

The Cottages at Forest Park Homeowners Association, Inc.

Annual Board of Directors' Meeting

February 1, 2023 2:00 PM, via Zoom

I. **Call to Order**

The annual meeting, via zoom, was called to order at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023, by Ron Blackwelder. Board members in attendance were: Dianne Bush, Larry Fink, Earl Smith and Janice Mirshab. Others in attendance were residents: Judy Blackwelder, Patrick Egan, Bill Eggleston, Libby Fink, Bob Charles, Bob Bush and Cyrus Mirshab. Also in attendance was Concierge/Manager, Meena Keuer.

II. **Approval of the Minutes**

Ron noted that there were three changes to the minutes from 10/19/22:

Under section I. Call to Order: change from annual meeting to **quarterly** meeting.

Under section VI. Unfinished Business: B. Tree Report –add in “the stump” to this sentence: They were not able to remove **the stump** in front of Unit #12...

Under section VI. Unfinished Business: C. Proposed Trees 2023, items 1 & 2: change name of Tom Tiekenbrock to **Tom Piekenbrock**. (2/2/23 - Meena called The Tree Farm to confirm the spelling.)

Dianne moved to accept the quarterly minutes with the discussed changes. Earl gave a second to the motion. It was unanimously approved to accept the minutes with the changes noted.

III. **President's Report**

A. The Moors bought #18 from Katie Keller, and Bob Charles bought #17 from the Moors. This was a private sale. Lois and Tom Weber, who are currently renting #18, were notified of the recent transaction.

IV. **Financial Report**

A. Meena gave the 4th quarter financial report, starting with the Profit and Loss Statement. Income was slightly higher than 2021 due to the increase in dues. Expenses were higher in several categories, such as gas, water, tax expense, insurance. We experienced a loss from Vanguard in the reserve funds. Total operating expenses were \$121,478.69. Gas and water expenses also increased significantly, and these increases had not been budgeted.

1. Pat asked why the trees, shrubs and lawn expenses were basically half of what they were in 2021. Ron explained that in 2021 The Cottages had planted additional trees.

2. Building Maintenance – Irrigation (special) expenses were due to replacing back flow valve.

B. Meena reported on the Balance Sheet. Currently the Vanguard account is down \$18,484.17 compared with 2021 due to the current downturn in the market. Capital Reserve – dues were increased in 2022, which accounted for the increase in the Money Market (MM) account.

C. Earl reported on Vanguard. He said the stock market was down 18-20%. Funds are mixed between bonds and stocks, and our overall loss was about 10%. Vanguard expects an increase of 3-7% this year. He said it is better to have the money in Vanguard rather than the MM. The reserve funds are for emergency purposes (ex. fire), rather than performing a special assessment when cash is needed. The reserve fund will cover items like asphalt repairs, cement grinding, sinking fund etc., and covers large items that aren't part of the day-to-day spending. Earl said that it is recommended for an HOA to have a deep reserve of about 1 year of income, and we are slightly above that. The reserve is in good shape, thanks to Tom!

Ron wanted to thank Earl for volunteering to learn about Vanguard and stepping up where Tom left off. We still miss Tom, but we are appreciative of Earl doing this.

D. Budget vs. Actual

Office equipment – expense was for a new computer.

RF Lawn Care – an extra 6 mows not budgeted for at \$470.00/mow.

Recycle & Trash – We had additional charges of \$600.00 for recycling left on the ground and trash going over the edge of the bin. Rates were due to increase in 2023, but WM agreed to keep us at the 2022 rates.

1. Janice had a question on the LOA assessment.
 - a) Is there a sunset date on the LOA or will it be on-going?
 - b) Do we get a report the board meetings?

Earl replied that the LOA is the whole 40-acre plot. The Cottages are 1 unit in the LOA. The LOA has a meeting once a year and the minutes and financials are posted online. Doug Tiefel is the president of the LOA. In the past, Doug T. has been representing The Cottages at Forest Park. Right now, we don't have a representative. Earl asked Doug if he could come to the next meeting. Doug will let Earl know when the next meeting will be held.

The Cottages owns the little street in back, "Cottage Lane". All the other streets are owned by the city. There is no money in the budget for plowing snow. Earl is interested to see where the money is being spent. 60% or more of the LOA budget is for "the park", the trees and lawn.

Janice asked if that fee will be there forever.

Earl replied yes because we are part of the LOA. Doug T. said it cannot be changed. The PUD was approved by the City of Lafayette. It would be a tremendous job to get it changed.

Janice said she knows that PUD's are changed from time to time. She is curious if there has been a discussion for an end date.

Earl is interested to see what comes of the board meeting in February. He has looked at the data posted online and will attend the LOA.

Meena commented that she has the 2021 minutes for the LOA, but not for 2022. She will share with anyone who is interested.

Ron thanked Earl for jumping in and finding out what the LOA was all about, and what is done with the money that we are assessed. Ron thinks Earl has done a fantastic job.

Pat asked what LOA stood for and Earl replied Lot Owners' Association. It is for the park – 40-acre PUD which extends from the restaurants and bank on the NW corner to the N down to the south, Trail Ridge Dr. to the east, including the enormous church on the NE corner, several office buildings, a few residential homes, mixed development. There are 3 churches in the development. There are 48 individual members/lots.

Janice asked how the fees are assessed?

Earl asked about that and is waiting to hear back from Doug T. on the formula for calculating dues.

Janice said that she is making an assumption, but if there are 3 churches in this area, they are usually exempt from paying. Earl said he didn't know about that, but he wants to find out the formula.

Earl thinks money is spent mostly on the little forest in the NW corner. We have 1 acre of grass and trees and the LOA has approximately 4-5 acres of lawn and trees – is that proportionally higher than what we spend at The Cottages.

Janice asked who maintains the lawns?

Earl said the LOA is managed by a property management company and Doug T. seems to be happy with them. Earl questioned what will happen to the trees and grass if they have to cut back as the cost of water increases? Will they lose their trees? They have been very careful with their trees over the years.

Janice asked about the Building General Repairs & Maintenance in 2022. Asked what the \$2800.00 was for; that was the proposed amount, not what was spent.

Meena replied the 2022 budget was \$2800, but we only spent \$152.88.

Ron said we will need a budget like that this year since we will have some grinding of concrete in several places where the soil has been raised. Last time it was done was 3 years ago.

Budget was to spend \$115,577.00; we actually spent \$121,461.00

Ron asked Earl about the Vanguard numbers. Earl replied that there are 2 funds:

1. Wellesley, which is mixed between stocks and bonds and is around \$102,000.00
2. 500 Index Fund, which is a smaller fund around \$37,000.00

According to the S&P500, both are up. Stock prices should increase 3-7%; right now, it's around 5%. It's better to have the money in here rather than the MM account.

V. **Caretaker's Report**

- A. Roc submitted his Caretaker's Report and it was included in the HOA Packet.
- B. Ron wanted to congratulate Roc on getting his report turned in. Roc was originally contracted for 8 hours/week. There were some fluctuations due to cleaning gutters, so some weeks have more hours. Ron said that we are thankful that Roc is here and doing the walk arounds. Ron said that Roc has done most of the gutters, but hasn't completed them all yet.

Janice said that she thinks Roc should initial each page of caretaker's report. Ron said he would ask him to do that.

VI. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Review and ratify 2023 Proposed Budget**

Meena discussed with bookkeeper line item by line item to try and get as close to accurate as we can. Ron said the bottom line is HOA dues are increasing by \$50.00/month, effective 1/1/2023.

Janice asked if the dues were going to increase \$50.00 every year. Ron replied that he hopes not and they shouldn't.

Janice asked about already having something in writing that said the dues would increase only \$5.00 - \$10.00/year. Ron replied when Tom B. first started looking at the reserves, they were very low. To get up to where we should be, Tom recommended to increase the reserve contribution \$10.00/month for every unit.. Thus \$10.00 of the \$50.00 is going into the reserves. \$50.00 is the highest increase we've ever had and most of the increase is due to insurance and a couple of other items.

Ron said that Tom figured this out 2 or 3 months ago when we first realized that it was to be an increase of \$50.00, increasing the overall dues to \$505.00. He went back to the time when Jack Von Eschen moved in and took his monthly HOA dues and projected what it should be now. Tom came up with \$501.00; so, we are \$4.00 over that, which basically says we are right at the rate of inflation.

Vote on the budget. The vote is for every unit represented. Earl moved to adopt the budget as proposed. Larry seconded the motion. No further discussion. Budget was passed unanimously.

Ron added that there was one additional item. When we have an increase in the HOA dues, we have an associated increase that goes into the account for Working Capital Funds, which are the reserve funds that are used for monthly expenses over the course of the year. So that means there will be \$100.00 (i.e. \$50 times two months) that each unit owes that goes into the Working Capital Fund and is held in the MM account, not Vanguard.

Meena said QuickBooks will automatically deduct the \$100.00, since it is already set up to deduct the HOA dues.

Meena said Connie will help set it up, transfer the money and correctly categorize in QB.

B. **Solar Powered attic vents**

Ron reported that Bill in unit #4 noticed that there was a leak in the protuberance through the roof. WestPro came out and realized that some of the caulking had come undone. In the process, they found that 13 of the vent fans on top of other units (there are 2 vent fans/unit) are not operating properly due to defective motors. WestPro has reordered the motors for the fans and can replace them, since they are still under warranty. They also offered another solution with fewer moving parts and one that shouldn't fail again, which is a centrifugal fan.

Pat asked if there was a less obtrusive option. Ron responded no, WestPro hasn't provided one yet. However, WestPro does have the motors in to replace the motors in the fans we do have. The fans we have are solar powered and have a thermostat on them. They kick on if the temperatures rise to 90 degrees. Ron will call WestPro back and see what the warranties are on the new motors they plan on putting in.

C. Property Maintenance

1. Landscape committee report – Linda submitted the report which was included in the HOA board meeting packet.

Ron mentioned that Linda has been the Landscaping Committee Chair for the past few years and she has committed to continue as the chair for this year.

Meena showed the landscape report and mentioned her conversation with Linda about Goose Haven. In years past, when the weather hasn't been so cold and the snow hasn't been on the ground as long, there was more work for Goose Haven to do on a weekly basis. Because this year has been so cold, we're not sure how much Goose Haven is able to do each week. Goose Haven has said that they bank the hours and use them in the summer. Meena would like to have a conversation with Goose Haven to see how they are keeping track of the hours. Ron replied that he spoke with Doug and he agreed with the weather as it has been, it is hard to keep up. Two things have been done:

a) Snow removal has been done, but a lot of snow had to be pushed off to the side. They were concerned that when it started to melt, it would become a problem. So Gonzalo spent some extra time moving snow around after it had been plowed.

b) Also, ice was left on the sidewalks and outside the garages of #9 and #10. Gonzalo and Ana spent a couple of hours there and removing ice that was sticking around a couple of other places as well.

Doug did say that he was keeping track of the hours and he would try and make sure that we possibly come out of winter with some extra hours for the summer.

D. Proposed Trees for 2023

Ron reported that Tom also sent out a list of trees that he was proposing. There will need to be additional discussion with Linda to see what we can and can't plant and what our budget will allow. There was talk about putting more trees into the area that was once a putting green and replacing a couple more that were cut down in various places. Possibly planting some in the back of Cottage Lane. Only 2 out of the original 9 that were planted there are remaining. Ron will ask the Landscape Committee to work on this. Hopefully we will have an update for the next meeting. We will need to get a proposal from Linda and see what the plan is going forward.

E. Follow-up Goose Haven

In the last HOA meeting, there was a question as to why we paid \$3000.00 more than was budgeted. It was for the removal and disposal of the trees. The money should have come out of the MM account, instead of operating expenses. This was corrected in QB and in our checking account.

F. Follow-up RF Lawn Care

In 2022, Roberto spent well over what we agreed to pay. Therefore, we are proposing to make a change of vendors. Earl has used Innovated Property Services for years at his home in Boulder. Earl said they will start in the last week of April and mow every 2 weeks, cutting the grass to 3". We have budgeted for 15 mows for 2023. Innovated was a little more than \$100 less than RF Lawn Care per mow. Additionally, they can also do other things, such as fertilizing, aeration and weeding.

The 2023 budget has \$5238.00 budgeted for regular lawn care without weed solution or gutter cleaning.

The signed contract includes 15 mows, bi-weekly; along with aeration and fertilization in the spring. Earl questioned this, saying that CSU Extension for Yard and Garden suggests doing this in the fall.

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/>

The board hasn't had time to sit down and discuss this yet, but the main point is we are reducing the cost. Earl mentioned that we may want to talk about what kind of fertilization they use per Linda's concerns. If we have Innovated spray for weeding, we will need to find out what solution they use. Linda is very concerned with the potential link between fertilization, weed control and Parkinson's. There is some evidence to suggest there is a connection.

Earl agreed that we do need to sit down with whomever are concerned and interested, to see how to move forward.

VII. **New Business**

- A. Tom Burnett – Ron said that by the number of times he's been mentioned in this meeting, it is clear we will miss Tom. He was a very involved and helpful person, especially bridging the gap between Banjo and Meena.
- B. Janice was appointed to fill Tom's place on the board until 2024.
- C. Vanguard – Tom and Doug T. have been the Vanguard representatives for the last 5 years. Earl has been very interested in learning more about Vanguard. Earl will be the main point person, giving the reports and updates. Ron has also offered to be a representative. A vote was held to confirm Ron and Earl are the new Vanguard representatives. They were voted in with unanimous approval.
- D. Innovated Property Services – vote to approve new lawn care service.
Pat brought up that in the past, we have contacted Gonzalo directly. Do we have a point of contact or way to contact Innovated? Earl replied that he does have the contact information for both Josh and Sue. The first year may need a little more communication with them as they learn the property.
Ron said that Earl offered to be the contact for The Cottages.
Again, this passed unanimously.
- E. HOA zoom meetings or in person
Janice and Pat agreed they like the convenience of zoom. The documents can be easily seen on the computer and it allows owners to join in, even if they are traveling.
Ron agreed to continue with zoom meetings and see if there is any more feedback during the April meeting.
- F. WM update
There have been numerous errors with WM picking up recycling since the end of 2022, due to several factors:
 - 1. New driver who didn't know where all the sheds are located.
 - 2. They were getting reports that they were unable to collect due to the weather.
 - 3. They are not local and cannot send a truck out unless it is on their regularly scheduled day.Meena has been calling WM, trying to get results. Meena also reviewed how we are charged extra from WM. Ron showed some photos of recycled water bottles in a plastic bag in the recycle bin.
Meena will send out an email with information on recycling and trash.
A WM supervisor will be out to The Cottages on Monday Feb. 13th to do a site survey.

When asked about using Western Disposal, Meena replied that they would cost about \$100 more per month. The City of Lafayette has a new program rolling out in Nov. 2023 to use Republic Services exclusively. It is currently unclear whether or not our HOA will be able to use the new program since they do not have a way to handle our steel dumpsters. Meena will follow up with more as information becomes available.

G. Other New Business;

Cyrus brought up the increasing break-ins in Louisville and Lafayette. He asked if there has ever been any thought to making the doors to the units more secure? Even though the doors are beautiful, they are single lock. Is there an option to get a heavier duty 2nd lock or maybe a security door that doesn't detract from the look of The Cottages? His concern also stems from the fact that #9 and #10 are not part of the main group of units. Ron said he hasn't looked into this before and doesn't know if it's possible to put in a 2nd deadbolt. Ron will pursue it and give an update in April. Cy also mentioned that there is a possibility to "beef up" the current lock.

Cyrus also brought up a program that is being offered free through State Farm. The Ting Monitor is free and monitors electrical activity. An app is downloaded to your phone and will alert you if there is unusual electrical activity. Janice and Pat were both interested in seeing if The Cottages can qualify as the exteriors are insured by State Farm. Meena will call our representative.

VIII. **Architectural Control Report**

Meena spoke with Henry Moore about how Jennifer twisted her ankle and broke her foot. As Jennifer exited the garage, there is a very small raised concrete area which she slipped on. Ron was aware of the location and said he is going to have someone come out and deal with that issue along with a couple of other areas on the sidewalk where the blocks are coming apart.

Janice mentioned that there is a raised area in front of the clubhouse, just past the ramp. A lady tripped on it last week; thankfully she didn't fall.

Pat asked when the concrete grinder comes out, would they also take a look at the sidewalk from the garage of #10 to the front door of #10. There is also a raised area there.

IX. **2023 BOD Meeting Schedule**

April 19, 2023	3:00 PM
July 19, 2023	3:00 PM
Oct. 19, 2023	3:00 PM

X. **Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion duly made by Earl and seconded by Janice, there was unanimous approval to adjourn the meeting at 3:30PM.

~~Respectfully submitted,~~

Ron Blackwelder 2/20/23
Ron Blackwelder – President Date

Meena M Keuer 2/20/23
Meena Keuer Date