

# LANDMARK MEWS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MINUTES

Board Meeting January 11, 2006

The January LMCA Board Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Board President Lou Wagner at the home of Carole Trimble. Members present: Simon Bennett, Suzann Evinger, Dan Ferezan, Carole Trimble and Don Washington. Officers/Committee Members present: Roger Casalengo, Anne Foster and Marty McDonald. Other homeowners present: Chris Dale, Bill Evans and Tim Foster.

## 1. Minutes

Minutes of the December 14, 2005, meeting were approved unanimously on a motion by Simon Bennett that was seconded by Dan Ferezan.

President Lou Wagner also asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Session held during the December meeting. Simon made the motion, Dan seconded it and the minutes were approved unanimously.

## 2. Financial Report – See report filed with minutes.

Marty McDonald reported that LMCA ended 2005 with a \$21,000 budget surplus. He explained that the balance was higher than anticipated because of the financial settlement received from Pulte Homes, increased interest income and additional revenue earned from the sale of the homeowner packets. Lou noted that this was the first time in several years that surplus funds were available at the end of the year. He moved that, pursuant to the budget resolution adopted at the September 2005 meeting, the Board commit \$21,401 to the unrestricted reserve. Dan seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Lou told the Board that he and Marty would be preparing a letter of instruction for the LMCA auditor to guide the auditor in accounting for funds when he audits the books for 2005.

## 3. Covenants Committee Report

Lou reported that during the December meeting, the Board held an Executive Session to discuss two covenants issues, one involving the repeated failure by a homeowner to complete repairs to the rear of his property, an outstanding issue for four years, and the other concerning a sidewalk that has needed repairing for the past seven years. Lou said that he had sent certified letters to both parties, setting deadlines for completion of the repairs. He also informed the homeowners that, in the event the repairs are not completed by the deadlines, the Board would take action to make the repairs and then bill the homeowners for the work. He warned that these matters may still end in court in order to collect the funds for completing the repairs.

The Board then discussed whether homeowners were required to replace Bradford trees removed during the fall tree trimming project. Lou said the homeowners had not been required to obtain Covenants Committee approval to have the trees removed, but would need consent if they

intended to plant a new tree. Dan said that current standards/guidelines require homeowners to replace trees, but Don said the replacement did not necessarily have to be another tree.

Lou also informed the Board about several other covenants matters, including the following:

- A homeowner request to put a dumpster at the end of the alleyway between Chaucer Lane and Chaucer View Circle while he completes a patio renovation project.
- A request for installation of vinyl siding that is a palette change, but that the Covenants Committee plans to approve because the new color is consistent with other colors in Landmark Mews.
- An ongoing exchange with a homeowner whose tenant has located a satellite dish on the front of the property. The homeowner has informed the Covenants Committee that the dish must be in the front of the property in order to receive the best transmission of Spanish language channels, a necessity for the tenant who is a Latin American diplomat. The committee is waiting for a letter from an expert who will certify that the dish must be in this location to achieve the needed quality reception.
- A recommendation by the Covenants Committee that the Board adopt a policy regarding pre-sale property inspections. Lou said that this is an issue that will be considered by the special committee reviewing the recommendations of the covenants process review committee.
- The need for new Covenants Committee members. Lou said Bruce Wood is recruiting committee members and asked Board members to give Bruce the names of anyone who might be willing to serve on the committee.

#### 4. Property Manager Report

Items addressed by Roger Casalengo during his property manager's report included the following.

- A letter received from a homeowner who was unhappy that a tree on her property had been trimmed without proper authorization. Roger said he personally paid the bill because he had not gained the homeowner's formal approval to proceed with the tree trimming.
- A request from a homeowner that LMCA pay for repairs to her back gate that she claims was damaged by a Pine Ridge worker with a weed wacker. Roger is investigating the matter.
- B. Rushing completed maintenance work to improve drainage in the alleyway between Chaucer Lane and Masefield Court and did an excellent job. Roger said that maintenance work on the alleys will be an ongoing project and that he intends to make it a line item in the budget.
- The tree trimming work by Tyson's Tree is completed and cost about \$14,000 for all the community and privately-owned trees that were trimmed or removed. Roger said that 98 percent of the homeowners contacted about taking advantage of the group rate negotiated with Tyson's Tree chose to participate. He also said that Tyson's Tree did a great deal of free work on the common area trees. In return, LMCA treated the work crews to pizza.
- The new sign, replacing the vandalized sign, at the Landmark Mews entrance from Stulz Avenue, is up. Replacement cost was \$1,400.
- Virginia Power still has additional work to complete to upgrade and landscape the two transformers on Chaucer View Circle.

- Twenty-two of the trees planted along Stevenson Avenue died last year because of drought. Roger said he watered the trees, but did not begin to do so soon enough to save all of them. He said that he intends to replace the trees in the spring, purchasing them from a nursery and planting them with the aid of a day worker. Managing the matter this way, will keep the replacement cost very reasonable, according to Roger.

## 5. Engineering Reserve Study

Marty reviewed the four proposals he had received from firms bidding to conduct the five-year engineering study to ensure that reserves are adequate to meet infrastructure repair and maintenance projections. In the course of researching firms qualified to conduct the study, Marty explained that he had found that there are two types of firms that conduct these studies for homeowner associations: (1) engineering firms with a staff of professionals in different disciplines who conduct the studies in the hope that they will then gain ongoing maintenance and repair contracts from the findings and (2) independent contractors who are not necessarily engineers and who just conduct the studies. In the bids he received to conduct the LMCA study, two were from engineering firms (FEA and GJB) and two were from contractors (Mason and AIA).

Marty distributed a chart in which he ranked the firms according to the results of his analysis of their bids. (*See chart filed with the minutes.*) In response to a question from Don Washington, Marty said that none of the firms who submitted bids had completed studies on behalf of LMCA previously. He explained that none of the firms used in the past were on the recommended list of the Community Association Institute (CAI). He chose only firms on that list to solicit bids for this study.

The Board then reviewed the items that would be covered in the study. Marty said he had asked for an evaluation of all infrastructure items with an anticipated life span of 20 years as recommended by the CAI. Landscaping items that fall into the purview of Pine Ridge were excluded from the study, according to Marty. He reminded the Board that most of the firms contacted provided LMCA with a checklist of items that would be included in the study. Dan suggested that drainage issues as related to the alleyways be considered as part of the study. Marty responded that the Board also needs to determine the dividing line of responsibility between LMCA and Fairfax County for drainage as it relates to storm drains and manhole covers.

Marty recommended that the Board award the contract for the reserve study to either FEA or Mason. FEA ranked at the top as highly qualified in all the criteria evaluated by Marty, although Marty felt most comfortable with Mason and was concerned that LMCA would be locked into future service contracts with FEA if the Board opted to hire an engineering firm as opposed to an independent contractor. Dan said that there could be merit to hiring an engineering firm with experts on staff who could be available to answer questions. Additionally, he pointed out that FEA was the only firm to provide a definite timeframe for completing the study.

Dan moved that FEA be retained at a fee of \$4,300 to complete the 2006 reserves engineering study. Don seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

Lou asked Marty to make it clear to FEA that the Board wanted a report by the end of March. He said that after receiving the report, he intends to appoint a committee, comprised of Board members and other homeowners, to review the study, analyze the financial implications and make recommendations as to next steps.

#### 6. New Business

Lou discussed a letter he had received from Fairfax County regarding the availability of a Community Emergency Alert Network. He asked that stories about the service be published in the *Mews News* and posted on the web site.

Letters to five homeowners who have tenants and have not submitted copies of their leases have been mailed. The letters ask the homeowners to comply with the bylaws by sending a copy of their lease to the Board by April 8.

Simon moved to adjourn the meeting at 9 p.m. Dan seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Trimble  
LMCA Secretary