

THE  
VILLAGE  GRANDE®  
AT ENGLISH MILL

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
August 8, 2023**

The Board of Trustees Meeting of the Village Grande at English Mill Homeowners Association for July 11, 2023, was called to order at 6:30pm by Trustee Jeanette Harris. The meeting was held in the Grande Room at 1 Village Grande Road, Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234.

A roll call was read by Trustee Sue Carey who confirmed a quorum of Trustees including Sue Carey, Jeanette Harris, Abe Greenbaum, Eileen Mayer, and Jo-Anne Goldberg. Also in attendance are Erica Moore, and Norma Meyer of DiLucia Management Corporation.

The agenda has previously been distributed. There are 3 changes to the agenda. We have added an approval for an addition to the ACC Rules and Regulations for installation of flood lights to the sides of a home with sensors set at 30-60 seconds. We have also removed approval of the Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee Charter at this time. We have added proposals from Longwood Tree Service and Brightview Landscape for the removal of 2 dead trees and 4 tree stumps on common property areas.

MOTION made by Jeanette to adopt the amended agenda seconded by Sue.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

The minutes of the meeting from July 11, 2023 have been previously distributed.

MOTION from Sue to adopt the meeting minutes as distributed and seconded by Eileen.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

**President's Report**

- The financial management of our association is vital and sometimes an arduous task for our Board to undertake, but is arguably one of the most important ones as it ensures that the association has the funds it needs to pay its bills, maintain the common areas, and be prepared for the future.
- As you may have noticed from examination of the monthly budget reports posted on the portal for the last several years, the Board has been battling to maintain an adequate balance in the operations account. This is due to several factors including increase cost of contracts, utilities, daily operating costs, etc., as well as the depletion of the money that our community received from Horton several years ago. Our Board goal this year will focus on replenishing our operating account and cutting costs of nonessential items. This will all be done while maintaining the amenities and the quality of life we have always been used to here at Village Grande. Additionally, we will also be critically reviewing all areas that were both over and under budget

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this year and brainstorming strategies to create a more balanced budget in the coming years. I would be remiss if I did not point out that we are extremely fortunate to have been saving money for the past two years through the efforts of the maintenance committee, landscape committee, and other committees, that service our community daily through volunteerism.

- In the meantime, I would like to give the community some of this information tonight, as well as, a preliminary action plan that will be put in place by the Board.
- By the end of the next fiscal year, the Board will ensure that our Operating Account (our account that is used to pay business expenses) will have a healthy cash balance. This account had a net loss of \$117,590 for the year ending 9/30/22.
- The Reserve Fund is healthy. The Board will continue to make necessary purchases as scheduled.
- The year ending 9/30/22 had excess expenses over revenue of \$266,291 per our recent audit.
  - Here is a brief summary breakdown of the most significant numbers:

▪ Operating Account Net Loss	\$117, 590
▪ Excess snow removal	\$39,663
▪ Prior year deficit (year ending 9/21)	\$61,000
▪ Interfund transfer (money that needs to be moved to replacement fund from the operating account)	\$44,029
- The Board will continue our community's amenities. There may be some compromises at times, such as time reductions, using supplies for a longer period, etc.
- Instead of having a one-time special assessment, we will add the necessary amount to our monthly assessments to repay the prior year's shortfalls.
- The Board will have an austerity program to reduce budget deficits. All expenses will be paired down to essentials.
- The Board will request that the finance committee investigate and report to the community:
  - How the operating fund was over budget- detail the 9/30/22 excess expenses over revenue of \$266,291.
  - Review all expenses to ensure they were proper.
- The Board will create a cash flow report and a cash flow forecasting report. This cash flow report should include aggregate data regarding all cash inflows and external investment sources. It will also include all cash outflows that pay for our business activities and investments. The cash flow forecasting report will provide us with an estimate of the flow of cash over a specific period. This will help us predict future cash positions, avoid crippling cash shortages, and earn returns on any cash surpluses we have.
- The Board will also investigate simplifying line items to reduce any potential bookkeeping errors.
- Lastly, the Board is happy to announce that there are no geese around the clubhouse.

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### **Board Goals**

Having a proper, fiscally responsible budget in place is necessary for the successful operation of any homeowner's association. Just as with any budget, income and expenses must be considered – for an HOA, this income mainly comes in the form of owner assessments. As we all know, things tend to get more expensive as time goes on. When necessary to cover the expenses of the association, board members may have to increase homeowner assessments. We know this isn't always the most popular decision, it is one that sometimes must be made by those serving on the Board to ensure that the association's expenses are covered for the year and to ensure we are in a fiscally sound position moving forward into the future.

This information is being shared tonight after several meetings with the Finance Committee and ongoing discussions among the Board. We are passionate about sharing information with the community and being transparent, even when the information is difficult to share. Will assessments be going up? Yes. We refuse to “kick the can down the road,” and we are committed to taking the proper action to ensure our operating account is replenished and reserves remain healthy. We appreciate the community's support as we navigate this important topic together. The Board plans to provide all of you with a “budget narrative” in the form of a letter, which will map out for you the amount of funds needed for the upcoming year and income and expenses from last year and the information that I covered tonight. You will receive this prior to our September meeting to give you plenty of time to review so we can address any questions you may have.

Also, the Board is initiating a pilot called, Meet with the Board. Our first session will be on Tuesday, Sept. 19th beginning at 2pm. Residents will have 10 minutes to speak to the Board about a topic of their choice. Reservations must be made and a brief questionnaire completed. Please contact the community manager if you are interested. The Board has designated a separate time outside of our very busy workshop sessions to listen to the community.

### **Treasurer's Report on June Financials**

Eileen reported the balances of the operating account, replacement reserve account, and the maintenance reserve account.

This is for the financial period ending June 30, 2023.

#### Operating fund

Beginning Balance: \$103,201.78

Receipts: \$87,749.00

Disbursements: \$88,062.15

Ending Balance: \$102,888.63

Balance of Replacement Reserve Fund: \$16,024.34

Balance of Maintenance Reserve Fund: \$11,316.51

Social Committee: \$3,678.85

Special Events: \$8,034.66

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Merril Lynch:

Capital Reserve: \$970,113.49

Other Reserve: \$134,862.31

### **New Business**

#### **2021-2022 Audit**

MOTION from Eileen to approve the 2021-2022 Financial Audit for Village Grande at English Mill. This audit was comprised of statements of revenues, expenses, changes in fund balance, cash flows and related notes to the financial statements, seconded by Abe.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

#### **Direct Energy Proposal**

The current contract with Direct Energy expires at the end of the month. The Board received two bids from Direct Energy. A 3-year term in the amount of \$0.139/kWh and a 5-year term in the amount of \$0.125kWh.

MOTION from Abe to approve the proposal from Direct Energy for a 5-year term in the amount of \$0.125/ kilowatt per hour. Our current contract with the same vendor expires at the end of this month, seconded by Sue. This expense will be taken from the Operations Account.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

#### **Longwood Tree Service Proposal**

The Board received two (2) proposals to remove two (2) dead trees and four (4) stumps; Longwood Tree Service for \$1,199.53, and Brightview Landscape for \$4,061.56.

MOTION from Abe to approve Longwood Tree Services for the removal of two (2) dead, hazardous trees and the removal of four (4) tree stumps from the common property for \$1,199.53, seconded by Eileen. This expense will be taken from the Operations Account.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

#### **Rules and Regulations Update – Bulk Trash Policy**

The Board would like to update the Rules and Regulations pertaining to bulk trash. The addition to the rule will read as follows: "Bulk Trash should be placed curbside no sooner than the Friday prior to the scheduled bulk trash pickup. Bulk trash day begins on Monday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> full 7-day calendar week for each month."

MOTION from Abe to approve the update to the bulk trash policy, seconded by Jeanette.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

#### **ACC Rules and Regulations – Curb Trees**

The Board would like to update the ACC Rules and Regulations pertaining to curb trees. The addition to the rule will read as follows: "This includes the trimming/ pruning around the trunk and at the base of the trees and ensuring limbs are no lower than 7 feet from the ground."

MOTION from Eileen to approve the update to curb trees, seconded by Sue.

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Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

### **ACC Rules and Regulations – Motion Sensor Lights**

The Board would like to update the ACC Rules and Regulations pertaining to motion sensor lights. The addition to the rule will read as follows: “Motion detected flood lights may be installed on the sides of the home with sensors set at thirty (30) to sixty (60) seconds. Spotlights, flood lights, and/ or motion detected flood lights shall not disturb or interfere with the comfort of the neighbors’ living space, nor be aimed at adjacent properties.

MOTION from Sue to approve the update to motion sensor lights, seconded by Abe.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

### **Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

The Board would like to add a Reasonable Accommodation Policy that would provide guidance for residents and owners to make a request for a reasonable accommodation from the Village Grande at English Mill Homeowners Association.

MOTION from Sue to approve the Reasonable Accommodation Policy, seconded by Abe.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

### **Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee Charter**

The Board would like to add an Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee Charter to provide the mission, vision, values, scope, membership and objectives of the committee.

MOTION from Sue to approve the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee Charter, seconded by Jeanette.

Vote: 5 in favor, 0 opposed

Resolved: Motion carried

### **Committee Updates**

- Sue informed everyone that there will be a gathering on September 11<sup>th</sup> for the pool closing party, put together by the Social Committee. Also, the Summer Party is closed and fully booked.
- Sandy with the Special Events Committee noted that the grill Wednesday’s will continue through the second Wednesday night in September. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, the first bingo game will be held in the Grande Room. On October 21<sup>st</sup> there will be a car show in the parking lot, with Village Grande at Little Mill being invited. Lastly, they are also planning a trip to the Northern states next fall.
- Sue mentioned that the Government Liaison Committee is always looking for new members.
- Abe commented on the ongoing Landscape Committee proposals, noting that the team has inspected the grounds of the references provided by those who submitted a proposal for the new contract. They will begin interviews shortly. He also noted the Maintenance Committee has completed various projects throughout the community and provided a handout to those in attendance.

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- Eileen commented on the ACC, stating they will be starting inspections soon, date to be determined. Newsletter has been growing, and they are considering adding an insert versus printing it in its entirety to save money. The Safety Committee will be a sanctioned committee soon. The Neighborhood Watch committee will be meeting next month.
- Ray Viventi additional comments to the landscape committee. \$44,000 was spent on water, with pit 19 consuming 300,000 gallons this month, at a cost of \$3,000. This pit takes care of the front entrance, and the committee is wanting to limit this amount.

### **Trustee Closing Comments**

The date of the next meeting is September 12, 2023.

### **Adjournment**

MOTION from Eileen to adjourn seconded by Sue.

This meeting of the Board of Trustees has been adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Do, Community Manager