

The Woods Garden Club Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 15, 2023—6:00 PM

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by President Donna Dozier at 6:00 p.m. The board members in attendance were Ken Wheeler, Jr., Ron Stutes, Richard Patteson, Chris Petty, Troy Mills and Jon Stone. Also present was our Certified Property Manager, Dawn Smith, with East Texas Community Management. There were no visitors present for the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes for September 20, 2023, were approved by email and provided to our webmaster for publication on our website.

III. Property Management Report

Dawn began her property management report by informing the board that the pool is closed for the season. Key cards are turned off. One of our valuable Pool Committee members, Gordy Widman, stacked the chairs and put the furniture under the shed for us.

Dawn is still working on getting another bid for the handrails we would like to add at the steps leading up the flagstone pathway at the pool. She thinks she has another company lined up to meet her soon.

Dawn said she checked the business rates for other electric services, and found that the company we use is the best deal around, so we are signed up with the same company once again.

There are still four residents who owe dues for both 2022 and 2023. There are 24 residents who owe dues for this current year of 2023.

Dawn presented a violation log, and the board discussed some of the more problematic issues, like a storage building on Woods Blvd, and dead trees on owners' property that need to be removed.

The board heard Dawn explain the various responses she had received from residents who had called or emailed to discuss their violations with her. Some had excellent reasons for their unfortunate violations, including a lawsuit that is pending for one resident against his insurance company.

It was reported that our Christmas lights will be installed by Thanksgiving weekend.

The board discussed the large number of trees we have that are in need of removal from our greenbelt areas. Some have pine beetles; others are simply dead from the stress of the cold, icy winters, followed by the hot drought of summer. Our tree budget is way beyond "busted" for the year, and even so, we still have quite a few more trees that need to come down before year's end.

IV. Financial Report

Our Operating account, as of August 31, 2023, had a total of \$16,865.91. The Savings account had a total of \$94,206.73, for a total of \$111,072.54. Again, the tree budget is by far the biggest problem, since everything else is pretty much on track and as usual.

V. Old Business

Donna reported that we have a deal with Tyler Tabernacle to have our Annual Meeting there this January 30 at no cost! Donna asked if the board would mind approving a \$100 donation to the church for the use of their premises and the electricity we will

use, and the board agreed this would be good to do. Thanks to Ken for arranging this special deal for us.

Again, it was mentioned that Dawn will be getting another bid for the handrail idea for the flagstone steps out front of the pool area. She will let us know what she learns.

It also reiterated that the electric contract was taken care of and a new term with our same company was the best deal.

VI. New Business

Our ACC has had a problem lately with trees being taken down without permission. The remedy for that has been a \$50 fine for each tree that is taken down without permission. The ACC would like to stiffen the penalties for this violation, and the board believes the Enforcement policy enables them to determine the amount of that violation. At a later meeting, the board is going to discuss a standard policy for taking down a tree without permission that is clearly written and stated to be more of a deterrent for doing so.

Donna said that Dawn had sent the board an email from our attorney's paralegal, explaining that his health issues will make it impossible for him to do any work until after the New Year of 2024, and possibly not even then. He has not been cleared medically to do any legal work. Donna said we have work pending that needs to be done, and wants the board's thoughts on hiring a new attorney, and asking the current firm to send our records to the new hire. The board agreed it was time. Ron mentioned the name of a local attorney who specializes in HOA work, and provided Dawn his number for her to call him and learn his rates and particulars. The board believes it is time to seek new counsel.

One of our board members mentioned he'd like to discuss a possible special assessment to the annual dues for work on the greenbelt. After discussing our budget and the fact that every facet of our lives has increased in cost, the board thinks it may be time to consider raising the dues we are assessed. Donna mentioned that 30 years ago, when these rules were written, and the cost set at \$300 per year, the price of a postage stamp was 29 cents. Today, it costs us 66 cents to send one first class letter. This is only one example of how we have been trying to function in this current economy, using the same amount of funds from the early '90's.

The board wondered if we have the lowest dues of anyone in the entire county? Donna said she was told by a board member in Hollytree that we have the lowest annual dues of anyone in Tyler. Dawn manages several HOAs in and around this area, and she said ours are by far the lowest.

While the board does not want to raise dues, since the economy has put such a strain on every resident, it is also imperative for us to keep up property values and have the necessary funds to do so. Every board throughout the years has been very careful and mindful of working within the confines of the budget. We must keep up with the times and maintain property values. It may be time, after 30 years of remaining at the same rate, to raise the dues.

VII. Miscellaneous Non-Action Items

Ken displayed a rendering for the front entrance, designed by a local landscape designer, who proposed a very nice entrance, featuring replacements for the red-tipped photinias, as well as other current landscaping at the front entrance. The cost was steep, however, and will have to be considered later.

Troy said he'd had a problem with the website, and can't figure out why he can't submit a request to the ACC. The board figures if Troy, who knows how to make the submission, is having a problem, some of our residents may also be having a problem. Troy is going to call our webmaster and see if he can get to the bottom of the problem.

XIII. Adjournment

Ken made the motion that we adjourn. Richard seconded the motion. All agreed, and we were adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald D. Stutes