***SPRING HAS SPRUNG***

The Meadows at Topsfield Quarterly Newsletter – Issue #3

aPRIL 1, 2019

# COMMUNITY NEWS

***Trustee Meetings***: We started the year with informal by-monthly meetings for the express purpose of ramping up and getting new members up to speed (working sessions). In addition to these initial organizational sessions, we held a “formal” business meeting on Jan. 27th. Minutes of that meeting were distributed to the Community. A status update on what the Trustees are presently up to is provided below. Hope it helps.

## COMMUNITY Projects – WHAT’S GOING ON?

***Registration of New Trustees:*** Registration has been completed. All new Trustees have been acknowledged as legal representatives for the Meadows at Topsfield. The cost was supported within our 2019 budget.

***New Association Banking Information***: Scott and Sandy have made the necessary changes with the State to clear the way for creating our new banking process and location (TD Bank in Topsfield). For those of you who are interested in paying your homeowner fees electronically, detailed instructions will be sent out once the process has been fully established and a demo will take place at the May Community meeting. Physical checks can continue to be placed in the Condo Slot.

***HOA Collections***: HOA collections from those opting to pay via a “physical check” have been challenging for us. We currently cannot access HOA checks until our mail carrier transfers those “fees” to mailbox #25 as there is no key for the “Condo Fee” slot. As we learned this past month, when substitute mail delivery personnel are in place due to vacations or illnesses, we sometimes have to wait weeks to access those checks. As a result, we have scheduled a locksmith to assess if the lock can be changed out (it is our right to do that per the Post Office). If so – issue resolved. If not, we’ll need to mount a secured box on or near our existing mailbox. We’ll keep you posted.

***REMINDER:*** We would like to remind unit owners that HOA fees are due by the 1st of every month. Collecting funds in a timely fashion eases the strain on our cash flow and allows for a tight monthly assessment. Quite selfishly we are looking to all of you to help make our lives easier by not having to continually go back to update our monthly financials. Thanks in advance for your co-operation.

***Legal Representation Status Update***: Feeling it prudent to learn about our vendors and current markets, we reached out to several local Law Offices. The Trustees found no parties interested in representing our Association other than our existing counsel. Marcus, Errico, Emmer and Brooks is well known and highly respected as the leading local law firm for condominium associations, so we will remain with their firm. We have worked with Douglas Errico in the past and are currently working with Matt Gaines, a Partner in the firm’s Condominium Group.

***By-Laws Update***: Review by our Legal Representation has been completed and returned to us with minor updates (appropriate legalese). We have sent our notarized updates to the Salem Registry for official recording and all 6 by-law changes are now part of our existing By-laws.

***Capital Expense Fund***: According to legal review, we are not required to maintain a separate Capital Expense Fund.

***Pre-Approved Floral Selection***: Now that spring is upon us, attached at the end of this newsletter are the pre-approved floral selections for those who wish to augment their front gardens. No permissions required. If you have other options you think may look nice – let us know and we’ll fly them by our landscaper. Although we want people to be able to exhibit their individuality, we also want to maintain an esthetic flow to the neighborhood.

***Topsfield Preference List for Elderly Home Sales***:

Section 34. of the By-Laws and Exhibit E of the Declaration of Trust require us to advertise for and maintain a list of Topsfield residents, their immediate families and former Topsfield residents who are interested in buying a unit within our condominium (see our documents for specifics). We have forwarded our Preference Notice to our Town Representatives for posting and it is now running on the Topsfield Channel. Donna Rich from the Planning Board has also posted a copy at the Town Hall. As a result, we are compliant with our By-Law requirement at no cost to the Community. When listing a home privately or through a realtor, it is the responsibility of the seller to check with the Trustees on the status of our Preference List before entering into an agreement with any buyer. At present, we have no persons on our Preference List.

***Website Update***: Su and Lucy Power have decided they can make better progress once Lucy returns from Florida in May. Sorry for the delay. The plan is to make this a top priority at that time.

***Association Maintenance:***  Upon Tim’s return from sunny Arizona (early to mid-May) the plan is to schedule budgeted maintenance tasks. In the pipeline are: continued siding and damaged fascia replacement, power washing building exteriors where mold has been forming, septic filter replacements and general walkarounds by the trustees in order to address any winter damages.

***Golf Net***: Tim and Richie were able to successfully implement a temporary fix to the golf net behind units 21 – 24, allowing us another year to budget the funding for a replacement - possibly in 2020. Savings to the Association was ~$1200 – $1300. Thanks guys!

***Tree Removal***: Tim and Richie recently removed two overgrown pine trees behind units 21 – 24, saving the Association ~$1700. The decision was made to remove the pines by both previous and current trustees as the pines would soon overtake the water basin resulting in other costly “issues” to our Community. Money is in the 2019 budget to landscape that area with appropriate plantings. Thanks again, Tim and Richie!

***Volunteers – Association Insurance***: We are currently exploring details of our Association Insurance Policy to see if cost savings are an option for us. If you are up to doing a bit of research with us – let us know. It would be most helpful.

***Window Washing***: Barbara Hastings has graciously volunteered to co-ordinate a date for this to take place. The plan is for last year’s vendor to come on a single day and wash all units that have requested his services. We’ll co-ordinate this to take place around power washing of our siding.

***May Community Meeting***: Our Bi-yearly Community Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 29th at the Topsfield Library. Scheduled start time is 5:30. If you have topics or questions you would like addressed at that meeting, please feel free to reach out so we can be prepared. An agenda will be provided to the Community prior to the meeting. At this time probable topics would pertain to the Health of the Association - 2019 Financial Trending, Unforeseen Issues or Surprises, Upcoming Maintenance, Reserve Funding Levels for 2020, Pros/Cons regarding a Contingency Fund and Other Items of Interest requested by the Community.

 ***As always, suggestions and feedback are welcome***. Pat, Sandy, Scott, Su and Tim

## **Financials**

***QUARTERLY OPERATING ACCOUNT***:

Beginning Balance:  **January 1, 2019:** $1,231.26

Deposits/Income: $34,020.00

Prepayments: $7,140.00

     Assessments: $0.00

Payments/Expenses: $19,170.35

Transfer to Reserve Account: $0.00

Ending Balance: **March 31, 2019:** $23,220.91

***QUARTERLY RESERVE ACCOUNT:***

Beginning Balance: **January 1, 2019:** $49,868.08

Transfer into Reserve Account: $0.00

Ending Balance: **March 31, 2019:** $49,868.08

Reserve Funding will take place at the end of the Fiscal Year in order for the Trustees to closely monitor expenses/costs. At this time HOA expenditures are on track and we are trending according to Budget.

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Pre-Approved plantings. I.E. No additional approvals required.

Spring/Summer

* Bachelor Buttons
* Balsam
* Celosia or Cocks Comb
* Coleus
* Petunias
* Lantana
* Lobelia
* Geraniums
* Marigolds
* Moss Rose i.e. Portulaca
* Nasturtium
* Snapdragons
* Petunias
* Pansies/Violets
* Strawflower
* Stock
* Sweet Alyssum
* Zinnia

Late Summer/Fall

* Chrysanthemums
* Flowering Kale
* Salvia

Suggested Perennials

* Artemisia
* Bulbs such as Lilies, Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths
* Carnations
* Creeping Thyme
* Periwinkle/Myrtle
* Dianthus Pinks
* Hosta
* Pachysandra
* Phlox
* Sweet Williams