

Amherst Woods Homeowners Association

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes, November 13, 2023

The meeting was held in-person at Munson Memorial Library. AWAHA President Jane Sheffler called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. 25 homeowners signed the attendance sheet, satisfying the 10% quorum (19 households). AWAHA Secretary, James Barnhill was ill; Board member Martha Hanner agreed to record the Minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023 AWAHA Budget

Jane Sheffler, who has also served as Treasurer this year, reviewed the 2023 budget. Total revenue was \$23,694. Total expenses were \$26,096. Landscaping comprises the major portion of the budget. Other expenses include property taxes for the common parcels, insurance, and miscellaneous items. Deferred maintenance in the landscaping during the sewer construction, plus the need to treat pest and disease damage to plants this past year caused an increase in the landscaping budget in 2022 and 2023 to more than \$23,000.

Dues Collection

Jane expressed concern that a number of families have not yet paid their dues. It was clarified that the due date for payment is December 1. An email reminder needs to be sent. There used to be a fee imposed for late dues, but when dues payment went online, the fee was discontinued. General agreement from the discussion was that the late fee should be reinstated, as an incentive to pay on time.

Proposed 2024 AWAHA Budget

Jane presented the proposed budget for FY 2024, (Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2024). Total projected expenses are \$22,675, with landscaping budgeted for \$20,000. The landscaping budget covers mowing, new plantings, and general maintenance of the common areas. As explained in the Landscape Committee Report, landscaping proposals for the 2024 growing season will be reviewed next spring.

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE REPORT

Denise Gagnon, Chair, reported on behalf of the AWAHA Landscape Committee (Denise Gagnon, Nina Korza and Kathleen Teagno).

The Committee recommends the landscaping for the common areas of Amherst Woods and oversees plantings done by the landscape company. Early in the spring, the Committee drove through the neighborhood with a representative from Spring Valley Landscaping to look at common areas, circles, and entrances to determine what work needed to be done. At the Indian Pipe circle, 11 'Happy Returns' daylily were planted in front of the birch trees. At the Alyssum Dr. circle, 8 'Happy Returns' daylily were planted in front of the boulder. At the corner

of Wildflower Dr. and Old Farm Rd., six azaleas were selected by the Committee and planted by Spring Valley.

Pump Station Plantings

During one of the spring wind/rain storms, two good-sized trees that were in the woods behind the pump station came down and fell on some of the plants at the pump station. Tree Warden Alan Snow was contacted to hear if the town could remove the fallen trees, but it was determined that they were not on town property. David Mullins and Doug Gagnon removed the fallen trees to try to save the plants at the pump station. Some of the plants were saved, but a few of the plants were destroyed by the fallen trees. It was determined that the grass in-between the plants at the pump station should be removed and the planted area should be mulched to help maintain the area.

Plant Damage

During the spring drive through the neighborhood, it was noted that some of the plants on the circles and entrances were suffering from pest and disease damage. In order to keep the plants alive, we contacted Greg Beck at Bartlett Tree Experts and took a ride through the neighborhood with him to determine what could be done to save the plants. He gave an estimate to treat the plants, which was sent to the AWhA President for approval, and then Bartlett Tree performed the work.

During the summer, Denise received a call from Spring Valley letting her know that when crew members were weeding in the juniper on the Indian Pipe circle, one crew member was stung a few times by bees nesting in the juniper. Denise called Minuteman Pest Control and they checked out the area.

Denise reported that Spring Valley Landscaping has been doing a good job keeping the common areas mowed and the circles and entrances weeded. The Landscape Committee plans to receive and review landscape proposals for the 2024 growing season and will share that information with the AWhA president and Board for approval. The full Landscape Committee report will be posted on the AWhA website.

Stone Bench

Two benches previously were placed on the Wildflower/Trillium circle. (The original benches were stolen and replaced; the benches were not made to be left outdoors for the winter.) The Committee suggested replacing these with a permanent stone bench. Ashfield Stone was contacted to get a quote for a stone bench that could be left out in the winter and not easily stolen. The quote for the bench and installation was \$800. We sent photos of the different benches and prices to the AWhA president and received approval to have the stone bench installed.

SIDEWALKS

The sidewalks along Wildflower Drive and Larkspur Drive have been deteriorating for some years. There are places where the sidewalks are a tripping hazard. Amherst Woods is one of

many places in Amherst where sidewalks need repair. It was recommended that individual homeowners contact our district 5 Town Council members, as well as the at-large Council members (one of them lives in Amherst Woods).

RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Members voted their approval of actions taken by the officers and board during the past year.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Jane Sheffler asked for volunteers among the members present, particularly emphasizing the need for a Treasurer.

Marc Littman volunteered to serve as Treasurer.

The following AWAHA officers were unanimously elected

President: Wade Elmore (Foxglove Ln.)

Vice-President: Martha Hanner (Alyssum Dr.)

Treasurer: Marc Littman (Woodlot Rd.)

Secretary: James Barnhill (Larkspur Dr.)

Board of Directors Members: Jane Sheffler, Betsy Mullins, Doug Gagnon, Jack Mattrey, Ralph Lowen

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Sidewalk Clearing

Betsy explained that homeowners are required by the Town to be responsible for clearing snow from the sidewalk in front of their home – and for keeping overhanging brush trimmed. The Town does plow at least part of Wildflower Drive and Larkspur Drive.

Station Road Bridge

A question was raised about whether the one-lane bridge on Station Road is likely to be replaced. It was agreed that replacement is not likely, or even feasible, given all the other urgent road repairs needed. The current bridge is sturdy and functional and serves to keep speeding down along Station Road.

Thanks to our President

Martha Hanner thanked Jane Sheffler, on behalf of the Board and all Amherst Woods residents, for her dedication this past year, serving as both the President and Treasurer. She will continue to be a member of the Board of Directors.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Hanner (Acting Secretary)