws has any restrictions regarding Air BnBs, and there are no general restrictions in our Bylaws against rentals in single family homes.
- Owners of the townhomes are not permitted to rent unless approved by the MPMC Board. This restriction is noted in the bylaws. Neighbors are one way of discovering homes being rented without permission. Other than that, being advised to send the annual maintenance dues invoice to an address outside the neighborhood is also an indication.
- One attendee at the meeting commented that it did not seem fair to allow renters in the single family homes but not in the town homes. In his mind, there is more of an issue of the single family homes being rented vs. the town homes.
- In order to try to deal with the townhouse rental problems, an item was included on the ballot to charge offending townhouse owners an extra \$200/month if in violation.
- At this point the only rentals allowed in the townhomes is a rent-to-purchase arrangement — but that can only be done for a six month period and must be accompanied with a lease. All other townhome rentals are expressly forbidden by our deed restrictions.

8. JUDGEMENTS AGAINST HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE DELINQUENT IN PAYING DUES

- There are some homeowners who chronically do not pay their dues.
- If the board receives a judgement from the Justice of the Peace Court for owing \$\$ to the community, the judgement will be filed with the Recorder of Deeds.
- The past-due homeowner will have 30 days to pay their judgement before the judgement money would be filed with the Recorder of Deeds.

- As noted by Treasurer, effort is made by Treasurer to work with homeowner to reach some sort of payment plan if needed.

9. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OLD MANSION FARM SIGN AT INTERSECTION OF MANSION FARM DRIVE AND R.C. PEOPLES BLVD?

- The brick bookends belongs to R.C. Peoples. We can take out the insert. Possibly we can put some plants there to camouflage the opening.
- The Mansion Farm sign located near the pond on Honora will get an uplift. The sign insert is going to be replaced by Signarama - the same company that produced our new sign on Mansion Farm Drive. The brick bookends will remain.
- The board will look into a new sign for Sunderland entrance to the Mansion Farm Development.
- Right of Way would need to be determined before anything else as we are not certain of who owns the land where the sign would need to be installed.

10. COMMENTS FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE EARLE JACQUES

- Delaware.gov/deldot is the name of a phone app. It is useful for checking live traffic and locations of snow plows.
- 4 way stop sign is in process for the intersection of Duke and Megan. There should be an update on installation within the next few weeks.
- The new development next to Mansion Farm will have no traffic signs for some time. Residents should be cautious going through the development.
- Woods Rd. is having drainage issues. Houses on that road were flooded. A drainage ditch is currently being installed to help with that problem. Deldot is currently addressing the issue.
- Woods Road and Buck Jersey Road will be repaved end to end in the spring.
- Porter Rd. is having a gas line installed to bring natural gas to several developments there.
- On April 4, 2020 a nuclear submarine will be named after the State of Delaware. This will be the first time in more than 100 years to receive this honor. Up to 4 free tickets are available for the event by going onto <https://www.usdelawarecommissioning.org>. Attendees will be bused

from the Chase Center to the port of Wilmington where it is to take place.

- One of the attendees at the February 3 meeting brought up a concern about a large hole in the vacant lot owned by R.C. Peoples. She is concerned a child could end up in trouble there. She was referred to Dave Carter, a county official for land use.

11. UPDATES ON SOLAR SPEED SIGNS AND SAND BARRELS

- One of our solar speed signs is dead. Roger McClurg has agreed to attempt to troubleshoot the problem. The signs were originally purchased for MF by DelDOT but now the neighborhood owns them. There is to be no maintenance assistance from the county on broken or damaged signs.
- Michael has cleaned the vandalized signs but too much cleaning was starting to remove some of the print as well.
- The board applied for sand barrels from the county. We now have a few of them at intersections. They came with coffee cans to be used as scoopers. Residents can assist with spreading the sand. No one is officially responsible for that. Unfortunately, some residents have been using the sand barrels as trash cans.

TREASURER REPORT:

1. The Treasurer is required in our Bylaws to report the dispersal of money.

Status of Payment of Dues from 2019:

389	Fully Paid
1	Partial Payment
23	Remain UNPAID!

- About 10 of the above unpaid are unpaid only for 2019. Therefore, Brendan believes they will be paid. The third notice gets people moving. Those notices went out late. The number of unpaid dues should go down from the current numbers.
- Snowplow budget was not expended in 2019 due to no snow.

- The budget amount for office expenses for 2019 did not cover the total amount spent. There was an additional newsletter sent out. The extra newsletter resulted in a larger expenditure to the budget for office expenses in 2019.
- Stump removal was a big expenditure from the landscaping budget costing us \$3,860.
- We own the parking pads in the townhomes and therefore are responsible for their upkeep.
- The operating costs for MFMC was under budget. The budget was \$60,989 with expenditures of 43,959. The unused money amounts to \$17,030.
- There are five main responsibilities of the MFMC.

1. Common area grass cutting
2. Insurance Liability
3. Playground Maintenance
4. Pond Maintenance
5. Fertilizing

- This year there is \$8,600 budgeted for the aerator for the pond on Dynasty.
- Each year the legal fund is replenished with any back dues that are received. This year \$4,994 in back dues were added to the legal fund.
- Dues collected in 2019 was \$58,400.
- Budget for 2020 is \$70,150.

FLOOR OPENED FOR QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

- Discussed the Pear trees on the main drag. They are not the property of Mansion Farm. The tree is an invasive species. They are not helpful to wildlife. If the group of trees interferes with traffic, Del Dot will take them down. If the trees are taken down or as they begin to die, the board will consider contributing to replacing them with Caravel Woods — even though they are not on our property and there is no legal requirement for us to maintain them. This would be done strictly as a goodwill gesture since they do line one of our access streets.
- The attendees applauded the effort of the board to improve the pond situation.
- Another applaud was given for having procured a new sign for our development that was paid for by Nicole Poore's office.

- One attendee mentioned the number of accidents near the roundabout inside the development there. Michael will discuss this issue with the State Police.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE SEPTEMBER 2020.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30.