

Carderock Springs Citizens Association

Minutes: April 18, 2022 Board Meeting

Held via Zoom due to Covid-19

Board Members present: Jack Orrick, Tom Deyo, Ashish Goel, Gary Ratner, Katalin Roth

Community members present: Meaghan Sullivan Curry, Robert Stern, Katherine Stifel, Maja Husar, Andrea Enzinger, Ashkan A. Malayeri, Firooz Gidfar

Meeting was called to order by Jack Orrick.

Agenda:

1. Approval of March Board meeting minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Charter of Committee to Revisit Tree Removal Guidelines
4. Annual Meeting agenda and plans – at club and hybrid
5. Wine Tasting event – May 20 – Kimberly
6. Old Business – Carderock Springs Village; Beltway widening; Knob sign rehab; Block party on Park Overlook
7. New Business
8. Next Meeting: Discuss whether have May meeting or wait for June and Newsletter deadline

Item 1: Approval of March Minutes

No comments on minutes. Deemed approved.

Item 2: Treasurer's Report – Ashish Goel

April 2022 Financial Report has just been sent to the Board. Received dues from 331 households so far, totally \$14,850. Additional \$1,500 to be deposited and could be more dues coming in. Ashish expects to get the same ballpark as last year: about 360 households. A second physical mailer was sent out at the end of March.

Jack reported that Diane Karlik is using \$500 for the Montgomery County Quiet Skies program. Diane and Petra Jacobs have been our representatives. Tom noted that Quiet Skies had been effective in reducing airflights affecting C.S. and asked if CSCA could make a donation to it. Jack will ask Diane how much money she'd like for Quiet Skies and whether we should make a donation.

Jack explained that CSCA's policy has been that each Committee – Environment, Social – can spend up to \$500/year without separate approval from the Board. The Board also allocated \$3,500 for the Newcomers Event this year.

Jack also mentioned that each year about 30% of our dues is put into our "Contingency Fund" to pay for the costs of litigation to enforce the covenants. The Contingency Fund currently has about \$69,000. CSCA had to spend about that much 12 years ago in litigation with a homeowner who was upset with CSCA's refusal to approve certain architectural changes.

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

Gary reported that he, Sue and Nancy Everett had prepared a proposed charter for a new CSCA Committee on tree preservation and the covenants and sent it to the Board last week. He explained that, assuming the charter was approved by the Board, the next steps would be for the three of them to develop a Plan for how to accomplish the charter's goals and, after Board review and approval, to implement it. The Plan would be targeted to current homeowners, realtors, and prospective homeowners and would include focus on coordination between the Tree Committee and the ARC.

Numerous comments and suggestions were made, and questions raised, relating to the proposed charter. These included the following: Maja Husar noted that it made total sense for the ARC to consider trees from the beginning of its consideration of owners' requests for approval of proposed designs. Tom asked whether the ARC requires each owner to present a survey of major trees on the owner's lot when the owner submits the household's plan to the ARC? Jack said he liked the idea of architects working around trees. Tom also asked whether the ARC is approving designs, but not site impact? Katherine Stifel, an ARC member, said the ARC does look at drainage. Robert Stern asked what is the process for ensuring that an owner does not cut down more trees than have been authorized?

Katherine believes the biggest problem is new homeowners cutting down trees without seeking approval. Relatedly, Maya indicated that the most important initiative is the education of new buyers. The question was raised as to how could the community require realtors to advise their clients not to buy a house in C.S. if they do not support preserving our large trees? Concerns were also raised that the Tree Committee is too loose in defining who qualifies as an "arborist" and in setting the minimum size for which trees are subject to the tree removal approval requirement.

Katherine noted that it was difficult to enforce the covenants both as to physical improvements and as to trees. In response, Gary asked if there was any reason the ARC couldn't send a letter to owners who requested its approval emphasizing that the ARC is authorized by the covenants to disapprove non-conforming plans and that the covenants are legally binding? Jack, a Maryland lawyer, said that such a letter would be legally permissible.

Tom pointed out that the proposed name of the Committee – "Special Committee on Covenants" – suggested its scope would extend to all the covenants, rather than just those related to trees. Gary agreed that the name should be revised to make clear that the Committee would just be focusing on tree-related provisions of the covenants and that its work was not limited to the covenants, but to achieving the overall goal of preserving C.S. as a wooded neighborhood.

Jack said that the committee which prepared the charter should develop a Plan and present it to the Board before the June Board meeting. He did not believe it would be possible to resolve the contents of the entire Plan at that meeting, and thought the Plan would also need to be sent to the whole community for its input.

Katalin believes that some of the language in the charter needs to be moderated. She will send around a moderated version. Jack and Gary will get out the proposed charter to the Board by the following week for a Board vote.

Item 4: Annual Meeting agenda and plans – at club and hybrid

Annual Meeting - Jack reported that the Annual Meeting will be in two parts: first, a review of the year and thanks to the people who helped; second, a speaker, Robyn Nietert, on micro-finance in Kenya. The meeting will be Sunday night, May 1st starting at 7 pm. It will be a hybrid – both in person and by Zoom. Jack said it was important for all Board members to attend and urged them to come in person. Jack also urged Board members to invite our neighbors to attend the Annual Meeting. Jack encouraged folks to come at 6:30 p.m. to help set up and to stay afterward to clean up. In prior years, we've had 15-50 people attend.

Secretary – Jack reported that the CSCA needs a new Secretary. Gary will be the Secretary for the April and May annual meeting, but then CSCA needs a volunteer to take minutes for the new year. Incoming Board Member Ashkan Malayeri complimented Gary on his lawyer-like minutes. Ashkan, a doctor, volunteered to be Secretary and noted his minutes would be different. Fellow incoming Board Member Maja Ansar volunteered to help Ashkan. Jack said that would be very helpful and thanked them both.

Item 6: Old Business

Carderock Springs Village – Katalin reported that Maja, Carolyn Finney and others are trying to learn what's being done in intergenerational villages in Montgomery County. The group is trying to do more needs assessments, especially of younger families, and to figure out how to make use of all the wonderful things going on in the neighborhood. In response to Katherine's suggestion that Foggy Bottom Village was worth learning about, Katalin said she will look at D.C. Villages.

Beltway widening – Jack mentioned that we did submit a third set of comments to the State Highway Department on the Programmatic Agreement in April. He hopes these may result in favorable changes on the Beltway widening project in the future.

Item 7: New Business

Tom informed the Board that there is a Montgomery County Tree Care program that evaluates trees in a community and arborists will give advice to individual homeowners. The cost is \$25/person. Jack thought this would probably be a good idea and suggested that this program be publicized in the newsletter.

Item 8: Next Meeting and Newsletter Deadline

Jack recommended that as the annual meeting will be held on May 1 the Board not meet in May and that the next Board meeting be on June 20th. At that meeting, the Board can decide whether it wants to meet both in July and August or to combine them into a single July/August meeting.

In addition, Jack recommended that the Newsletter deadline be extended until May 6th, with a goal of trying to distribute the printed newsletter during the weekend of May 13 - 14.

Personal Note: Tom said that he's enjoyed being Vice President of the Board for the last four years and that this is his last meeting. Tom said he is grateful to Jack for Jack's leadership and advocacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Gershon M. (Gary) Ratner, Secretary