

Vicksburg Commons HOA Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023

Location: Goshen Elementary

Meeting Start: 7:03pm

Meeting End: 8:01 pm

Present: Adrienne Linden, Kermit Winslow, Raed Armouti, Don Burroughs, Yan Zhang, Matthew Smith, Sarah Estes, Robert Vecchetti, Matt McFarlane, Brad Allan, Deepa Dummi

Old Business

Budget/Financial Update

- 88% HOA dues have been received
- Generally, HOA expenses are tracking below budget
- Landscaping is coming in under budget due to dry conditions. If the trend continues, the expectation that expenses will be around 30% below the approved budget
- Gillihan has been working in the basins, as hired
 - The next goal would be to create a schedule for regular basin maintenance (seeding, mowing & cleaning out the silt)

Little Library

- The City of Edwardsville awarded Vicksburg Commons an ENERGI Grant for the Little Free Library. The award will be \$1000 or 50% of total costs, whichever is less.
- Attendees then held a discussion on where we should locate the Little Free Library
 - Attendees agreed that the ideal location would be on the District 7 property at the school crosswalk, perhaps close to the school fence. The District has approved this location. Although there have been a couple of attempts, there has yet to be a direct discussion with the homeowners who live on either side of that strip of land to get their thoughts. Attendees agreed that we should try to re-engage with the homeowners.
 - Second location discussed placing near the monument (ex-fountain) at Goshen & Vicksburg.
 - A third location was at Governors & Vicksburg Dr where the sidewalk ends. Beyond that is County or City property.

NOTE: Post-meeting – majority of the Board approved that Adrienne Linden should proceed and order the materials for the little library. To meet the grant's rules, installation must be completed by April 1st.

Fall Festival

- Sarah Estes reported that the Fall Festival is being planned for the weekend of October 14th, with October 21st as a secondary date option.

New Business

- Bob Vecchetti raised a few concerns that he wanted to share with the HOA Board and with the other Attendees to solicit people's opinion on these matters:
 - (1) His primary concern is the safety of the school children who are crossing the street at the crosswalk after school. He stated several risk factors:
 - Vehicles moving beyond the 20 mph (during school hours) – 25 mph (non-school hours) speed limits.

- The volume of vehicles parked on both sides of the street, including sometimes directly on the crosswalk each workday afternoon, particularly around 2:45 pm when Liberty Middle School day ends.
- The curve in the road in the vicinity of the crosswalk what also limits drivers' visibility
- And he has observed that parents are not getting out to their cars to walk their children safely across the street.

While the HOA Board and all Attendees agreed with Bob that it is a dangerous situation, it was discussed that HOA does not have authority on issues related to either street parking or speeding. It was recommended that those concerns should be brought up to the City of Edwardsville, and perhaps even to Liberty Middle School to suggest a communication to parents about not using this area as a parking lot to pick up their students.

- (2) Bob also shared concern about the general upkeep of houses and properties within our subdivision. He has observed that the maintenance standard has decreased over the last 18 years. More often, he has noticed houses with building materials, lawn equipment and/or garbage containers visible for extended periods of time in front or side yards. He also noticed that the standards for lawn maintenance and/or landscaping have declined. He is concerned that continued disregard or inattention to these things could decrease the value of everyone's homes.

Discussion on Bob's observations followed. Like with the parking and speeding, some issues fall under the City's purview (i.e., grass being too high). Some issues, such as neighbors having their trash cans in their front or side yards, are noted within the Vicksburg Commons covenants. However, there have been many conversations over the years in the HOA meetings about how to and whether to address these covenant violations. Bottom line, while the covenants state the rules, the covenants do not define the consequences when rules are broken. It would require rewriting the covenants to address some of these issues. The effort to generate enough interest among the homeowners to rewrite and approve updated covenants (which would require 2/3 of the homeowners to vote to approve) has been deemed too great and expensive a challenge. There is a general feeling that any endeavor to attempt rewriting the covenants would not be successful.

Two recommendations were made to give feedback to a larger audience that the 12-20 people who regularly attend HOA general meetings: (1) Have next year's Fall meeting coincide with the Fall Festival (maybe meet 1 hour before the festivities are to begin) and (2) include a reminder about covenant rules along with the next dues letter.

- (3) Bob also had a general question about the HOA rules regarding yard sales.

Brad Allen explained that there are no rules in the covenants about yard sales. Brad also shared that another homeowner had recently reached out to the Board because they had had a similar question when they noticed one family having multiple, long-running yard sales. The questioning homeowner was directed to contact the City of Edwardsville, which does have regulations regarding how many days a yard sale may be held and the number of yard sales a person may have per year. It was reported that the homeowners who may have been in violation of the City's yard sale rules were notified via letter from the City, and it now appears the situation has been resolved.

- Next, Deepa Dummi asked a question about whether the covenants mention compost bins or composting, in general. The response was that there is no mention within the covenants about rules relating to composting.
- Spring HOA meeting tentatively scheduled for **February 22, 2024**, subject to facility availability.

Minutes submitted by: A. Linden