

The Woods Garden Club Meeting Minutes

Wednesday May 17, 2023—6:00 PM

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by President Donna Dozier at 5:59 p.m. The board members in attendance were Ken Wheeler, Jr., Ron Stutes, Jon Stone, Chris Petty, Troy Mills, and Richard Patteson. Also present was our Certified Property Manager, Dawn Smith, with East Texas Community Management. There were two visitors present at the meeting: Faye and John Serio.

II. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes for April 19, 2023, were approved by email and provided to our webmaster for publication on our website.

III. Visitors' comments

Donna explained that a resident had asked to speak to the board after the agenda had already been posted. Donna said that with the board's approval, we could take the comments from visitors out of order and let the visitor(s) speak. The board agreed that was acceptable.

The two residents present, Faye and John Serio, were given the floor to speak. Mr. Serio began by saying, "What happened to us was really pretty stressful. It also turned into an embarrassing situation for me, in particular. I wrote a letter to the board because I had begun to make assumptions, which were incorrect."

It was so stressful to him, he said, and that he made "faulty assumptions, which interfered with me coming to the board meeting to simply address the issue."

Mr. Serio took issue with the fact that he received a violation letter, and was told in this letter that he had ten days to respond to this notice or he would begin receiving fines. He said this “came out of the blue,” and he was upset that he should be receiving this, and said he called our property manager to discuss this violation, but she did not return his calls. Our property manager disputes this and reports that she did return his call. Mr. Serio continued, saying, “She called me back and I asked her to send me copies of the letters she sent in February, but she never did.”

Mrs. Faye Serio asked that the board do more research into violations because they had the storage barn for twenty years. She said they were “panicking, thinking we were going to be fined in ten days.” Mr. Serio said that he is asking for a policy change for more consideration, and that the letter stating they had ten days was very upsetting.

Donna said that the language used in the letter he received is based on the direction of our covenants. Mr. Serio said “That’s not in the first letter, is it?” “No,” said Donna, “That was in the letter you received, but not in the initial letter to alert a resident to a violation.”

Donna said, “Dawn did not know you had not received the previous letters. She had no way of knowing you had not gotten them. All she knew was that she had no response, and that’s why you got the harsher letter –the letter that you actually DID receive.” Donna and Dawn went on to say that it’s common for people to ignore the initial letters, which notify a resident of a violation.

Mrs. Serio said, “Then why not send registered letters?” Donna said, “Because of the expense.” Dawn added that a registered letter costs \$8 to send.

Mr. Serio said he called Dawn after he got his letter, so she knew he hadn't gotten it. Ron pointed out that John only called Dawn after he got the one and only letter he said he received. "Dawn knew that that letter was received because of your phone call to talk about it," said Ron, who went on to explain, "When Dawn sent the letter you got, she did not know that you had not gotten the first letter." Mr. Serio replied, "Correct." Mr. Serio said his assumptions would have been "totally eliminated" had Dawn provided the first letters she sent. Just like that, he said, it would have solved the whole issue.

Mr. Serio asked for "condolences" and a policy change so that the initial letter is nicer and should show more consideration. He said there is now a pall over the neighborhood because of this. Dawn produced his first notice, which was indeed, the "kinder, more considerate" notice of his violation, which the resident claims he never received.

Mr. Serio said he went to some expense to remove the storage building that was in violation and has now been approved for a storage container that is shielded from view. He has his approval letter in hand, and the matter is done as far as the board is concerned. Before the couple departed, Donna asked them both if they felt satisfied that they had said everything they wanted to say, and they agreed they had. They were thanked for their attendance.

IV. Property Management Report

Dawn began her property management report by telling the board that we purchased new pool furniture. The board was pleased to get this furniture on sale. We got 5 new loungers, 5 new chairs, and two new umbrellas for just under \$575.

Dawn reported that there has not been a completed report from the grout guy about the breakdown of costs for the repair of the pool area.

NET Health is preparing to do our pool check and inspection this month, and Dawn is signed up for the usual “pool school” in June.

Donna asked about the emergency exit for the pool gate. Dawn will learn more about that from the inspector when he comes. Donna made note to explain to our new board members what we were referring to. Jon asked Dawn if she had talked to East Texas Alarm, since he knew the police department uses them for that sort of thing.

Chris said people have approached him about the possibility of having a swing set. Dawn and Donna told him we’ve been working on that idea for awhile. He said he was willing to look into it some more, and maybe contact the lady Dawn had talked to at the City’s Parks and Rec department. Ken, Donna and Dawn explained that we have tried to get toddler swings, which were a specific request from some of our residents, but our playground is considered public, so we have to have commercial-type equipment. Chris said he’d see what he could learn and will explore it further. Jon said it would be good to talk to the Parks department, especially Lee Ann Robinette, the new director.

Dawn said that six people owe dues for 2022 and 2023. Fifty-three people owe dues for 2023. Of that 53, ten have pool keys, and are aware that their keys are turned off because they have not paid their dues. Late fees are accruing, at a rate of \$3 per month.

Dawn said she called Granite Division about the Eastwood sign again and got the guy’s voice mail again. She will keep trying him.

She said a lot of the same people are still on the violation log, but that several are being fined, and have received certified letters to notify them of that fact.

Ron asked about the columns on the violation log, to get a clear understanding of when initial letters were sent. Dawn made note that she did get confirmation that the resident who was fined for a violation committed without approval from our ACC had received his certified letter.

Donna said she thought the new pool committee members were doing a really good job. Dawn agreed, and said we even had more volunteers than we could use, so that was a very good thing.

Ken asked about the grill cover at the pool. Donna said she'd folded it up and put it in the storage area. The board discussed the propane and the need for a new "no diving" pool sign.

V. Financial Report

Our Operating account, as of March 31, 2023, had a total of \$49,558.59. The Savings account had a total of \$128,897.83. Our total is \$178,456.42. Dawn said we are doing okay. She said we spent \$2600 on trees, and we would see the costs for the furniture in the budget, and that the monthly expenses for the janitorial service at the pool had begun.

VI. Old Business

Donna said she didn't have much in the way of old business except to report that the pool opened May 1st, and that it is going well so far, except for the people who say they'll meet Dawn to get a pool key but then are no-shows.

Donna said that the Splash Party plans are still on track, with the party planned for June 10th, featuring free BBQ pulled pork sandwiches, chips and bottled water provided by East Texas Home Inspections, along with our HOA's contribution for the free food for our residents. Kona Ice and the usual giant waterslide will be there, courtesy of Crutcher and Hartley. Dawn has agreed to provide her DJ skills, and will feature her usual fabulous music selections. Donna got tablecloths and said that some folks had asked if they could bring cookies or desserts. She said that she will post on our Facebook group to remind people about this event for our neighborhood.

VII. New Business

Donna said she had no new business to discuss.

VIII. Miscellaneous Non-Action Items

Ken said there are umbrella bases in the storage area behind the pool's storage area. He said Kenneth is going to rent a wood chipper and will be going up and down the greenbelts, getting as much taken care of as he can. He is planning to work on the Southwood exit, too, and remove the debris from the City's right of way since they still have not taken care of it.

Ken said his brick guy has measured the expansion joints and radiating joints at the pool, as well as the skirting area, so he can provide a bid for the work that needs to be done.

Ken said Hugo has been busy repairing various irrigation points, and that when he went back to check the clock at the former chiropractor's location, the clock was working!

Donna had asked Dawn to have our mosquito treatment service be done again, because she had gotten reports about kids getting

mosquito bites at the pool after the most recent spraying. The guy came back out two more times, and didn't charge us. He thought one of the visits might have not worked because of heavy rain right after the treatment.

Ken said it has only been within the last two or three weeks that the soil has reached the suitable temperature for the grass to begin growing, so we should start to see more coverage now. The board agreed that this rain has helped our bottom line on watering costs.

IX. Adjournment

Ken made the motion that we adjourn. Troy seconded the motion. All agreed, and we were adjourned at 6:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald D. Stutes