



Tuesday, December 18, 2018

At the regular monthly meeting of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Association Board of Managers, held on Tuesday evening, 12/18/2018 in the United Methodist Church, Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, Mr. Martin presided and Margaret Hopkins acted as Secretary.

A quorum was present including the following: Ted Martin (President), Mary Kopala (Vice-President), Sally Marisic (Treasurer), Margaret Hopkins (Secretary), Pam Bishop, Larry Bowman, Kevin Burd, Lisa Carr, George Resh, Esther Mefferd, and Tammy Travitz. Tom Harlan, MGCA attorney, was also present.

I. Call to Order, Ted Martin

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, Mr. Martin opened the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

- i. Since the Minutes were distributed to Board members prior to the time of this regular monthly meeting, the reading of the Minutes was dispensed with and the revised November Minutes were approved.

III. Treasurer's Report

- i. On a motion from Bowman and seconded by Travitz, a resolution was adopted unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the Board of Managers accepts the November P&L report presented by the Treasurer.

IV. Superintendent's Report

- i. See appended report.

V. Strategic Planning

A. Finance Committee - Sally Marisic

- i. The proposed budget includes \$100 increase to home assessment to continue to build up the capital improvement fund, parking/garage/shed rentals are up around 20% to get the rates closer to competitive rates in Lebanon County, and the proposed budget includes discontinuing early pay discounts for all but homes. No questions were asked.

B. Special Committee on Rentals – Jon Green?

- i. Committee recommends the following be considered.
 1. Rental permit
 2. Cap on total rentals
 3. Defined process to apply for and grant permit
 4. Paid rental administrator for MGCA
 5. Addition rules/fines for rental without permit
 6. Online hub of information with forms, sample documents, etc.
 7. Safety inspection (part of conversation) has now become a recommendation, not a rule.

Thought is that the safety inspection would go to all property owners as a voluntary guideline.

C. Communications Committee – Kevin Burd

- i. Articles due by noon, 12/19/2018

D. Community Activities Committee – Tammy Travitz



- i. Two new groups have been added to the Heritage Festival. There will be performances on 6/8, 6/15, 7/6, 8/10.
- E. Parks & Recreation Committee – Margaret Hopkins
 - i. Tree monitoring with Bob Houser, tree health review upcoming. Will look to grind stumps to replant in that spot, plant buddy trees to fill space in canopy.
- F. Property Ownership Committee – Pam Bishop
 - i. No completed transfers to report.
- G. Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures Committee – Margaret Hopkins
 - i. First reading of Policy for use of MGCA image pulled to discuss more.
- H. Nominations Committee – Esther Mefferd
 - i. No meeting, nothing to report.
- I. Tabernacle Association – Esther Mefferd
 - i. Larry Bowman reported that there had been no meeting, and therefore nothing to report.
- J. Ad-Hoc Archives Committee – George Resh
 - i. No meeting, nothing to report.
- K. Ad-Hoc Library Committee – Lisa Carr
 - i. No meeting, nothing to report.
- L. Buildings & Grounds Committee – Ted Martin
 - i. Report attached to minutes.
- M. Executive Committee – Ted Martin
 - i. Nothing to report.

VI. New Business

- i. On a motion by Margaret Hopkins, seconded by Mary Kopala, a resolution was passed unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the MGCA Board of Managers accepts the offer of a 3-month trash & recycling contract extension by TNT at the current contract's rate.
- ii. On a motion by Kevin Burd, seconded by Larry Bowman, a resolution was passed unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the MGCA Board of Managers releases \$2,000 from the Heritage Festival fund to cover expenses for the June 8 Teentown and June 15th Celtic Martins Heritage Festival concerts.
- iii. On a motion by Sally Marisic, seconded by Mary Kopala, a resolution was passed unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the MGCA Board of Managers accepts the proposed budget for 2019 as put forth by Finance committee.
- iv. A motion was made by Mary Kopala and seconded by Sally Marisic, and after the following discussion the resolution was passed unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the MGCA Board of Managers accepts the recommendation report of the Special Committee on Rentals and directs Attorney Tom Harlan to commence drafting proposed policies for the governance of rental properties in the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting.

Tom Harlan - Many communities in Lebanon and Lancaster Counties are acting on the thought that communities are better off when short-term rentals are regulated. Most current case law in PA

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deals with municipality zoning ordinances. The MGCA is a uniform, planned community created many years ago, run by MGCA, and the deeds contain language that owners are bound by the By-Laws and Rules & Regulations of the MGCA. This language provides for the kind of recommendations by the committee. Challenges to these kinds of regulations have not gone through the court system yet in PA.

Larry Bowman –recommended that the MGCA not be put between a MGCA Member and the property/county taxing authorities.

Margaret Hopkins agrees that we would not put ourselves in an enforcement position with regard to tax and insurance requirements.

Kevin Burd agrees it is up to Lebanon County to police their taxes and it is also up to insurance companies to protect their own risk. He does not think we should be involved with insurance oversight either.

Sally Marisic agrees with the idea that we provide information to renters about local government rental requirements and not interfere with its enforcement.

Ted Martin – acknowledged that the committee has done an enormous amount of work putting information together with regard to requirements related to the business of owning rental property.

Margaret Hopkins – would like the MGCA to be thoughtful about how we maintain/handle full-time and is basically in favor of a rental property cap – but what number? She would not want rentals to exceed full-time permanent homes.

Ted Martin – likes rentals and the vibrancy they add to the community, but wants to see the community stay a primarily residential community

Kevin Burd – posed the question, “How do we define rentals?” On one end of the spectrum there are full-time residential owners and at the other end are MGCA Members whose properties are vacant other than rental. There is a lot of area in the middle where a Member may rent but also live in and support the community. What is that number? How do we define it? Doesn’t want to “punish” those in the middle.

Margaret Hopkins – these recommendations will help us to define those questions. The clarification can come along the way of pursuing a permitting process.

Mary Kopala stated that the committee worked hard to be inclusive for all stake holders. The committee was trying to be fair to renters as well as trying to preserve our unique community as a primary residential community. Pursuing language in Charter and By-Laws.

Pam Bishop – in favor of being articulate about what our purpose is as a community. That leads to the appropriate regulations and rules that lead to that end. She is concerned about process. The MGCA has hosted several public meetings, but wants to make sure that the motion is to accept recommendations and to begin to put the meat on the bones, not to declare what we are actually going to do. If the board accepts the recommendations, that does not mean that we will do everything that is recommended. She wants to make sure that we get the input of the entire community before we implement anything. She sees that the motion allows us to move forward with drafting language that will become a rule, and that this draft will be released to the public



before the Board would vote on it.

Tammy Travitz – agrees that we need public/community input. Her biggest concern is the cap and how it would be determined. She worked with committee to try to simplify process and reduce some points to recommendations to rental owners only. Would like to make sure that we get input from community and base decisions on data.

Esther Mefferd – supports committee work.

George Resh – agrees with most of the recommendations. He likes the idea of one person being in charge of renter groups, and making sure renters are following the rules

Lisa Carr – agrees with recommendations and the safety checklist.

Ted Martin – would like the first reading to be in January. Second reading would not need to be immediately following, there could be work and revisions in between the reading. Readings are not necessary, but will do public readings (two) for transparency and to include the public as much as possible.

VII. Old Business

- i. None

VIII. MGCA Community Member Comments

- i. John Hoyt, 609 2nd and 603 1st. Stated he appreciates that the rental committee studied the impact of rentals on the community and were open to input from the community. He would like their recommendations to be available to MGCA Members. John is not happy with the implication that owners of rental properties feel differently about the MGCA than other MGCA Members. Owners of rental properties know as much about the MGCA and its history, care for their property, and are as involved as other owners. He also hopes that the Mt. Gretna Borough's approach to controlling rental properties will not be used as a model; what they have passed is onerous to property owners and was passed without input from the community. Rental properties are a benefit to the community; they attract a number of people to the area who support local businesses. Many renters have been coming here since their grandparents first visited; and these visitors have a stake in Mt. Gretna as well. With regard to safety checks and other proposed regulations for rental properties – why limited to those who rent? Regulations should apply to everyone, not discriminate against a certain set of owners.
- ii. Paul McMullen, 207 Dickson. Expressed his concern that group-think can take over when a small group of people proposes a solution for a situation. Paul is very concerned that a wedge is going to be driven into the community by these proposals that will separate those who rent and those who don't. He would urge the Board to take the consideration of these proposals very slowly and to make small changes to see what effect they have. What is the need to make so many changes so quickly? Most of the concerns presented about rental properties (noise, parking) are not confined to rental properties but are the concerns for non-rental properties as well.
- iii. Larry McKenna, 309 Mills. Stated that he has been coming to the Campmeeting for 67 years, but only recently has he been here as an MGCA Member rather than a renter. He urged the Board not to forget the long tradition of families who have been renting here for generations. Many of these



- renting families who have been part of the summer community for generations could have a greater respect for the Campmeeting than Members who are recent additions. He urged the Board to not make it difficult for people to rent their homes.
- iv. Vincie McMullen, 207 Dickson. Expressed her concern that there are a lot of concerns being dealt with in the recommendations, and that each one could result in pages of new rules and guidelines. Her hope is that the Board would consider approaching each concern one at a time and propose resolutions rather than making sweeping changes all at once.
 - v. David Rogers, 200 Otterbein. Mount Gretna and the Campmeeting portion of Mount Gretna has changed a lot over the last 20 years and he thanked the committee for their work investigating what changes rental properties have contributed to those changes. He observed that many of the concerns the committee investigated were from problems related to people not following rules that are already in place. How do we indoctrinate newcomers with our culture? Unless this question is dealt with, he does not believe that more rules and regulations will change behavior.
 - vi. Nancy Rogers, 200 Otterbein. Had question to ask the Board. In the 2018 survey sent to MGCA Members, 53% of respondents said they have no problem with rentals. The other 47% said their concerns about rental properties were primarily about them following the rules we already have in place. Since business decisions should be based upon data, not emotion – how did the Board go from a survey which indicated no concerns unique to renters to the formation of a committee to address rentals? [Ted Martin responded – committee was looking into the situation to discover more information.] Nancy Rogers responded that the community as a whole does not appear to be concerned. Nancy also asked what the data was to full time residents, part time residents, and rental properties 20 years ago to date? Has it dramatically changed? Is there actual data or is it anecdotal. [Mary Kopala responded with some of the ways they determined current rental properties, and indicated that the belief that there has been historical change is based on anecdotal evidence.]
 - vii. Dale Kreider, 205 4th. They rent their house periodically because otherwise they could not keep their Campmeeting property, feel that many renters are in the same situation. They came to the Campmeeting because of the inclusive, friendly nature of the community and would consider retiring here. However, these regulations appear to be trying to keep out a certain group of people from the Campmeeting. Would urge the governing body not to regulate, and to keep rules simple.
 - viii. Pat Wilmsen, 400 Glossbrenner. Pat submitted written comments to the Board which are attached to these minutes. At the meeting, she thanked the Board for their hard work. She also thanked the Board for being open to community comments and to responding to community concerns. She introduced her father who had been coming to Gretna for over 80 years and had been renting in Gretna for over 20 years. Of the family cottages they own, 2 of the 3 were rentals before they purchased them, and one of those has been a rental for at least 40 years. Pat affirmed that she doesn't feel it is her best interest to have a property manager as the committee was originally suggesting. With regard to advertising, they do not place advertisements outside their cottage and do not agree with having plaque placed on their cottage. If a limit is imposed on renters, what about



military renters? She would also like to volunteer to help other renters set up their rental arrangements to help them fit into the overall culture of the Campmeeting.

- ix. Gary Wilmsen, 400 Glossbrenner – Posed the question about whether or not the renters are using resources beyond the norm, causing parking problems, or creating trash and noise problems. The pretense of the committee was to address the “renter” caused issues, which could not be proven and were not addressed.
- x. Ann Bering, 305 8th. She is passionate about community having grown up here. She keeps a house here because she is interested in Mount Gretna. However, after hearing the recommendations from the committee, it appeared that the concerns were not so much about safety but about not liking renters. She realizes that she could be mistaken, but sees no other reason that rental properties are being targeted rather than the community as a whole. There are so many other issues for the MGCA to be managing – she urged the Board to slow this process down and allow for community input and to honor how the majority of MGCA Members feel about this issue. She also noted that you can’t compare the Campmeeting to other communities like Lancaster and Lititz when examining the rental issue because these communities are nothing like the Campmeeting in that they are primarily full-time communities. If most homeowners don’t agree that it is appropriate and honorable to continue with this process – what will the Board do?
- xi. Brenda Wentzel, 04 Batdorf. Expressed that she is in favor of rental permits; it allows the Board to know who the responsible parties are. She likes the safety checklist, and is in favor of a rental hub being added to the website. She had questions about the cost of permit - is it to take care of the administration cost? She urged the Board to not make it an onerous amount.
- xii. Issa Dixon, 411 6th. Stated that she is in the category of those who rent so that they can keep the house. She loves Mount Gretna and thinks that those who own rental properties are caring for the homes and making it so that not only families like herself can stay here, but also enable other families to stay here who otherwise could not. 85% of her rentals are repeat visitors coming to stay with families who can’t house them. The Mount Gretna Borough rental permit is said to be thousands of dollars. [The committee noted that a rental permit would be from MGCA, not County. The committee also responded that their recommendation for a property manager requirement was replaced with a primary and secondary contact, and that the paid safety inspection was also dropped based on feedback from the community after the last public meeting.]
- xiii. Harold Myers, 511 1st Street. Agreed that it may be desirable for the Campmeeting to maintain a core of full-time owners. It may be a good idea to quantify and track the number of rental properties, and a permit may be a good way of achieving this goal. Safety recommendations are fine as long as the Campmeeting would not assume any liability by actually certifying the property as safe. Many of the recommendations of the committee are a good idea. However, as Nancy Rogers stated, it doesn’t appear that there is any widespread concern regarding renters in particular, but rather that the primary concern expressed was in regard to violations of community rules whether by a renter or not. The key thing is to have everyone in the community follow the rules that impact the quality of life and nature of our community. As such, the Board's proposal seems like an

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overly complex solution to a problem that doesn't exist. The recommendations appear difficult if not impossible to enforce, and potentially costly to administer. It is ultimately up to rental property owners to ensure that renters comply with rules. We need a system to report violations to owners for speedy resolution, not a complex system that addresses problems that may not exist.

- xiv. Tina Clarkson, 410 6th Street. Stated that many of her concerns had already been expressed by other Members. She affirmed that most Members who rent their property do not do so as a money-making scheme, but rather as a way to maintain ownership of a property in the MGCA. Will Members who need to rent be able to hold on to their cottages? [The committee responded that there is a recommended target of 50 rental properties. Since all current properties who rent would be able to keep renting, that number would need to be reached through attrition and may never be reached. If you are currently renting, by the committee's recommendations you would be able to keep renting forever.]
- xv. John Hess, 411 2nd Street. Stated that by purchasing and improving their cottage, they saved the cottage. They chose to invest in the cottage even though the work on such a house could not be justified elsewhere; the house is worth more in Mount Gretna than it would be anywhere else. But part of its value is in its status as a rental cottage. Renting has allowed his family to maintain the cottage for future generations. He hopes that the Board will maintain an open mind and not pass restrictions on rental properties.

Adjournment

On a motion by George Resh, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, January 15th at 6:30 pm.

Attachments:

November P&L
Superintendent Report
B&G Report
TNT 3 month contract extension
Email communication from George & Sandy Leyh
Email communication from Paula Deppen
Email communication from Nelson & Ellen Lawrence
Letter from Pat Wilmsen
Letter from Victor Massad



Secretary



Chairman