

**Forest Creek Homeowners' Association**  
**Annual Meeting & Election of Board of Directors**  
**September 29, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

The meeting was held at the Stage Nature Center.

Present: Board members Denise Ridenour, Chuck Hessler, Rick DeVisch, Denise Sauter, Nancy Dougher; and 26 homeowners (sign-in sheets on file)

Absent: Board member M.G. Shapiro

- Introduction of Board Members – Denise Ridenour introduced herself. Current board members followed and introduced themselves. Denise R. then thanked Chuck and Nancy for their years of service to the board as both are retiring.
- Homeowner Introductions – Homeowners in attendance introduced themselves.
- Election – Board of Directors – Denise Ridenour
  - Introduction of candidates – Three homeowners have stepped forward to volunteer as members of the Board of Directors. Clint Bryant was in attendance and introduced himself and provided information including his background in finance. Greg Bockart and Rick Hughes were unable to attend the meeting. Their background information has been posted on the subdivision website and their names are included on the ballot.
  - Call for nominations from the floor – None
  - Election –
    - Ballots were distributed, listing the following homeowners: *Denise Ridenour, Denise Sauter, M.G. Shapiro, Rick DeVisch, Clint Bryant, Greg Bockart, and Rick Hughes*. Homeowners were given the opportunity to vote (one ballot per lot) and the ballots were collected.
    - The candidates listed on the ballot were elected unanimously - 21 ballots and 6 by proxy. (ballots and proxy forms are on file)
- Treasurer's Report – Denise Sauter
  - Current Account Balance - \$35,030.70, Petty Cash - \$100
  - Payment of Dues – All homeowners have paid dues for the current year and there are currently no homes with liens placed against them by the HOA.
  - Electronic Dues Payment and Implementation of Processing Fee – Homeowners have the option to pay dues using the portal on the Forest Creek website. When this option was initially set up there was an introductory offer that allowed a certain number of transactions at no charge. Once that number was exceeded, a service charge was added to each transaction. The board has approved implementation of a small processing fee (likely \$2.50) to help defray these costs, which can be in excess of \$700. The money that will be collected from the processing fee will not offset all costs associated with payments made on the portal, but will recoup a significant portion. Homeowners were reminded that they still have the option to pay dues using a check and thus avoid any cost to them over and above the dues amount. Suggestions were made by homeowners that the board consider using Venmo, PayPal, or Zelle – options that do not carry a service fee. Another suggestion

was that the board charge title companies for status letters when homes are sold. Denise S. will research these options.

- Electronic Notification of Dues – Each year in March a packet is sent to each homeowner notifying them of the dues amount for the coming year and the date that dues payments are due, which is April 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year. Other items may be included in the packet, such as a proxy form, newsletter, or garage sale registration form. Denise R. explained that there is considerable cost (\$400+) associated with mailing these packets, including printing, collating, supplies, and postage. The board would like to move toward notifying homeowners electronically via email of the dues amount and due date. Included with the dues notification email, homeowners would be made aware that the other documents that might typically have been included with the dues mailing will be available on the website. The board is planning to do a survey to determine homeowners' comfort level with this idea. All homeowners are encouraged to be certain that the board has their current contact information – email and phone number.
- Budget Update and Status of Subdivision Projects & Contracts – Chuck Hessler
  - Landscape & Lawn Service – Chuck reported that we have been happy with the service provided by Hundich, our current landscape contractor. Chuck has been notified that costs for next year are increasing for various reasons, including the higher price of gasoline and supplies, and increased labor costs. It is predicted that the cost of mulch next year will be about \$6000 which is more than we have paid in the past. The company advised Chuck that they like having our business and will make every effort to keep cost increases to a minimum.
  - Proposal for Signs at Subdivision Entrances – In 2019 we received a bid for new signs at the entrances from “Wild Bill”. His cost for 3 signs was \$4,500. Chuck attempted to obtain bids from other vendors (Sign-A-Rama, Signs & More) and received little or no response or follow up. Because of the financial status of the HOA at that time, the board tabled the idea until after funds were received from the Special Assessment. The “hold” was then extended because of the COVID pandemic. During that time it was noticed that the stonework on the structures that hold the signs is deteriorating in areas and is in need of repair, which would need to be done prior to affixing the new signs. Chuck has attempted to find a vendor to do this repair and has not been successful. He contacted Michigan Brick and they did not respond. He is reluctant to “chase” vendors, thinking that if they are not responsive in providing bids, it is difficult to trust that they will follow through with the work. The project is therefore at a standstill.
  - Special Assessment – Chuck noted that some of the funds generated by the special assessment have not been spent for reasons noted above. Some of those funds were earmarked to improve the entrance at Coolidge. Our new landscape company (Hundich) has done a nice job and the entrance is looking better than it has for a long time. The board needs to re-assess the need to spend money on this area.
  - Pond
    - Additional water treatment was required this year due to algae and condition of the condition.

-Need for landscape maintenance – As pointed out by a homeowner and viewed by some of the board members, the vegetation at the pond has become overgrown and there are several trees that are in need of trimming and/or have dead sections. Vegetation overgrowth is particularly a problem along the fence on the west side, around the benches, and along the area on the north side of the pond. It has been several years since funds were earmarked for improvement in the pond area due to the limited amount of funds in the HOA budget and account. The board will need to evaluate and make a decision on how to tackle what needs to be done.

- I-75 Noise Level – Homeowner Graham Bush has volunteered to serve as Forest Creek HOA liaison on a committee of representatives from several surrounding subdivisions that is working to find a solution to reduce the increased road noise generated as a result of I-75 construction. In 2005 a noise study/survey was done and it was deemed that the north side of I-75 did not require noise mitigation. Since then walls have been erected on the south side which cause sound to be deflected to the north, the freeway has been widened, the quality for the concrete is not as good, the freeway surface has been slightly elevated, and the old trees/vegetation were removed during construction. All of these factors contribute to a higher level of noise to many subdivisions. MDOT indicates that the funds for these projects are controlled at the federal level.

Homeowners Loraine and Mario Scussel, and Jeff Orzechowski (noise expert) are also working with the committee. Graham reported that the group is conducting noise studies, contacting MDOT, the mayor, city council members, and representatives at the state level. Graham will be in the lobby after the meeting to answer questions and encourages homeowners to attend a meeting of this group on October 6<sup>th</sup> if they are interested in volunteering to work on the committee.

- Sprinkler Backflow Testing - Graham also mentioned that last year 208 homeowners took part in the sprinkler backflow testing that is required by the city. The testing was coordinated by Graham with plumber Stacey Fulton doing the work. Stacey has been contacted by some homeowners who were notified by the city that their testing paperwork was not received. It is believed that this is a result of city employees working from home during COVID and paperwork having been misplaced. Graham encourages anyone that took part in the testing group and is contacted by the city to contact him or Stacey for assistance.
- Update on Shed Violations – Rick DeVisch discussed the board’s plan with regard to homeowners in violation of the provision in the association’s Restrictive Covenant Agreement (RCA) that prohibits sheds. Over the years, the board has received complaints from homeowners that there are homes in the neighborhood that have sheds. Other homeowners have requested permission from the board to build a shed, and permission was not granted due to the restriction in the RCA. The board consulted an attorney who advised that if the board is aware of a violation, they are obligated to enforce the Bylaws and RCA of the subdivision. The board worked with a small group

of homeowners who were interested in changing the RCA to allow sheds. A vote was conducted in 2019 and the majority of homeowners who responded were NOT in favor of revising the RCA to allow sheds. After the vote, homeowners who have sheds were sent a letter notifying them that they are in violation and asking that they bring their property into compliance. Because of the impact of COVID, this issue has been at a standstill. Rick reported that the board intends to proceed with seeking compliance from homeowners with sheds once things return to normal. He will contact these homeowners and express the board's desire to work with them on this issue, and follow up letters will be sent.

- Subdivision Activities – Volunteers Needed – Nancy Dougher shared that in past years there were many activities within the subdivision that brought families together. Examples include parades and activities for children for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Halloween, a summer picnic, a subdivision garage sale, and a gathering at a local restaurant for adults to socialize and enjoy pizza and soft drinks. The budget includes funding for some of these activities, but, in recent years there have not been volunteers willing to spearhead them. The board hopes that with many new homeowners (and young families with children), volunteers will step forward to organize activities that can be enjoyed by many.
- Questions from Homeowners
  - A homeowner expressed concern with the speed at which traffic moves through the subdivision. She was almost hit while walking her dog and asked if the HOA could be of assistance in having stop/yield signs placed in the subdivision. Other homeowners expressed similar concerns particularly with regard to cars that park in the Apple/Mountain Drive area while waiting with their children for the school bus. These areas become congested and present a danger to traffic attempting to navigate the area and are a safety concern for all. Remarks included that the city has, in the past, placed a 'speed machine' in the sub to call drivers' attention to how fast they are driving. It was mentioned that there was an accident at Forest Park and Redbud after which neighbors contacted the city and a stop sign was placed at the intersection within two weeks. Residents were advised to contact the city with these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Nancy Dougher, Secretary  
Forest Creek HOA