

Carderock Springs Citizens Association

Minutes: June 20, 2022, Annual Board Meeting

Held via Zoom due to Covid-19

Board Members present: Jack Orrick, Ashkan A. Malayeri, Gary Ratner, Katalin Roth, Maja Husar, Susan Eastman, Meaghan Sullivan Curry.

Board Members absent: Ashish Goel

Community members present: Robert Stern, Katherine Stifel, Dominique Rychlik, Kimberly Young, Frank Jackson, Stefan Lobuglio, Nancy Everett, Inge Enzinger

Jack Orrick called the meeting to order around 7:30 pm.

Agenda:

1. Approval of April and May Board meeting minutes and May Annual Meeting minutes
2. Treasurer's report
3. Covenant Committee Tree Preservation Guidelines
4. Village Committee discussion (may need to have a quick overview and defer until our next meeting)
5. Social Events for fall - Kimberly
6. Old Business – Beltway widening; Knob sign rehab
7. New Business - Next Meeting - Discuss the next meeting date – typically have one meeting in July and August; Newsletter deadline

Item 1: Approval of May Minutes

No comments on minutes. Deemed approved.

Item 2: Treasurer's Report – Ashish Goel

Ashish was absent, and no treasurer's report was given.

Item 3: Charter of Committee to Revisit Tree Removal Guidelines – Gary Ratner, Nancy Everett, and Sue Eastman

Gary reported on the activity of the committee in the past month and the draft of the proposed Tree Removal Guidelines that had been sent to the Board prior to the meeting. To coordinate the efforts

amongst the stakeholders, the committee has met twice with the Architectural Review Committee to discuss the draft. In addition, the committee has discussed the vision with Dominique and Kimberly, two local realtors, to understand their perspectives. Finally, Sue expanded upon ten different facts that are cited in the tree covenant on the role of the trees in improving personal and community health.

Maja praised the plan for its detail and novelty. She emphasized that there should be a cultural change in the neighborhood so that the incoming and current residents understand the value of trees and organically come on board with tree preservation efforts. Nancy Everett mentioned the gravity of the situation with the number of trees being cut based on arbitrary historical precedents. She mentioned the importance of clarifying the guidelines, particularly the definition of the sound tree. Jack raised a couple of questions:

1) the discrepancy in the definition of sound hardwood tree (diameter used to be 12 inches and is proposed in the draft to be 5 inches at shoulder level). Gary mentioned the purpose of the covenant, which is to preserve the neighborhood's natural beauty. He referred to the covenant and prohibition of removal/taking down "any" sound hardwood trees – there is also no mention of 12 inches in the covenant. Nancy mentioned that 12 inches in diameter could be generous since some of these trees can be very tall, up to 50 feet. Gary emphasized the difference between Carderock and other neighborhoods since the covenant binds the new residents, and they need to preserve the neighborhood's identity. He mentioned that the committee came up with the 5 inches criteria in diameter due to reasonableness. Gary referred the Board to the new study that Carderock is losing tree canopy by 1 percent a year, and the committee's purpose is to stop the reduction of the tree canopy. After some further discussion, the Board suggested changing the diameter measure to 6 inches instead of 5 inches.

2) Jack asked about consulting arborists to take down trees. Gary went over the committee's logistics of hiring an arborist to go over the requests for taking down trees. Jack mentioned the lack of funds for arborists and his opposition to writing a blank check for the arborist. The Board will revisit the issue after approval of the tree covenant.

3) Jack inquired about the discussions with the ARC regarding the updates in design guidelines. Katherine answered by stating that the ARC should be requesting for the folks who are bringing their new design also to consider how their renovations will affect the surrounding canopy. She also mentioned that they had not dwelled on the issue of revising the design guidelines. She also mentioned that having a landscape architect very early on and submitting the renovation plans as soon as possible is beneficial. She also suggested a stronger collaboration between the ARC and the tree committee.

4) Jack asked for clarification on the practicable language in the document. Gary responded that the committee's purpose is to preserve hardwood trees, and they are saying that whoever is asking to take down trees needs to consider other options rather than taking down the sound hardwood trees.

5) Jack asked about the realtors and their understanding of the covenant – at times, they refused to alert the potential buyers of the existence of the covenant. Dominique said that the language and tone should exude partnership and more carrots instead of the stick. She also emphasized why preserving the neighborhood's identity is essential for the property value in Carderock. She suggested that someone from the association approach the realtors to provide the information regarding the covenant. She also suggested setting up a reminder to alert the point of contact regarding the new houses that are coming on the market.

6) Jack also inquired about the replacement trees – and he is skeptical that the folks who don't comply with the removal will comply with replacing the trees after the fact. Mainly the fact that this is not going to be enforceable. Gary explained the reasoning behind it, that this is going to be a request rather than an enforceable portion of the covenant, and that the language can be changed. Multiple members suggested incorporating positive enforcement (e.g., curbside signs) to increase members' compliance.

Jack suggested making some modifications and revisiting the document in our next session in the fall. The document will be distributed to the neighborhood so that folks can express their opinion in the fall session.

Item 4: Welcoming party – Kimberly Young

Kimberly is working on the next welcoming party. The proposed date is Saturday, September 17, with Sunday 18th as the rain day. The issues that need to be ironed out before the party are food and the band. We also need to discuss the welcome presents for the new folks in the neighborhood. Jack proposed reaching out to the community via the newsletter and chat to see if anyone is interested in volunteering to help with the event.

The international potluck was another event that the Board discussed. The proposed date is the beginning of November (likely November 5). Since the dinner and the fall meeting are very close, maybe we want to combine the two events into one.

Item 5: Village exploratory group

The group is exploring different models for the village. Katalin went over some of the issues the group had discussed and the ideas that emerged from the Block Party. Jack strongly encouraged the villages to be a part of the Board, having a united face to decrease confusion amongst the neighbors.

Item 6: Old Business – Beltway widening and Environmental impact statement.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement has been posted on the SHA Ops Lane Maryland website. There is little change regarding the noise barriers or limits of disturbance, the flyover ramps have been eliminated from the road near Carderock and Carderock South, and most of the comments CSCA has previously provided have either been incorporated or ignored. Jack suggested not pursuing further actions in that regard.

Item 7: New Business - Next meeting date

Based on members' availability, it appears Monday, August 22, is the best time next Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashkan A. Malayeri, Secretary

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