

VOLC Board Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2023
The Clubhouse
Zoom
6:00 p.m.

Present: Melody DeVoe, Mike Ostroski, Ray Krout, Carolyn Aresu (Recorder), Odette Haight

Technical note. Zoom was not operational tonight. It should be available for the next Board meeting as we transition to the new VOLC laptop.

Call to order: Melody DeVoe at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes of 1/4/23: Approved. 5-0

Community Reports:

Ray Krout, Treasurer:

Ray reported the budget is in great shape because there has been no snow removal. We therefore have a surplus so far.

Community comments: Linda Trach mentioned the communications expenses of \$800.00 for the new laptop and tech support. Mim Krout: What happens with the budget surplus? Ray replied that there is \$18,000 “in the good” because of no snow removal so far this year. Melody: if there is a surplus it can be returned to the homeowners. We likely won’t have to raise the assessment fees next year, as a result.

Grounds:

Bob Leaming was not present. Melody presented his notes to her, as follows. Further tree efforts will be delayed to fall planning and potentially 2024 planting due to a lack of resources to manage the project in 2023. In other words, Melody stated that the community needs more volunteers to serve on the Grounds Committee. The Committee currently lacks a Chair.

The post and rails fencing was mended this week for an amount less than the \$2,000 budgeted for the project. Final invoices should be received by the end of the week.

Melody reminded the community that the County has a tree reimbursement program. If we plant \$5000 of trees, for example, the County will reimburse the VOLC \$2500.00. This is an annual program. If we plant no trees in 2023 but plant \$10,000 worth of trees in 2024, VOLC will be reimbursed for 50% of the cost.

- Mulching:

The Grounds Committee conducted a survey among the community. The majority of us believe mulching is not necessary this year. Grounds later met with Bright View for input on when and how much to mulch. Melody mentioned that Bright View said it brings potential clients to VOLC to show the work that they do for us.

After Ground members met with Bright View it was decided that the Common areas and tree beds will be mulched this year, but with 30% less mulch. There will be an earlier spring clean up because of the warmer weather.

Rebecca Crowe reported on the Grounds/Bright View walk through and observation of the mulch status within the VOLC. The mulch at the homes is hit or miss, according to her. Some lots have mulch. Mulch on some of the lots has been washed away.

Community Comments: Nancy Halbedl remarked that mulch is not good for the trees, according to a tree expert her daughter consulted. Barbara Lawrence: A limited \$2000 savings should not be the single determining factor since, under the BV Contract, the exact cost of the mulch product and labor for mulch application is not specified. The mulching service is part of a much larger, lump-sum cost for Spring Cleanup (approximately \$26,000). That cost is not broken down to show the individual costs of the many services included in Spring Cleanup, such as cleaning of beds, edging, application of pre-emergent, and pruning of shrubs, in addition to mulch and mulch application.

Melody reported that 30% less mulch results in a \$2000. savings. If we don't mulch all beds there would be \$4000 savings, according to Melody. Mim Krout: 3 inches of mulch is needed, which can look sparse. Barbara Lawrence: \$2000 savings should not be the determining factor. Ray Krout clarified that Bright View will have 2 supervisors on site to survey the mulch additions. It will be up the crews to determine where to mulch. Ray insisted Jack Bailey of Bright View should be on board to make sure the job is done correctly. Bob Leaming had reassured Ray that two supervisors would oversee the project. Linda Trach stated there is too much mulch is in the lawn area. It should be raked back, she suggested.

Ray Krout made a motion to mulch the entire community. The motion was seconded. All of those present at the meeting voted. The motion passed unanimously. Melody will invite Bright View to the next meeting for further clarification.

Activities: Cheryl Werner.

- Facilities update:

Carpet installation has been completed and final payment made.

The two new rectangular tables and 8 new chairs that we ordered in September have been delivered and have added more safe seating to our clubhouse space. And a better setting for meetings.

Andrew Price, our contractor for the patio pavilion, reports that he has updated his building permit to the county after receiving approval by the Fire Marshal, and is awaiting a response. We have told him that if he doesn't get a response soon, we can request assistance from our elected officials like Councilman Tackett. He has agreed that that might be the way to go, and he will let us know when he needs the help.

Dino Peronti of IPS Management arranged for the curtain rods to be reinforced and for all smoke detectors to be replaced.

- Activities:

In addition to our continuing our monthly repeating events - Stitch n' Bitch, Pizza/Bingo, and Coffee Klatch - we celebrated our February Happy Hour on the 19th with a Mardi Gras theme, followed by a game of Pub Trivia.

On February 11th, we hosted a session on Heart Health. Presented by Angie Primus, an RN for over 30 years and the founder of A1 Advocacy. Free blood pressure and glucose screenings were also available. Several residents took advantage of the offering. Due to the new clubhouse laptop, we were able to project Angie's Power Point presentation seamlessly on the clubhouse TV.

The Activities team has decided that finding the perfect location for the Holiday Party is impossible, and we have decided to hold it here at the clubhouse this year. In the interim, we will be testing caterers. You are welcome to make suggestions, based on personal experience.

- Coming events:

Next month's Happy Hour will be on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, at 5PM. The theme will be St. Patrick's Day.

Our New Castle County outreach officer, Corporal Christopher Gigliotti, will speak here at the clubhouse on Monday, March 27th at 6 PM. His topic will be Safety and he will answer questions after a brief Power Point presentation.

Angie Primus will return on April 27th at 6 PM for a session on Healthcare Advocacy, Navigating the Healthcare System.

Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

MDR Subcommittee: Linda Trach

We're on the home stretch!!

Our mission has always been to keep our fingers on the pulse of the VOLC and understand what our neighbors are interested in changing to the exterior of our homes. Having successfully completed our first two ballots, we are now ready to invite everyone to the next VOC (Voice of the Community) meetings for the third ballot on **Thursday, April 20 and Saturday, April 22**. VOC meetings are our vehicle for gathering feedback from residents to help shape what will be stated in the final ballot.

Topics addressed in this next ballot (just five) are: 1) Siding appearance and replacements; 2) Screened-in porches; 3) Colors: Front door, shutters and garage door; 4) Shades and Awnings and 5) the 'In Kind' list.

After that ballot is finalized with your feedback and approved by the Board, it will be distributed to the neighborhood, requiring only a 60% 'yes' vote this time (will be early summer, probably).

What you can then expect from us after this last ballot are two things: 1) is a new list of the Guidelines, alphabetized and with a Table of Contents (that will come out pretty quickly), and then a revision to the Third Amendment of our governing documents.

We have to clean up the Third Amendment (the actual MDRs) and that document will be renamed 'the Restated and Amended' Third Amendment to the Village of Long Creek Active Adult/Lot Maintenance Declaration of Restrictions. That document, after review with our attorney, with our proposed adds (all new

guidelines need a related line item), changes and deletions will be circulated (similar to a ballot) through the VOLC seeking a 60% 'yes' vote so we can then submit the 'restated and amended' third amendment to the Recorder of Deeds office to be re-recorded with the County. You will then get a new copy of that section (tab 3 if you have a book) of our Governing Documents for your notebooks.

Lastly, as I was working through the Recorder of Deeds' office to understand the process for making these formal changes to our Governing Documents, they had to forward me to the Ombudsman's office. Surprisingly, when I was forwarded, on 2/08/23, our Ombudsman Chris Curtin, actually answered his own phone! In addition to the advice he gave me about our committee's project and how to name this revision, I took advantage of a captive audience to ask him about requesting private meetings between committees and our Board relative to DUCOIA's Section 81-308A,(c). I mentioned that we had a resident who formalized a complaint to his office with this topic, among others. I quote Chris' response "I can't give legal advice or legal interpretation about DUCOIA; it's an extremely difficult document. However, I don't see any reason why your committee can't meet privately with your Board, providing that the purpose of your meeting is not to make decisions affecting the rest of the community". So, for future reference, it's okay to do so. Also, prior to that conversation, our MDR SC has been inviting the Board to our meetings as a work around to accomplish what we needed.

Unfinished business:

- VOLC Laptop

Mike Ostroski reported that the new lap top is being integrated into the system. The community has a contract with the Geek Squad. We also have a wireless Mouse. The cost for all is \$880.00. \$1200 had been approved for this expenditure. VOLC needs an oversight tech committee, according to Mike. This would include residents who have computer technological skills and/or those who are willing to learn them.

Cheryl Werner stated that she and Mike have recruited 3 additional residents to serve as tech support volunteers, in addition to themselves. They include Amy Leickel, Tom Sutor and Mary O'Hara. Mike suggested the name: VOLC Clubhouse Tech Squad.

Cheryl reminded us that VOLC laptop is strictly for VOLC business only. However, outside speakers can bring their thumb drives to give presentations on the VOLC laptop. Melody affirmed the need for an anti-virus program if this is the case. Mike said we have Microsoft Defender as well as Norton Anti-Virus software.

Melody warned that no inappropriate or illegal content (e.g. child pornography, etc.) should be downloaded on the VOLC laptop. If this should happen the entire community is liable. Steps will be taken to help ensure the laptop's security.

- GDC: Melody reminded us there is no longer a Governing Documents Committee. She asked for volunteers.
- Waivers: Melody restated that there is little interest for waivers in the VOLC. There is no insurance to 100% protect us, according to her. Melody asked Dino asked to look into a higher level, more protective liability insurance.

Community Comments: Rebeca Crowe suggested a community wide meeting with Dino (IPS), the VOLC attorney and insurance agent. Linda Trach made a motion to proceed with Rebecca's proposal. Cheryl Werner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with all present voting. Rebecca will reach out to Dino to set up a meeting with IPS, the VOLC attorney and insurance agent.

New Business:

Community Discussion: Rebecca Crowe announced the forthcoming replacement of the existing Hodgson Vo-Tech High School. The plan is to build a two story building on the existing soccer field, across from the VOLC entrance. The replacement project includes a new road off of Glasgow Highway, approximately 50 yards across from and north (left) of the VOLC entrance. There is concern among the VOLC residents that this new road will make the traffic conditions on Glasgow Highway far less safe. This is especially the case when exiting the VOLC and KinderCare in the morning and at dismissal time.

Cindy Jenkins contacted the state Senators involved. There will be a meeting at the Hodgson Vo-Tech High School Library on 2/28/23 at 6:00 p.m. Residents are urged to attend. Carolyn asked Cheryl to inform VOLC residents of this meeting via email on February 26.

Melody announced the next Board Meeting will be on March 22, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourned 7:30 p.m.