



Tuesday, May 21, 2019

At the regular monthly meeting of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Association Board of Managers, held on Tuesday evening, 5/21/2019 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, Esther Mefferd, Barb Myers, Tammy Travitz, and Justin Williams.

I. Call to Order, Ted Martin

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, Ted 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 April Minutes were approved.

III. Treasurer's Report

- i. There is one delinquent property we are working to collect. Snow removal is far over budget – other line items are as expected.
- ii. On a motion from Margaret Hopkins and seconded by Pam Bishop, a resolution was adopted unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, That the Board of Managers accepts the April P&L report presented by the Treasurer.

IV. Superintendent's Report

- i. The Superintendent's report is attached to the minutes.
- ii. Q – With leaf pick up being suspended for the summer, what are residents to do with leave and pine needles?
A – Residents can bag and trash their leaves, or put them on the correct pile behind the garages on 1st Street. Sticks will continue to be picked up.
- iii. Q – Will these time limitations apply to 2020 as well?
A – That is not yet decided. The B&G is experimenting with pick-up schedules and they will be amended as needed.
- iv. Q – Was our water usage different when connected to the Borough water supply?
A – Yes, measuring double the usage. Our meter needs to be calibrated.

V. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee - Sally Marisic

- i. No meeting, nothing to report.

B. Communications Committee – Kevin Burd

- i. Wednesday, June 19th is the deadline for summer newsletter articles.

C. Community Activities Committee – Tammy Travitz

- i. Heritage Festival advertisements were handed out. These will be available at the post office and library and distributed to cottages.



- D. Parks & Recreation Committee – Margaret Hopkins
- i. One memorial tree has been planted in the last month. Three more trees have been purchased and volunteers are needed to help plant them.
- E. Property Ownership Committee – Pam Bishop
- i. Two properties transferred in the past month, 105 3rd and 604 4th. Two more are currently scheduled for June.
 - ii. It has been a very active winter season, more than usual. November through May have seen 13 property transfers, three were purchased as primary residences, three as a second home, and seven as rental properties.
- F. Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures Committee – Margaret Hopkins
- i. The committee met to review how rule violations are handled and to review the fining structure. They will be recommending some changes.
 - ii. The committee is also working on a policy for MGCA image use.
- G. Nominations Committee – Esther Mefferd
- i. At the Annual Meeting there will be an election for Members to serve in three positions from 2020-2022. Three Members have submitted their names to be on the ballot, and currently two Board Members are seeking re-election. Nomination submissions are still open.
- H. Tabernacle Association – Larry Bowman
- i. Minor damage is still being found to Tabernacle benches. There is concern that damage may be from children playing in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle Association is adding signs to remind visitors that it is a place of worship, not recreation. The signs will list activities that are prohibited in the Tabernacle.
 - ii. One of the concrete pads under a pillar was cracked, broken. The pad has now been repaired.
 - iii. Will be resealing the benches in the fall, hope to do with a volunteer force.
- I. Ad-Hoc Archives Committee – Barb Myers
- i. Committee meeting scheduled to meet in June.
- J. Ad-Hoc Library Committee – Sally Marisic
- i. The library is ready for the 2019 season and will be open every day from Memorial Day through Labor Day with some possible extensions into September depending on volunteer availability.
 - ii. Volunteers have currently filled all available slots and clearances are being provided.
 - iii. A volunteer has offered to stain the library porch.
 - iv. The library received a grant from the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Foundation that will be used for books for summer programs.
- K. Buildings & Grounds Committee – Ted Martin
- i. Committee report attached to the minutes.
 - ii. The B&G used a large portion of their meeting to discuss issues that were part of the Superintendent's report.
 - iii. Trash is also a continued conversation. Exploring ramifications of all the different proposals so that there are no hidden costs with any of the proposals.



- iv. Two engineering firms have come to give proposals on an infrastructure report and water flow. Both have said that we have serious storm water issues. It will be helpful to get storm water flow pictures for this research; the community is invited to send pictures of water flow during heavy rains to the MGCA. Capital projects need to be prioritized in a sensible, intelligent way, and these reports will help with those decisions.
- v. With regard to water – we are doing a DEP File review. The MGCA has 3 wells; two are no longer in use. One well was properly abandoned, the other is not abandoned with the DEP. Doug Cheyney is investigating. There is also documentation stating that a residential sump pump is contributing a water problem to #2 well contaminating it – well #2 is not being used.
- vi. Q from Jenn Kantmann – when building permits are denied, is a written response sent stating why. If that is not normal procedure, the Kantmanns would like a written response to their application if denied. They are also concerned about liability. The footprint of their recently purchased house is larger than their owned lot. Who is liable if someone is hurt on what is technically MGCA property?
- vii. Bob Travitz requested to make a motion that public comment would be given before the vote on the second reading, and that the vote be delayed until the comments given by the public to the first reading were made available.

Ted Martin stated that public comment has been given throughout this process and that there is no guideline or MGCA practice for what to do with public comment given to the Board outside of the monthly Board meeting. In this case 41 MGCA Members gave comment on the rule, 28 of those comments were from Members who have regularly been at the meetings and given comments there. The comments submitted to the Board were not wholly and completely different from comment that has been previously submitted. However, at the request of Members, the Board has agreed to make the submitted comments part of the public record of the April Board meeting and post them on the internet. These comments have been used extensively by the Board, even to the point of delaying the vote by a month to allow further time for reflection as the Board considered both the pros and cons submitted by the community. Taking all that into consideration, Ted Martin denied the request to delay the Board's vote on the proposed Rule 20 until the comments were made public or before allowing further comment at the evening's meeting.

L. Executive Committee – Ted Martin

- i. Larry Bowman made a motion to approve the proposed Rule 20, Mary Kopala seconded the motion and the floor was opened to discussion from the Board.
- ii. Attorney Harlan was asked if the Board could take this action. He responded that he has not come across any legal action that would prohibit the Board from doing what they want to do under Rule 20.
- iii. Margaret Hopkins noted that West Cornwall Township has an ordinance that rentals must be for a minimum of one week; the MGCA does not require a week's rental. Is the MGCA in violation of the WCT ordinance? Tom Harlan responded that in his opinion owners are subject to both. Owners



have to comply with WCT and with MGCA; WCT zoning ordinances apply to every property within the township.

- iv. Larry Bowman asked how MGCA's proposed rule compares to other local communities who are regulating rental properties. Tom Harland responded that this is a new concept with regard to zoning. While many are considering regulation, there are not many who have adopted rental controls. One sees more rules farther out in places like Lancaster, the Poconos, Gettysburg, etc.
- v. On a separate issue, Tammy Travitz asked if Harlan had reviewed the Code of Conduct the Board Members were asked to sign; he has not seen it. Tammy stated that she had a problem with having to sign the code of conduct before participating in meetings to develop the rental rule; she considers it her fiduciary responsibility to be able to respond to questions from the community. She asked Harlan if it was standard for an organization such as ours to have a code of conduct. Tom responded that since he had not seen the code of conduct he could not respond to that question.

Larry Bowman stated that it was standard on the non-profit Boards he has participated in.

Ted Martin also stated that it was common in the organizations that he has been a part of to have a code of conduct that included confidentiality in order for the group to work through their brainstorming and development in an atmosphere of security, honesty, and trust.

- vi. Ted Martin then read the following statement.
"Before I call for a roll call vote on the proposed rule, I would like to make a statement on both the process and what has been produced. As a group of volunteers, bound together by a love of our community, we have worked hard to listen, to be fair, to be thoughtful, to be careful, to discuss, and most of all, to be honest in our approach to getting something done.
It is far easier to say things are crooked or fixed or simply close one's mind than to find the best way to move forward. Compromise, the bedrock of our very democracy, has somehow sadly become a dirty word throughout the nation and something much more to stamp on than to strive for. We have hard questions before us. If we don't work to give a little, to see another's point of view or find balance, then every decision we face will be as contentious and as difficult as this one has been. No-one on this board and I suspect no-one in this room wants that.

A few facts to consider about our process:

- This nearly year-long discussion has always been about finding balance in a place that has become the strong residential community that is outlined in the preamble of our by-laws, the place with such an active rental life, and the place enjoyed by seasonal and part-time residents.
- At no time has the Board of Managers ever entertained eliminating rentals in the Campmeeting. Balance between full-time residents and rental guests has always been the goal of this initiative.
- Information gathered by the Campmeeting through the most recent assessment, anecdotally, and through committee study bears out the trend that rentals have grown at a significant rate within the past 2 years.
- It is plain to see that this upward trend can be attributed to the ease of online booking sites like AirBNB and VRBO. This is a nationwide trend.



- It is well-documented in articles submitted for the record that unchecked rental growth WILL do irreparable damage to a community changing it forever and erasing the very aspects that draw all of us together as neighbors.
- Equal to its long history as a spiritual place, Campmeeting residents have held tightly and fiercely to the rightful belief that neighbors and friends are what makes this place so special. Losing that would be devastating.

The compromise that is before us is not perfect. Compromises by their very nature are not perfect but it addresses major issues and concerns from both sides of the debate.

- Under the proposal before us, every current renter that applies will receive a permit. It is their responsibility to re-apply each year to keep that permit.
- There is a cap on rentals set initially at 30% which by the numbers entitles 72 cottages out of 241 to be used as rental properties. That is a number larger than the estimated number of rental properties available currently.
- Rental properties will be required to post the permit in a conspicuous outdoor location. However, NO names will be listed on the permit ONLY a contact phone number and the rental permit need only be displayed when renting is taking place. Both represent concessions to those concerned about posting permits.
- Those opposed to posting permits have claimed repeatedly that such publicity will be an invitation to burglary and an enticement to mischief. There is no record on such a jump in such crime happening within the Campmeeting and it does not appear that rental properties have ever been targeted in this way by criminals. Signs advertising rental availability are rife throughout the Campmeeting and many rental owners have chosen to provide the most intimate inside details of rental properties on the internet, instantly visible to millions of all types of people and still no crime wave has ensued.
- While permits are not transferable, we did make special consideration for those who need to rent due to an emergency, those who want to keep renting as an option for those family members who may inherit a cottage in the future, and we took into account those of you who may lend your cottage to family and friends when no formal rental arrangements or exchange of money are part of the visit.
- At the suggestion of the community, safety inspection of a rental property are now recommended, not required and as promised, the permit fee stands at a reasonable \$75 per year.
- Finally, the proposal requires that the Board of Managers review the progress of the rental program each year and gives any future Board the ability to adjust various aspects of the program including the cap.

Throughout this process we have not always agreed as a body, we have not always seen eye-to-eye on approach and outcome, but I believe none of us has actively worked to hurt each other or ignore different points of view. Hours of effort and conversation and debate and discussion have gone into creating this proposed rule. All views have been listened to and I believe engaged both respectfully and thoroughly. Many of you have spoken multiple times on this issue. No-one has been denied the floor. And let's not forget, this effort began with a special community committee unanimously selected by this Board to look at the rental landscape. And there's really no way to calculate all the time all of us have taken discussing this issue unofficially outside this room or over the porch rail as I like to say. We should all feel deeply honored and humbled that we live in a community so passionately loved by all. Thank you."

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- vii. Tammy Travitz asked if the property surveys gave enough information to indicate a trend in the increase of rental properties. Pam Bishop responded that the data was incomplete, but even so it does indicate a trend over time.
- viii. Barb Myers asked what percentage of Members had not responded. Margaret Hopkins responded that 42% of Members have not updated their property information in 2019.
- ix. Ted closed the discussion time and asked for a roll call vote to the motion on the floor to approve the draft Rule 20 as presented to the Board.
Margaret Hopkins, Yes
Pam Bishop, Yes
Esther Mefferd, Yes
Larry Bowman, Yes
Mary Kopala, Yes
Sally Marisic, Yes
Justin Williams, No
Barb Myers, No
Kevin Burd, No
Tammy Travitz, No
Ted Martin, Yes
The motion carried.

VI. New Business

- i. It is hereby recorded in the May minutes, that a motion was adopted via e-mail on May 17th, introduced by Ted Martin, and seconded by Tammy Travitz. This motion authorized the Board to use capital funds to purchase a new pump from Kohl Brothers for an estimated installed cost of \$33-35,000. It is expected that this purchase will be fully reimbursed from DEP grant funds.
- ii. On a motion by Margaret Hopkins, seconded by Larry Bowman, a motion was adopted unanimously as follows: RESOLVED, that the MGCA Board of Managers authorizes Climb High to remove the trees they rated as the most critical to remove. The money to remove the trees is in the budget. Members who own property near trees that are to be taken down will be notified before their removal.
- iii. Margaret Hopkins recommended the removal of the speed bump on Boehm Ave.
- iv. Sally Marisic suggested that representatives of the Borough Council be invited to discuss their campaign to slow down traffic. The Borough would like all of Mount Gretna to participate in the program which may cost upwards of \$20,000. The consensus was to invite them to come to speak to the Board.

VII. Old Business

- i. None.

VIII. MGCA Community Member Comments

At this time Members were invited to address the Board for a 5 minute time slot, giving their name and property address. Members were called upon in the order of their names on the sign-in sheet. If



Members wanted to have their full comments part of the minutes, they were invited to submit a written copy.

- i. Ellen Lawrence, 702 5th Street. Thanked the Board of Managers for voting for Rule 20.
- ii. Daniel Strickler, 309 6th Street. Stated that his experience as a real estate agent in MD has shown him that the more you negatively impact rental properties, the more it's difficult to sell properties at the price you're expecting. No written comments submitted.
- iii. Chuck Erisman, 705 3rd Street. Supports the control of rentals but thinks the cap should go up. Higher taxes and assessment make it hard to afford the house; many people have to rent. No written comments submitted.
- iv. Vincie McMullen, 207 Dixon Ave. Stated she was pleased with progress on policies and procedures and revisions to the Rules & Regulations. Glad the Board is figuring out how violations of rules are going to be handled; it's hard to say something to your neighbor if you're not confrontational. No written comments submitted.
- v. Gail Widmer, 206 Edwards. Thanked the board for their work.
- vi. Ron Hontz, 309 7th Street. He generally supports the rule; it is not perfect but seems like a reasonable starting point. He thanked the community for their input as well. Thinks there needs to be a way to report violations such as a form on the website. No written comments submitted.
- vii. Jim Campbell, 402 Glossbrenner Ave. Thanked the Board and committee for their work in this rule. No written comments submitted.
Jim also stated the dumpster at the garages is full and overflowing. As the Board continues to look at trash contracts please make sure that the dumpsters will be bigger and for MGCA residents only. At a December meeting there was a discussion on trees, and the Board said there was going to be a priority list that would be posted on the website. Ted Martin stated approved list of trees that will be scheduled for removal from tonight's meeting will be put on website.
- viii. Gerald Collins, 510 Otterbein Ave. Stated that he is glad to see B&G has taken notice of Rockledge. To say he is displeased is an understatement. Destroys architectural balance of the whole area. He believes the Board did not give permission to raise 6' and put a garage under. Anxious to see what comes from B&G in response to this "desecration".
- ix. Christine Slotznick, 507 3rd Street. Requested that everyone thank the Board for their work and efforts as volunteers. Asked the Board to clarify Section 7 item 1 in future editions of this rule. She thinks the line about transferable inheritance could be ambiguous and is asking for clearer language. No written comments were submitted.
- x. Kathy McKenna, 309 Mills Ave. Has a major concern in how the enforcement of our rules will be conducted. How do we manage the "sounds of life" when we live inches and feet away from one another. Porches collect people which promotes community. Asked that quiet hours be considered later than 10pm, 10pm is too early. No written comments were submitted.
- xi. Larry McKenna, 309 Mills Ave. He sought out the Swarrs to understand other side of the issue. He discovered that there was a lot of common ground between both sides. He still doesn't think cap is a good idea. No written comments submitted.



- xii. Bob Travitz, 502 2nd, 111 2nd, 112 1st. He has a love for Gretna and the fun of restoring cottages. Stated that when the Charter established a “permanent residential community” – they meant that the community wouldn’t turn into a Macy’s or a Hersheypark. They couldn’t envision permanent homes because there were tent sites and cottages without plumbing or heating. He is also concerned about the enforcement – there is one person who is judge, jury, and executioner? They don’t have to come before the Board before permit is revoked or before a Member is fined? Finally, no one can be available 24-7; owners attend church and go on vacation. The rule should have said response would be in a timely manner. No written comments were submitted.
- xiii. Dave Adams, 609 6th. Thanked the Board for their efforts to regulate growth of short term rentals. No written comments submitted.
- xiv. Fred Swarr, 301 Bell Ave. Read comments supporting Rule 20 given to him by Connie Dwyer of 704 3rd Street, Paula Deppen of 511 5th Street, and Susan Engle of 705 1st Street. Fred also stated that we may have differences of opinions, but won’t allow it to affect friendships.
- xv. George & Sandy Leyh, 301 6th. Strongly support the new rule. Gave their thanks to the Board for listening to all and finding a compromise. No written comments were submitted.
- xvi. Val Swarr, 301 Bell Ave. Read comments supporting Rule 20 given to her by Ben Wiley of 507 2nd Street, Barbara Mark of 709 6th Street, and Bob Rader of 501 6th Street.
- xvii. Judy Musser, 606 2nd Street. Her cottage is rented occasionally. She wished the community discussions had been in front of everyone and that the whole committee would have voted on the new rule. No written comments were submitted.
- xviii. Mr. Musser, 606 2nd Street. In reference to Sunshine laws, don’t the Board’s discussions have to be public? No written comments were submitted.
- xix. Jane Mourer, 207 Markwood Ave. Expressed that the Fire house’s alarm system should be explained to rentals. No written comments were submitted.
- xx. Pat Wilmsen, 400 Glossbrenner. Thanked the Board for their hard work through this process, hopes we can heal as a community now. No written comments were submitted.
- xxi. Kent Meyer, 501 5th Street. Stated that it seems like permanent residents are trying to take over. No written comments were submitted.
- xxii. Jenn Kantmann, 404 3rd & 212 Boehm. Gave her thanks to the Board as well. She appreciates the compromise and finds the second version of the rule much more palatable. While she is glad that current rental properties are grandfathered, it is vitally important that the rental permit can transfer with the sale of the property because it affects the value of the property and its ability to sell. Please consider making this change in the next review to the rule. No written comments were submitted. She also stated that she respects the need of the Board to talk privately and balance this with the Board’s desire for transparency. As a Vice-President in Human Resources, she thinks they’ve treaded the line well. VP of HR.
- xxiii. David Geib, 210 Boehm. Asked what the process would be for getting the application. Was told that within the 30 day window, the application would be available either online or from the office.



- xxiv. Hal Myers 701 2nd Street. Stated that he is opposed to the rule as it was adopted. He is concerned about the process and how we got here. Written comments were submitted.

Adjournment

On a motion by Esther Mefferd, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Attachments:

April P&L

Superintendent's Report

B&G Report

Tree removal/trimming 2019 05 recommendations from Climb High

May 16, 2019 Board e-mail and vote regarding water tower pump

Community Comments presented at meeting:

Jon & Janet Green

Hal Myers


Secretary


Chairman