

From: Mt Gretna Campmeeting Association <office@mtgretnacampmeeting.org>
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 3:28 PM
To: office@mtgretnacampmeeting.org
Subject: Message from the President



Camp Connect

A Communication of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting

Dear friends in the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting community,

Hope everyone is enjoying the lovely spring we're having. It reminds me of my gratitude for this very special place we all call home, or our home away from home.

You are probably aware that the Board, in community with our Members, has been working on a long-overdue update of our Association's Bylaws. We have shared drafts, invited comments, held discussions, and made revisions. The next step in this process is a vote on the final changes, set for May 21st.

You have probably also recently received a letter from our neighbors, Bill and Joy Linton, which itemizes a number of concerns they have about the upcoming changes.

Many of those issues have been previously raised and addressed, but Bill and Joy are still concerned, so I'm happy to respond in writing and share those answers with all of you as well.

1. Membership Definition. Let us be very clear: it is ***not*** our intention to allow renters to vote. All of the attorneys who have read our proposed changes agree that the language of the proposed Bylaws does not allow renters to vote. The language of the proposed Bylaws acknowledges that residents who may not be included on a property deed (because their spouse is the owner), or those who are long-time renters, are still important members of our community and should be allowed to contribute their energies to committees and other volunteer work. That spirit of inclusivity and volunteerism is something we want our Bylaws to reflect.

2. Annual Membership Meeting. Moving the date of the annual meeting doesn't threaten transparency. It is very simply a kindness to allow all our community members to enjoy the short summer season in Mt. Gretna with less Association work, transitioning the considerable preparation work for the staff and Board to

the fall.

Zoom-style meetings are the new norm for most non-profit boards and annual meetings. Everyone who can attend in the summer can also attend in the fall. No one is excluded by this change, and it does not prevent anyone from speaking.

3. Bylaw Revision Process. Members of the community have been involved throughout our process, through the reading of drafts, submission of questions and suggestions, and more. But our community has been run by a board since its inception. It is the nature of board-run organizations to undertake work on behalf of the community. Pennsylvania law does not require that members be allowed to submit amendments directly.

4. Voting Process. There are a lot of changes in this set of revisions. Some are mandated by law - and in fact, the Board could just make those changes without holding a vote. Some are very trivial corrections; some are more complicated. But it was the Board's judgment that collecting them all together with lots of community input and discussion for each necessary item was the most efficient way to do this, as opposed to a lengthy series of separate revisions and re-filings, which would have increased our legal expenses and exhausted the patience of the community to be engaged in the effort.

5. Legal Restrictions. Bill & Joy are suggesting scrutiny of these changes; with all due respect to Bill and Joy, there have been months of review and scrutiny, and I think the issue here is that we just aren't in agreement.

We are NOT in danger of losing our 501(c)4 status; some of the changes we're making in the Bylaws are in fact to keep us in compliance with those statutes.

One of the differences of opinion we have with the Lintons may be on where the work should be done in a Board-governed organization. This one, like most non-profits and related entities, has always expected most of the work and decisions to be made by the Board and its Committees *on behalf of* its members, with input from the larger community as is feasible and appropriate. Members choose their representatives, and those representatives try to move work forward in ways they believe support their community.

The current Board of Managers takes its responsibilities to you very seriously. In fact, this Board has sent out more communications and requests for input, and had more discussions with the community, than most prior Board in our recent history as a Campmeeting. In the end, as with all forms of democracy, if you don't believe your elected representatives are doing the job you expected, you vote them out and elect others.

In closing their letter, the Lintons encourage us all to cooperatively safeguard the future of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Association. I'm sorry that we don't find ourselves in

complete agreement on all matters; it's quite a challenge to balance our past, present and future. But adapt we have. (Otherwise, we'd still be outlawing bathing suits and card-playing, and closing the Campmeeting to all at the end of August!) But I do believe that, as your appropriately elected representatives, the Board is continuing to work with you to honor our history while we adapt to the world around us, remote meetings and all!

I would also like to inform you that we have been in contact with our lawyer and will be updating you on her response within the week.

Please be in touch if you'd like further clarification on anything. Regardless, I do hope you will take the time on May 21 to attend the meeting and vote on the new Bylaws. If you haven't already registered for the meeting, please contact the Office, as advance registration is required.

Thanks for your time, and once again I hope you're enjoying spring in our lovely little corner of the world.

Warmly,

Pat Wilmsen, President
Mount Gretna Campmeeting Association Board of Managers

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