

## **Soapstone Cluster Monthly Meeting Minutes, June 25, 2025**

Meeting called to order at 7:02 PM

- The board President announced that we will not have a board meeting in August due to schedule constraints. There will still be a monthly meeting in July.
- The board contacted Charlie about moving the playground sign. It has a concrete footer and thus cannot be practically relocated.
- It was brought up that the inward facing seats on the new spinner appear to be designed to be used with seatbelts. Adam will reach out to Charlie for clarification.

### **Trees**

- Phase 3 of tree work is complete, phase 4 is scheduled
- Once phase 4 is paid for, with the exception of an emergency \$10k, we will have exhausted our budget.
- Debra brought up the idea of having Garrett (our arborist) come out to walk the property after a storm to identify problem areas to monitor for rapid deterioration of safe conditions. The board will schedule a meeting with the new account manager and address this concern at that time.
- Debra also brought up and was seconded on the fact that Brightview is not picking up brush piles that are sufficiently small to be hauled off in their equipment.
- The board will contact the new BrightView manager to meet him, talk about the overall contract with them and also request pick up of small tree branches that are piled up in parts of the neighborhood.

### **Paving**

- We sought estimates from 3 companies, negotiated them up on the pricing, and in the end, based on responsiveness, payment terms, reviews, and pricing, went with Brothers. The Board will check references before awarding a contract to Brothers for additional due diligence.

### **Taxes**

- A letter was sent to an apparently random address within the cluster. It stated that our state taxes had not been paid. The oversight was with our accounting firm. They have accepted responsibility and are going to pay for any penalties and interest incurred as a result.
- Taxes have now been filed.

## **Finances**

We received our audit statement. It came back without any comments. Debra has experience with this, and has volunteered to review it prior to the board signing it.

### **Sidebar:**

- Jeff put a lock on the water spigot.
- Placing a trash can at the playground was discussed. It was decided that this would not be a prudent course of action.

### **Finances 2.0**

- We need to pay for the balance of the playground upgrade
- Between that and the paving we're going to have to break a CD in order to pay for everything.
- Alternatively, we could attempt to negotiate a payment plan where the rate of repayment would be such that one of our CD's would mature in time to meet our obligations while paying as agreed.
- Debra informed us that every year we need to put \$500 into the fund for the Reserve Study for the \$2500 that the reserve study costs when it is conducted every five years. The balance should be \$1500 at this point. The Board will notify our Management company to make sure to move those funds.
- There is an operating reserve fund. There is currently no money in it. We should put money into it when we can, if there is any net income at the end of the year. There was no net income from last year.
- Delinquencies: one has recently been turned over to our attorneys. The outstanding one is at a stalemate. We need to activate our legal team to move to the next step toward recovering the outstanding balance owed to the cluster.

### **Trash**

- Prices have gone up...again. It's the most expensive line item in our budget.
- Debra stated that they have looked at other companies but were unable to find a better value elsewhere. Also, Fairfax County has been considering taking over management of trash removal and recycling. She mentioned that Next Door could be a good resource for crowd-sourced reviews of trash hauling providers. Additionally, it would be good to contact Charlotte at RA to get information on what other clusters are doing and talk to other Boards of clusters in Reston to see which company they are using.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.