

Minutes from 9.15.19 Annual Meeting

Big Country Acres

The meeting was convened at 6 p.m. Lot owners in attendance: Barton, Brown, Christiansen, Craft, Dierks, Gilley, Goforth-Olson, Groneck, Hanna, Harshaw, Ottinger, Pearia, Pineda, Rattini, Roe, Smith, Stern. One valid proxy was received from Miller. Additional proxies were presented by a resident, but since they were not handed directly to a trustee by the homeowner who signed the proxy they were not valid.

Quorum was reached.

1) APPROVAL OF 2018 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Tim Roe made a motion to approve the minutes from the 2018 annual meeting. Mike Hanna seconded it. The vote was 18 in favor, zero against. The minutes were approved.

2) TREASURER'S REPORT

Trustee Connie Smith gave the treasurer's report. The forecast for the remainder of 2019 and 2020 is a question mark due to the uncertainty of whether our trash rates will change due Waste Management selling our account to Meridian. She anticipates it will increase. Our electric bill with Ameren has increased every year. Rates are reset in May or June and there's an adjustment every November due to BCA being on budget billing. Snow and ice removal costs were up in 2019 due to the harsh winter. She based the 2020 projections on a similar winter forecast. Gary Pearia and Tim and Abby Roe will continue to provide mowing services in 2020 at their current rate.

The only change to the assessment will be the adjustment for inflation per the consumer price index. The water charge will increase from roughly \$27/quarter to \$40/quarter starting in the first quarter of 2020. The increase will cover the increased electric charges for operating the larger pump and to pay for any service calls with Flynn.

We are keeping an eye on road and culvert conditions to determine if a special assessment will be needed in 2020. Robin Barton of the road committee will address this further.

A financial audit was conducted on July 20, 2019 by Stephanie Pineda, Pat Hanna and Connie Smith. No anomalies were found.

3) ROAD COMMITTEE

Robin Barton of the road committee gave the report.

A) CULVERT PATCH

Thanks to all of the volunteers who assisted over two weekends to complete the concrete patch over the culvert near the Christiansen/Powell lots. It cost between \$300 and \$400 – a significant saving over the \$1500 quote we received.

B) CULVERT STATUS

The other culverts in the neighborhood are in very poor condition. They are all galvanized metal and they are in various stages of rusting out and collapsing. IC Services, the company that replaced the culvert by the Christiansen/Powell lots, evaluated all three culverts. We are waiting for final figures, but we do know that it will be a slightly lower price to repair all three at once, and that the quote for repairing just the worst of the three is \$9700. Once the road committee receives additional bids and compiles enough information to move forward, they'll call a special meeting either late in 2019 or early in 2020.

C) ROAD STATUS

The road maintenance plan for the past several years has been to fill the cracks annually to keep the road from getting worse. We recently asked Ford Asphalt – our contractor the past two years – to provide a bid for this year's road sealing. They informed us that our road is failing – that crack sealing will no longer help, and they won't take our money for it because what's needed at this point is a 2-inch overlay. When the road was put in 16 years ago, the contractor said the overlay should last 10 to 15 years. The road has reached the end of its life cycle.

The road committee will put together some options regarding the costs and financing of the overlay. Saint Charles County is no longer offering Neighborhood Improvement District funding for private roads, which enabled the first Big Country Acres residents to finance the original road over a 10- year period.

Tim Roe and Steve Smith spoke about the pros and cons of having St. Charles County take over our roads. We would be required to upgrade all roads, culverts and bridges to county standards of 20-foot widths. High Sierra meets the standard, but Madre Drive and Madre Court would have to be widened. Residents would have to pay for the improvements, but St. Charles County would lend us the money. If the county takes over the road, we would have to allow public access to the lake, because the 10 feet of right-of-way on each side of the road would encompass the entrance into the common ground. We could switch to private trash services per address. The county would provide snow plowing and ice services – which would take the costs for those services out of our annual budget, but our neighborhood would likely have low priority for how quickly our roads would be cleared.

Ed Harshaw asked if resident would vote whether to approve the county assuming responsibility for our roads. Robin Barton responded yes.

The road committee members – Robin Barton, Tim Roe, Bob Ottinger and Paul Stern – will continue working on this important issue and will call a special meeting when they have all the data ready to present to the neighborhood.

4) WATER SYSTEM UPDATE

Steve Smith provided an update.

The pipe bringing water up from the well to the tank failed in early summer. We received two bids – from Lincoln County Pump and from Flynn Drilling – and went with Flynn due to a better price, more complete bid with improved components and better service. The pump was upgraded from 5HP to 10HP, which fills the tank faster.

It appears we will need to replace the compressor soon. A check valve failed in early September. As a result, water pressure was low – around 30 PSI instead of 50 PSI. Then a fitting blew and a tube came off the compressor so it wasn't charging the tank. Steve replaced the fitting and he thinks we're ok for now.

Robin Barton said her water pressure at her house is the best she has ever had. The Christiansens and Fasnachts have low pressure. Brown said that when he has multiple spigots it is low; Pineda concurred. Harshaw is the first house on the system and has consistent water issues.

Our previous contractor, Lincoln County Pump, said that the variation among homes is likely due to differences in the intake pipe. Some homes probably have pipes with a ¾ inch outer diameter vs. inner diameter, which changes the available volume.

Harshaw replaced his ½ inch line with ¾ inch line and says it didn't make a difference.

Pineda suggested that everyone evaluate their check valve for iron.

Tonya Goforth-Olson asked how much the compressor might cost. Connie said that \$1000 has been allotted in the budget for it; Steve said he hasn't priced the unit yet.

Tim said that a drain from the tank house exists to the left of the dumpster. If anyone notices water is coming out of the rain, please notify the trustees or pump house committee.

Connie said that as of September 1st the remaining balance for the water system repair is \$3,600 out of the original \$11,270.00.

5) LAKE COMMITTEE

Travis Dierks gave the report.

In the spring, Bob Ottinger, Henry Miller and Travis attended a free pond management seminar offered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. It covered everything from aquatic plants to population management strategies. The committee has stocked 4375 of four-inch red ear sunfish, which are useful in controlling the yellow grubs we have in the lake. The grubs are harmless to people but an unwelcome addition to the lake.

The fishing regulations will remain as they are. The fish population seems healthy.

There have been a lot of complaints regarding non-residents/uninvited individuals fishing in our lake without permission. Paul Stern has seen a white pickup truck in the common area around 11 pm/midnight. Each lot owner was issued fishing tags last year. Please make sure any guests have the tag with them when fishing. There are also notices available that you can place on the windshield of unfamiliar vehicles in the common area. The notice informs the driver that we have noticed their presence on our private lake and that trespassing is not permitted.

Tonya Goforth-Olson asked Travis if he'll hold another fishing derby. Travis will check his calendar and respond with dates soon.

6) TRUSTEE ELECTION – President

Secretary Kris Rattini said that Travis was willing to serve another full term as president as asked for a motion. Tonya Goforth-Olson motioned for Travis Dierks to serve as president. Stephanie Pineda seconded the motion. A vote was taken: 18 in favor, zero against. Travis was approved for another term as president.

7) NEW BUSINESS

A) TRASH REMOVAL

Connie Smith summed up her efforts on the trash removal fiasco:

Trash was not picked up on the Wednesday after Labor Day. Pickups often fluctuate during holiday weekends, so she assumed the missed day was due to the holiday. However, the following week, on Wednesday, Sept. 11th, trash was not picked up again. Chris Pineda was kind enough to use his tractor to push down the trash in the dumpster to make more room in the overflowing bins.

Connie contacted Waste Management on 9/12 and was informed that our contract was sold on 9/1 to Meridian; Meridian purchased Waste Management's West Transfer station and the accounts associated with it. There had been no notice sent by Meridian or Waste Management about this transfer of our account. Connie contacted Meridian's phone customer service line, but was given no information about when our trash would be picked up.

On NextDoor, Sue Brown encouraged the trustees to file a complaint with St. Charles County. Connie talked to Michelle Watkins in the St. Charles County Department of Health. Watkins had been out in our area and saw that everyone along Dietrich to Incline Village was awaiting pickup. The few that had pickup were with Grace Hauling. Connie called Grace Hauling twice for information, but did not receive a call back.

Ed Harshaw asked what kind of reputation Grace has. Mike and Pat Hanna said they had Grace for residential service and they were great; they went above and beyond with their pickups.

Connie called Meridian again on Friday; no further information was given.

On Saturday, Sept. 14th, a Meridian trash truck arrived, but it was a rear loader instead of a front loader. The driver told Henry Miller that the proper kind of truck would return by the end of the day. It didn't.

Kris will keep up the pressure on Meridian while Connie is out of town this week.

Connie's internet research turned up that Meridian has an F rating from the Better Business Bureau and was dropped from their contract with Wildwood, St. Charles and Florissant for extremely poor service. Daryl Gilley reported that Stonemoor neighborhood in Wentzville has been having problems with Meridian for two to three months.

Our neighborhood is in the second year of a three-year contract with Waste Management. Connie renegotiated the contract in 2018 and was able to get the rate cut in half. The early termination fee for our contract is six months of fees, approximately \$4000.

Several residents thanked Connie for her hard work on this issue.

B) SNOW REMOVAL

Someone asked if Kevin Powell will be performing our snow removal again this year. Robin responded yes. During the first two snowfalls, when Kevin was unable to plow, he called in Mitch Turpin to plow in his place. For his three rounds of plowing, Turpin charged \$1700 – significantly more than our standing rate with Powell and much more money than our neighborhood could afford to pay on an ongoing basis.

Gary Pearia plans to serve as a backup for Powell. Since Kevin and Gary are in the neighborhood, they can get to an earlier start on the plowing. The standard is that after 2 inches of snow falls, the road is plowed.

Mike Hanna asked about the plow equipment; he thinks a full-size truck would be better than an ATV.

Gary invited anyone who wants to help to distribute salt along their portion of the road and the major hills. Connie said our neighborhood started with a half a pallet of salt and purchased 3 pallets last year, split between World Outdoor and Lowe's. Mike Hanna suggested checking prices with the soil company in Moscow Mills.

C) CHARTER INTERNET

There was a discussion about circulating a petition between Big Country Acres and Jaxson Estates to see if Charter would be interested in offering internet service in our area, as an alternative to the poor speeds we receive from CenturyLink.

Ed Harshaw said that he Charter previously and it is equally bad. It will drop for days. He uses a hotspot at home in BCA. The Hannas use a hotspot, too, and get speeds of 25mpbs. Tim Roe said to check your speed using Speedtest.net

Travis asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tonya Goforth-Olson motioned; Mike Hanna seconded. The vote was 18 in favor, zero against. The meeting was adjourned around 7:20pm.

ADDENDA

1. Meridian finally picked up the trash on Tuesday, Sept. 17th. Wednesday will remain our weekly trash pickup day.
2. Travis Dierks offered Oct. 12th and October 19th as possible dates for a fish derby and fish fry.