

**Ashford Lake Property Owners' Association Board Meeting
February 7, 2023**

1. Call to Order: Tom Barry

Tom Barry called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Those Board members present were: Tom Barry, Judy Campbell, Robin Clapp, Nancy Conlan, Don Judson, Jason Pufahl, Ann Milner, Sue Orcutt and Brent Raymond.

Absent was: Paul Brown, Lisa McAdam Donegan, and Denise Pillion.

Homeowners Present: Melissa Brown, Bernie Dubb, Michelle Goslin, Kathy Hollister, and Carolyn Trotta.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes

Tom moved to accept the January Board Meeting minutes as submitted. Don seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report: Don Judson

Below is an executive summary of our account activity for January including expenses, outstanding assessments, and year to date payment activity:

Checking Account

Beginning Balance	\$10,901.10
Deposits	\$25,692.94
Interest	\$1.59
Payments to: JCL Lawn Care LLC \$110 Clear pipe & swale at 39/40 ALD on 12-21-22 USOS \$80.40 Postage for January Bills Staples \$56.74 Copies of Newsletter	\$247.14
ENDING BALANCE	\$36,348.49

2023 YTD Spend

Expenses and Projects \$247.14

Capital Fund

Beginning Balance - Savings Account	\$53,952.55
Deposits	\$0.00
Interest	\$2.36
ENDING BALANCE	\$53,954.91
Beginning Balance - Certificate of Deposit	\$39,936.10

Interest	\$33.90
ENDING BALANCE	\$39,970.00
Total Capital Fund	\$93,924.91

Outstanding Assessments		% of Owed
Delinquent Previous plus Current year (19)	\$29,031.58	36.36%
Current year only (73)	\$48,766.00	61.07%
Current through 3/1/23 (7)	\$2,050.00	2.57%
Total Owed (99)	\$79,847.58	100.00%

2023 Payments

2023 Assessment Total (133 Property Owners, 146.11 Assessments)	\$73,055.00
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2023 Assessments Received		% of Assessment
Paid in Full (34)	\$22,200.00	30.39%
Delinquent Previous plus Current (5)	\$717.94	0.98%
Current year only (2)	\$500.00	0.68%
Current through 3/1/23 (7)	\$2,400.00	3.29%
Total Paid (48)	\$25,817.94	35.34%

Payments to prior balances	\$125.00
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Total Payments Received in 2023	\$25,942.24	35.76%
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Current Activity

Don reviewed the executive summary and the general ledger. The bills went out and we received \$25,692.94 in payments or 35% of the total assessment in the first month. This is \$6,000 more than last January due to more total payments and the \$100 increase. Thirty-four assessments have been paid in full. Five delinquent assessments have paid some.

Spending for January is down from last year due to less snow plowing. There have been some snow plowing and sanding events, but we haven't been billed yet.

We also received several new email addresses. We now have email addresses for 71 of the 130 properties.

Correspondence

We received an acknowledgement and thank you from Living Proof Church for our donation to the Ashford Food Bank.

Arta and Don Dobbs sent a thank you for all the Board does for the ALPOA members.

Reimbursement

Tom motioned to reimburse Judy \$58.30 for signs and materials for the ice warning signs.

Nancy seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

4. Committee Reports

Roads and Grounds: Tom Barry

Update on the status of the Ashford Lake Dr. Drainage Project

Tom received information from the Wetlands Agent which he forwarded to the Board. The agent requested that a hold harmless document from the Town be signed. This would protect the Town from any future suit if someone had an issue with the project. Don made a motion for the Board to authorize Tom to sign the home harmless document on behalf of ALPOA. Nancy seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

There is also an additional \$120 permit fee.

Attorney Dennis Poitras is working on the easement for 30 Ashford Lake Dr. Since there is a mortgage on the property, the bank needs to approve the easement. The bank is requesting a title search and the drawing to be modified to reflect the drainage. No work can begin until the easement is in place.

Justin Cyr will give us a bid by next week.

A letter was sent three weeks ago to the abutting property owner of 30 Ashford Lake Dr. regarding the hemlock trees on the border where the pipe will be laid. The trees need to be cut back or removed. There has been no response.

Campert Lane/Farm Drive Update

The Town had Asplundh cut down trees on Campert Lane where the town will widen road.

Environment: Sue Orcutt

Caution Signage for Blue Green Algae

Sue proposed that signs be temporarily posted at the beaches and the north and south ends of the lake when there is a bloom of blue green algae. The signs will that caution that blue green algae may be present and that there should be no fishing or swimming and that dogs be on leads. The best price was for ten, 18 x 24 signs for \$120. Stakes are an additional \$20. Sue motioned to appropriate up to \$200 for blue green algae signs. Ann seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

Phragmites

Sue has contacted SOLitude and they will draw up a contract so we can have the residual phragmites sprayed at end of year. The State of CT has new regulations for treating waterbodies. Now in addition of getting permit from state, every property owner will be sent two notices. The additional cost will be passed onto ALPOA.

Recreation: Denise Pillion

Chili Fest

Denise is recommending we have a Winter/Chili Fest on Feb 25th.

Boats at the Beaches

The kayaks without stickers on the Sunset Beach boat rack still have not been removed. We will have to consider a different way to deal with this next year.

Community Watch & Safety

Appoint Chairperson

There has been no chairperson for this committee for a few years. Judy volunteered to chair the committee. Tom officially recommended Judy as chairperson. Anyone else interested in helping Judy can contact her or the Board.

Mailboxes

Judy reminded all to be aware of mail left in mailboxes. She has found mail by the dam and returned it to the owner. She suggested that if you are not around, to have someone pick up your mail and hold it for you.

5. Old Business

Update from the Short-Term Rental Subcommittee

Nancy reported on her research since the last meeting. Judy noticed an item on the Eastford Board of Selectmen's December agenda regarding complaints about two "Airbnb's" in town. Nancy contacted Deborah Richards, First Selectman, who said there were two citizen complaints regarding noise and other issues at lakefront Airbnb's, not at Ashford Lake. She said that without a zoning ordinance, there was nothing that could be done.

Nancy contacted a couple of law firms looking for attorneys with expertise in common interest law. Gregory McCracken, an attorney with extensive experience in common interest ownership law, land use and zoning, and a partner in Jacobs, Walker, Rice and Barry was recommended. He reviewed our covenants and bylaws and spoke with Nancy for about 20 minutes. He said we could enact short term rentals regulations but would have to amend the covenants which is a lengthy and expensive process. He would charge \$325 an hour with no retainer. Carolyn Trotta found an HOA attorney in Putnam who would do an initial consultation for \$360 with \$5000 retainer.

The Ashford Planning & Zoning is currently looking into more a specific definition of primary residence to be included in the town's regulations.

The 2019 rental guidelines which were mailed with bills to all owners in January 2019. As community, friendly communication can make a difference. Another option is updating the rental guidelines. The Subcommittee would develop them and present them to the Board for approval. They would then be distributed to everyone by Communication Committee.

Ann commented that updating the guidelines is the way to go.

Brent commented that changing the bylaws should be what we focus on. He recommended seeking council if we need to amend the bylaws.

Tom commented that we can achieve our goal with short term rentals without an expensive route of covenant revision. There are only twenty houses in Eastford. Ashford, with more percentage of lake properties, has town regulations. He recommends revising the guidelines and stated the guidelines should be directed toward renters not owners of the entire lake. There should be good communication with short term rental operators. We should work on guidelines that are practical and conducive to keeping everyone working together.

Bernie has written some observations and suggestions. Tom will forward them to committee to review.

Nancy commented that we should revise the guidelines and put into place this season and see how it works.

Judy commented that the guidelines should apply to everyone not just short-term renters. We don't want to exclude or target owners.

Brent commented that before we assert any guidelines, they should be presented to an attorney to review.

Michelle stated that she didn't agree. She may have a party that is later than 10:00. She doesn't want someone telling them how to live their lives.

Tom stated that the Association can make guidelines without an attorney.

Carolyn commented that we should trust in owners to have a code of behavior for their tenants. She recommended waiting until Ashford determines the definition of a permanent residence before hiring an attorney. We could replicate what Ashford does. If there is something in covenants, then that would cover it.

Ericka Backman was unable to attend the meeting but wants to recommend a survey because not anyone is comfortable coming to a meeting.

Brent commented that we could take Ashford's regulations and make covenant changes to apply for everyone.

Sue stated that the covenants say that you can't have a business. A short-term rental is a business. How can we allow short term rentals, if we can't have a business?

Robin commented that working from home is not a business.

Tom commented that some short-term rentals are a business but not all. Others may use their home part of time and rent the other time. So, it's hard to define. The covenants state that you can't operate a business without approval of the owner (which is ALPOA).

Judy commented that we need to consider the budget before retaining or hiring an attorney.

Don stated that we budgeted \$250 for legal. We can choose to overspend if we need to.

Don commented that guidelines can and should be implemented. ALPOA owns the roads, beaches, and dam. The guidelines should include wearing PFD's. We have obligations and liability concerns.

Nancy welcomed thoughts from other ALPOA members for the committee to consider.

Tom commented that the purpose of the guidelines should be to keep people safe and for harmony in the community. They should be geared toward transients.

Robin commented that the guidelines should be shared with every homeowner. At some point anyone could rent.

Ann suggested that the subcommittee revise the guidelines and present it to the Board to review.

Carolyn asked if we create something, how often would we have to disseminate it or where would we post it?

6. New Business

Members Helping Members: Judy Campbell

Members Helping Members, is a group for people in need of services like rides, shoveling, lawn care, mail/house watch, etc. Some interest has been generated as a result of the posting in the newsletter. Judy would like to put contact information of people volunteering their services and type of service on Facebook with their permission. Brent volunteered to help to this.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 7th.

7. Adjournment

At 9:09 PM Brent motioned to adjourn, and Tom seconded the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Milner
Recording Secretary
February 22, 2023