

Trails at Brittany Homeowners Association 2018 Annual Meeting — Minutes

MEETING DATE: 7 PM, Tuesday, June 12, 2018

LOCATION: Countryside School Gymnasium

The annual meeting was called to order by President John Gilman at 7:27pm. The HOA board was in attendance, as well as a quorum of homeowners.

AGENDA

1) Welcome & Introductions

John Gilman opened the meeting, thanked and introduced those who serve on the board and head up the committees. *(See list in item 8.)*

2) Neighborhood Updates

John presented the status of standard HOA business:

- a) Architectural requests have been pretty basic, nothing to raise any concerns
- b) The few remaining empty lots are being mowed
- c) There is just one remaining foreclosed house in Trails at Brittany, which will be up for auction very soon per notices in the newspaper.
- d) There is some needed compliance work to be done with the city to retain our official Neighborhood Watch program. Volunteer needed to head this. [Kyle McClure has volunteered.]

3) Treasurers Report

Kim Martin presented the Association financial report:

- a) At the end of last year, the Trails at Brittany Homeowners Association had a balance of \$87,000 in the bank.
- b) The HOA had a substantially larger amount in reserve a number of years ago, especially after a period of years when Association was fairly inactive and dues continued to amass. A portion of these funds has been utilized over the past few years for the many beautification projects and other approved maintenance needs, such as repairs to irrigation systems and various maintenance needs for the lakes.
- c) Annual assessment dues for entire neighborhood are remitted fairly consistently. There are a small number of delinquent properties, and those end up being paid and reconciled from the lien upon the sale of the related home.
- d) These annual dues are added to reserves in account, and are used for ongoing expenses, which have been close to budgeted amounts year over year. However, maintenance expenses are growing. Last year the assessments brought in approximately \$57,000, but needed expenses were \$67,000. We are in strong shape — the only concern would be if any large and unexpected critical needs were to arise.

4) Potential HOA Assessment Raise

- a) The treasurer's report led to a discussion of assessments, which have never been raised. The neighborhood is now 20 years old, and many more things are arising that need repairs.

These repairs are increasingly expensive, per normal inflation and otherwise, two decades after the assessments were originally implemented. The Association does not want to be running at a small loss each year as far as the expense budget needed for mowing and basic maintenance compared to the total amount of dues collected. And while we have adequate reserves at the current time, it may be prudent to raise the HOA fees slightly to grow the reserves.

- b) An explanation of annual line item expenses was provided, and then attendees discussed what might be determined to be the comfortable amount for a reserve cutoff. Michael Henneman suggested that it may be time to raise dues modestly to make sure they meet the recurring baseline operating expense budget. It was agreed by attendees that the annual operating budget should be balanced and/or the same as the dues, and reserves used more for one-time expenditures. There was an additional suggestion that increases could be done on a pro-rata percentage basis on the current tiered payment structure, or could just be implemented as a \$50 raise for everyone.
- c) Any raise to assessments would need to be done in accordance with the HOA covenants and charter. The HOA Board agreed to look into the overarching matter and determine the correct points of order should a raise in dues proceed at its upcoming meetings. Any notice for proxy votes to determine a course of action will be determined by the January mailing of dues bills.

5) Beautification Committee Report:

JoAnn Henneman presented updates:

- a) The tree program has been a huge success. The City of Champaign reimburses for full amount for trees planted via the program in the easements/right of way areas. They are providing 25 trees per year for 3 years. There is a requirement for subdivisions that each lot should have a tree, but some don't. In looking into neighborhood planting history, there was an oversight in inspections during the initial development of TAB. Beyond those asked for by neighbors, the balance of trees annually will go into those lots missing trees in their front easements in support of this rule.
- b) Ash tree issues in yards and easements: There are 16 ash trees in the right of ways. Many of the diseased trees have been removed. The stumps need to be ground out as well. Neighbors are also asked to take care of any diseased Ash trees in their yards.
- c) Some bushes are overgrown and some of the pines in common areas are falling, creating a number of needed future projects.
- d) There was discussion of the large tree that lost a huge branch off of Brighton Court, and one opinion was that HOA should cut the whole thing down, which would have cost \$800. Neighbors asked for a second opinion, as it has been there for many years.
- e) Entrances: The Mullikin Drive entrance was painted, new low voltage LED light were added, and some new trees were planted. The two gatehouses on Staley have new doorknobs so we can actually enter them, and they are scheduled to be painted as weather permits. There will be some trimming and clean-up of the overgrown plants at the entrances. New LED lights will also be added.
- f) Street lights on main roads by the entrances are now on the City's radar, per Dennis Schmidt. Seems we may actually get lights, courtesy of the City; we are encouraging our City contacts to make this happen.

Welcome Committee Report:

Katie Newman presented a report:

- g) The HOA has welcomed 13 new families since last years' meeting.
- h) There are 14 houses for sale and 9 pending purchases.

6) New/Old Business:

- a) The Board is having the lakes assessed for silt levels and to determine if there is a need or not for dredging. A question was raised about adding aerators to help with algae and mosquitoes. The Board explained that it is very expensive to bring an electric line to each lake, as well as to put in and take out the aerators each season for winter, and that there is significant maintenance required to keep the intake clean, etc.
- b) There is a goal to finish the review and update of bylaws and covenants this year. Mostly items need to be brought both in line with current legal and city requirements, as well as fix outdated language. An attorney needs to look over originals and propose changes, and proper process for passing via proxy determined. It was suggested by an attendee who had recently worked on the same project for a past neighborhood they lived in, that it may be much easier to add an amendment and to make sure the Board knows exactly what we want changed before going to an attorney for review.
- c) The website will be updated this year.
- d) The bridge over I-57 on Kirby is slated for widening in 2023.

7) Election / Approval of HOA Board Slate:

John presented the slate of renewing and new HOA board members, which was passed by a quorum:

John Gilman (President)
Jim Kurley (Vice President)
Kim Martin (Treasurer)
Shira Epstein (Secretary)
Michael Campbell (Member at Large)
Katie Newman (Member at Large; Newsletter publisher; Welcome Committee Chair)

Beautification Committee — JoAnn Henneman

Emeritus Board Member & Ice Cream Social & Beautification Committee — Janet Peshkin

Volunteers are needed to join the board! Many of the current Board members have been serving for upwards of 5-10 years, and may not be able to continue in coming year(s). Please get in touch and give back to your neighborhood. The hard work to keep Trails at Brittany special does not happen automatically, and we need more neighbors involved.

The meeting was called to close at 8:29pm. *Minutes submitted by Shira Epstein.*