

COUNTRY LAKES AT FOX MEADOW  
HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING  
JUNE 23, 2022

WELCOME: President Shawn Smith commenced the 2022 Country Lakes of Fox Meadow Annual Meeting at exactly 7:00 PM. The PowerPoint Presentation was projected and followed. He asked that everyone silence their cell phones and that the recording of the meeting was prohibited.

The President provided a quick overview of the Agenda including an opportunity for Homeowners to ask questions at the end of the meeting and not interrupt presenters.

Current Trustees were identified and included:

President: Shawn Smith

Vice President: Bob Beres

Treasurer: Dottie Fox

Secretary: Bill Hanigan

Trustee and Chair of the Design Review Committee: Vince D'Angelo

The President also offered a special thanks to three others that have assisted the Board and offered the Homeowners a monthly newsletter. These were:

Bruce Buller – Property Manager

Anthony Embrogno – Assistant Treasurer

Shirley Krcmar – Monthly Newsletter

Country Lakes has had a number of new residents, and the President wished to extend a warm welcome to two in attendance:

Carron, Roger and Christine

DiTommaso, Robert and Mary Ann

The Annual Meeting Notification was sent on June 1, 2022 and additional reminders were posted on line, such as the call for candidates and the posting of signage at the front entrance. Our covenants/bylaws state that a quorum exists in a duly called meeting by the homeowners in attendance or by proxy. The President stated that a quorum is present for this meeting.

The President called for unanimous consent that the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes not be read and that the Minutes be approved. Hearing no objection the Minutes were voted upon by voice vote with unanimous consent and therefore no opposing action.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Shawn Smith**

President Smith followed his PowerPoint presentation and covered the topics listed. He presented a brief bio, as a veteran and current flight attendant. He prefaced his presentation with a statement surrounding certain events during the past year where the Board had received threats against them and that such verbal attacks cannot be tolerated and that such incidents were and will be turned over to the attorney and local authorities. Shawn emphasized that

Board Members are open to listen to any homeowner concern and that these are not paid positions. He asks for civility and that we have a community and there are times when a homeowner's desire does not meet a community standard or bylaw and would hope that reasonable discussions be forthcoming. At there are occasions where no means no.

The HOA Board has met twelve times during the past year. Several of these were virtual. We have 122 Homeowners in Country Lakes.

The Board is working diligently to provide the services in an inflationary economy. If anyone has a question about the financials, the Board Members can schedule a meeting with them and discuss the details, if they so desire. The Board is very transparent in its actions. He made mention of several contracts that have been negotiated at current rates but in the case of the landscaper they have a provision that allows them to bill for rising costs related to gas increases.

The Board uses a third party to provide professional assistance in our Reserve Study. We have had expenses related to Reserve Assets .

The Board endeavors to get information out to our 122 Homeowners, but may encounter issues related to weather that impact the deliverance of notified services. A specific reference to the fertilization application was made. He also mentioned the website and Facebook as informational sources.

The Board did not receive any formal complaints. We have had several appeals and other communications with homeowners, but no formal complaints. The formal Complaint Form was shown as a slide in the presentation.

The Speed Signs were purchased last year, but just recently installed. The homeowners, where the signs were to be installed were advised in advance to placement. He explained the data that we receive from the signs and how it clearly indicates that we do have a problem with speeding. On Hedgewood we had 752 speeding violations since install and 813 on Watercourse. Eight-three (83) were in excess of 25mph, nine were over 30 mph and one was in excess of 35mph. A brief explanation was made about safety and potential homeowner liability.

Shawn asked that Homeowners, who have issues about services and other property related issues to contact Bruce Buller our Property Manager.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Dottie Fox

Dottie Fox commenced with the status of our financial accounts.

	2020	2021
Huntington Money Market	\$276,856	\$239,898
Edward Jones	\$228,507	\$229,427
Total Reserves:	\$505,363	\$469,325
Huntington Checking	\$9,507	\$13,360
Total Holdings:	\$514,870	\$482,685

Dottie further reported that the taxes were paid and 1099's issued. It was further noted that upon filing the 1120H with the IRS, we received a refund of \$1,648.42.

As a result of increased costs of services, the homeowner assessments were increased by \$20 to \$165 per month. The insurance policies were reviewed and renewed.

A number of processes were implemented including the movement of financial assets from Huntington Bank to Westfield Bank in 2022 to reduce bank fees and improve services. We also instituted new procedures for the payment of bills to expedite payments, and increased the number of homeowners who pay their monthly assessments by ACH to 113. For those still paying by check, they are being assessed a \$10 service fee per check.

Dottie explained that we had secured new extended service contracts from several vendors at current rates. She further explained that the Board was working with vendors to control future costs.

#### LANDSCAPING, Bruce Buller

Bruce informed the audience that Moscarino (landscaper) was awarded a three year contract at current price. He further noted that the contract does provide for adjustment in billing for increase in fuel expense. The mulching should begin by July 1<sup>st</sup> with several of the older homes having their old accumulated mulch removed .

The Snow Plowing contract is under review with requests for quotes being solicited.

Another of the contracts which are being renewed for three years is our Weed Pro for fertilization and disease control. Their service includes all lawns, shrubs, and trees in the HOA. The next round of fertilization will be Monday.

Tree Master is provides trimming of the trees in the front beds. The large trees in the front and back of the homes are the responsibility of the Homeowner. Due to the growth of the different types of trees pruning is under consideration for those in the front beds and common areas.

Akron Pest Control was contracted to apply an application to control the spider population. This is the second year and it appears that it is proving effective. The application is approved by the EPA for residential use. This year they are doing two applications versus three in their first year of service.

Pond Control has a two year contract for maintenance of the inner ponds and fountains. Bruce had requested the continuance of the Biochemical treatments in both lakes. A recent depth study of the ponds has shown that the treatment has had a beneficial impact on the potential need and timing of dredging. This has a major impact on the funding needed for the Reserve Fund. Bruce stated that dredging the ponds would cost between \$250,000 and \$400,000.

Bruce planned to have fifteen mailboxes replaced each year. The oldest are being targeted.

He was also able to highlight a number of actions:

- Gazebo was power washed and tables repainted
- Storm drains will be inspected and repairs made if needed
- Road patching to be done
- Aeration will be done again this year (Sept/Oct)
- Christmas lights for the Holidays
- Speed signs installed
- Continue to patch the end of driveways to protect and extend the road life

- Front wall, guard shed & grill masonry will be patched and sealed. He made reference to the front entrance North wall being replaced in 2004 at a cost of \$11,000. All being done to preserve and delay future replacement.

#### DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) – Vince D’Angelo

Vince D’Angelo stated that the Design Review Committee members were Bill Hanigan (Member), George Shafer (Consultant) and he, Vince (Chairman).

He identified the purpose as outlined in Article 7 Exterior Appearance of the covenants and restrictions. “To ensure that any exterior additions/alterations to your home or landscaping changes are consistent with the other homes in the neighborhood. Responsibility of all homeowners to maintain outsides of home to keep our neighborhood consistent& beautiful.”

Vince offered a number of examples, then proceeded to advise the homeowners as to the process which can be found on the Country lakes Website. He emphasized that the homeowner and not the contractor must complete the DRC application. When an application is received it normally receives a response within ten days, although the longest wait was four days since he has been chair. The majority have taken only one day or less. He added that the review considers the street view being consistent and that the homes have all been built and what is being considered are alterations and improvement to property. If they are simple, he will quickly review, but if they are more involved then Bill Hanigan (DRC Member) is approached for input. Any application rejection can be appealed to the full Board.

Of the forty-seven (47) applications that he has received since his term as chair, forty-one were approved with five being denied and one falling under the Master Association purview.

Hard copies of the application are kept, but recently all recent records are being digitized and stored for easy access, and a Master historic log has been developed which allows records to be sorted by category, homeowner or other criteria. This permits a review of new applications against historic activities.

#### ELECTION OF HOA BOARD MEMBERS

President Shawn Smith presided. He identified two positions on the Board which terms are expiring. The current Board Members are Dottie Fox and Bill Hanigan. Dottie Fox has determined that she will not run for re-election based on personal reasons, and that Bill Hanigan has agreed to submit his name for re-election. We have received only one other candidate, that of Roger Carron, who is new to the community.

Shawn asked Roger to step forward and introduce himself to the Members. Roger stated that he was happy to be here, as was his wife. He has a business experience in computer repair and other business. He has belonged to the Kiwanis, The Rotary as well as several other volunteer organizations. He has a BS in Business and MBA. He expressed that it is a responsibility and honor to serve.

Shawn then asked for unanimous consent in placing both candidates to the Board. The voice vote was unanimous.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Shawn Smith, President announced that the Board had been approached by a realtor inquiring on behalf of an Air-BNB as to restrictions surrounding rental properties. Shawn advised the Homeowners that the Covenants are silent on the matter, but our attorney (Kaman & Cusimano) stated that they are hearing more about the issue as of late.

Shawn opened it up for input from the Members as to their thoughts on the matter. The comments offered a number of concerns:

- There should be a minimum in terms of the length of time a property could be rented or leased. Some referenced a thirty day minimum.
- Opposition to corporation ownership, where there would be a series of tenants over various periods of time
- Interest in not restricting a homeowner having their family member(s) live at the residence
- Neighbors and HOA would not know who is renting and thereby uncertain as to whether the occupant is allowed to be there.
- Expressed concern over renters not having a stake in the upkeep of the property or obey the rules and the difficulty in reaching owners, who are not on site or even in the state
- Thought expressed that there be a limit on the number of rentals at one property in any given year.
- Others built on previous comments but were all expressing concern

Shawn took the comments and advised that the Board would be in contact with Kaman & Cusimano (attorney) to address the matter. If the action requires a change to the Covenants/Bylaws, then the Homeowners will be provided information about the proposed changes and have an opportunity to vote (electronically) on the matter.

#### HOMEOWNERS' QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question #1 by Art LaFountain: Art wished to express his appreciation and thanks to Bruce Buller and the Board for the spider control application.

Answer: Shawn appreciated the kind words and will endeavor to provide advance notification of the application.

Question #2 by Carol Erickson: Carol thanked the Board for all that they do and bringing matters such as the Air BNB to homeowners' attention. Carol then offered concerns in three areas of question: a) She expressed her displeasure with the speed signs. They take away from the charm of the community, that they perhaps reduce the speeding and they just do not look good. b) Carol believes that the spider control spraying should be a homeowner application if they choose to have such an application and is not a Board issue. c) Carol stated that she saw the budget in the January Newsletter and was concerned over the way the budget items were grouped. She wanted to know if there were changes in the financial format and why in Miscellaneous there was budgeted \$30,000 without further detail. She had met with the Treasurer, Dottie Fox but did not have her glasses when shown the detail. She wanted such amount further broken down.

Answer: a) Shawn addressed the speed sign question but providing a brief history of the actions taken by the Board to address a known safety issue for residents. Our attorney has advised that since we have a known issue that if we fail to act then not only do we face a potential safety issue for pedestrians, but a legal liability for the HOA. He addressed the numerous communiqués that had been sent over the years, the speed bumps, which residents did not like and now the signs. He stated that there is no such thing as a pretty speed sign, and though the Board researched the matter, these do

offer information that can be used to help in our effort. He ended by stating that the next step would be cameras if the signs fail to address the issue. As far as location of the signs, we requested the assistance of the Montville Police Chief in identifying the location. We understand that where ever they are placed someone will not be happy.

b) Spider control applications came up a number of years ago and the budget at the time allowed for it. In order to be effective, it requires a blanket coverage approach since it controls not only the spiders but also their food sources. The Board would explore an opt-out provision.

c) There was a change in the financial format which includes the budget. We are now using QuickBooks. Anthony (Assistant Treasurer) is knowledgeable in its use but not all previous expenses fitted the categories, which lead to their placement in the category of Miscellaneous. The detail is available under Misc. but it was summarized for the purpose of the report. Any Homeowner, who desires to view the financial reports, may do so by asking for an appointment. A follow-up question which referred to the reduction in the Reserve Fund was addressed by explaining that said reduction was attributed to the cost of repairing the Emergency Road, which is a Reserve Fund Asset.

Question #3 by Keith Hoyer: Keith wanted to know if the trees which are currently blocking his view of the ponds and fountains could be removed.

Answer: We are not in the practice of cutting down trees. The trees were originally planted by the developers and not the Board. The Board has replaced several trees that died such as the willow by the gazebo. The Board does contract for the bushes and shrubs to be trimmed. Bruce Buller, Property Manager added that many of the bushes and shrubs are getting big where trimming them will expose bare limbs or branches and such older bushes and shrubs should be replaced.

JoAnne Arko asked as a follow-up whether the homeowner can take down a tree. The trees that are in or on the Common Areas are the property of the HOA and not any homeowner. A brief explanation of where the property lines are for homeowners was explained.

Question #4 by Jim Darus: Jim had three questions or concerns: a) He was unable to find the Minutes from the previous Annual Meeting on the website. b) A number of contractors are parking on the wrong side of the street. c) Home maintenance is becoming an issue in that some have mold on the sides of their home.

Answer by Shawn Smith: a) Shawn advised that he go to the Country Lakes website and go under the "Board Members & Minutes". It is under the "Archive Minutes" and it is listed there.

b) Shawn wished to thank Jim for approaching the contractors in a civil tone and manner and get them to move their vehicles. It is the responsibility for the homeowner who contracts with the firm to have their contracted firm to obey our rules.

c) Shawn stated that it is up to homeowners to maintain their property.

ADJOURNMENT:

By unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM

*Draft Minutes were taken by Bill Hanigan, Board Secretary*