

High Sierra Property Owners Association Annual Meeting & Picnic

Meeting Minutes

Sunday September 2, 2018 12:00 @ Lot 109

Check-In began at 11:30 am conducted by Member Volunteers Dawn Arbogast, Kitty Fitch and Marty Fowler. At 12:04 pm, HSMPOA President Richard St. Marie invited the Members to enjoy the luncheon. Meat Bees were tolerable, and the shade was a welcome relief.

At 12:40 pm, the meeting was officially called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. President St. Marie introduced the Board Members in attendance - Richard St. Marie (P), Rick Edgeworth (VP), and Kim Workman (AL).

An accounting of Member signatures shows approximately 58 Lots were represented with 65 - 70 people were in attendance.

1. In the absence of **Guest Speakers** due to ongoing fires in the State, Richard St. Marie instead asked for all people associated with their Lot Number to stand and introduce themselves to the crowd as he read the Lot Numbers and Owner Names from the Sign-In sheets.
2. The **President's Statement** was short and to the point of thanking all Members for their hard and ongoing work that is helping to make our community safer from the threat of wildfire. Richard called for a round of applause.
3. The annual **Treasurer's Report** was presented by Mike Compton. (*Copies of the Operating Statement from January 1, 2018 thru July 31, 2018 were provided to Members and can now be viewed on the HSM website under Official Business.*)
- 3a. Reading first from the **Operating Statement**, Mike highlighted our beginning cash balance at \$82,110 before describing individual items in order from Operating Statement summary. As for expenses, Mike touched on propane for

generators, water system testing, insurance costs and road work to repair the Pond section.

- 3b. Moving to the **Reserve Study**, Members were told that we, as a H.O.A, are required under the Davis-Stirling Act to conduct a Reserve Study of community assets every three years. Golden Consulting was contracted to perform the most recent audit in July 2018. Items of review included both pumphouses, pond shed, floating dock, railings, gates, fencing and roads. Mike explained that this study estimates the lifetime costs to either replace or repair our community assets. Currently, we are at 76% fully funded, with the goal being at least 90%, if not 100 percent.

(Reserve Study is available on the HSM website under Official Business)

Mike explained that the consulting firm suggested an annual increase in dues of \$102 to achieve the 100% funding level. Mike recommended we not accept that figure for two reasons – firstly, in recognition of the amount of money Members have already spent on fire compliance and secondly, the Reserve Consultants do not consider our volunteer labor in their calculations. They presume that all work is done solely by outside Contractors at costs. In simpler words, the study may be overpriced. Mike suggested a lesser increase in dues of \$25 per year for years 2019 and 2020 which should achieve the 90% target.

Mike gave a breakdown of the annual dues per Lot of \$215 as such – Operating Expenses of \$125, Reserve funding of \$38 and Special Assessment of \$52. Mike described the Board designating the Special Assessment for the first 2 years to cover costs to remove Beetle Killed trees from the Pond. The assessment was renewed by Member agreement in 2017 to cover the grading of the front and back entrance roads and the placement of additional culverts on each. The remainder of the Special Assessment will be used to fund a program to replace all Lot Water Main Valves beginning later this season. If need be, the Special Assessment would be extended for an additional year or as needed within reason to complete the Water project.

Bob Grooms (Lots 111-112) asked if this Special Assessment money would be used to clear culverts under community roads. Only Operating Expense funds could be used was the answer. Kitty Fitch (Lots 59 & 98) asked about clearing the cul-de-sac Black Pine Place. *Item will be place on Board's agenda for October.*

Mike then asked if there would be any objection to the Board increasing the current \$52 Special Assessment by \$25 to fund the completion of the Water Project and possibly additional road repair. No dissent was forthcoming by the Attendees.

A question was asked to clarify the expenses for road repair. Mike clarified the issue by saying that there were two repair projects – the one referred to earlier which costs \$5,050 to repave sections of South Meadow in front of the pond. The second project was the \$8,000 to regrade and add culverts to the front and rear entrance roads for a total of \$13,050.

A question was asked about “oiling” the roads. The group was reminded of a proposal from 7 - 8 years ago to fund repaving of all roads. The costs at that time would require a per-lot assessment of approximately \$5000 for two years – that proposal was soundly defeated by Membership. The Board agreed to revisit this issue if asked. During the discussion, Jacob Moren mentioned that the State of California no longer permits “oiling” of roads due to environmental concerns. Rick Edgeworth recalled that the total costs to repave when last considered ranged from \$340,000 to \$600,000. A question was asked about pothole repair and the suggestion from a few members was to consider the use of “Cold Patch” as needed.

Lastly, Mike called for Member volunteers to conduct an Internal Audit of the Association financial records. We operate on a cash basis and would like someone to verify the book entries. No volunteer stepped forward.

Richard St. Marie then thanked Mike for his years of hard work on behalf of the Association to a round of applause.

4. Richard St. Marie called for the **Volunteer Committee** reports as follows:

Architectural Committee Report – David Person (Lot 30) was not present.

Fence Committee Report – John Edwards (Lot 6) thanked Sam and Kim Workman (Lot 2) for their help with fence repair and the fenceline is now intact. John mentioned two areas of concern with the access gates at the Water Tank and at the Lower Meadow. Both gates were found to be disabled and laying on the ground. John asked if the Board would consider replacing both wire gates with welded metal pole gates.

Key Committee Report – John Fitch (Lots 59 & 98) talked about a problem with our long-time key maker, Haven’s Keys of Fresno, CA. Apparently, the last two batches of 10 keys each have been found to not have been cut correctly and will not open our gate locks. Lisa Anderson (Lots 11 & 12) concurred as none of her recent keys have worked. John asked for everyone to try any new key issued this year and touch base with him for a replacement.

Bob Grooms (lots 111 & 112) asked if we know how many any Owner can have. Richard St. Marie said there is no rule as to the number of keys. Mike

Compton opined that perhaps Escrow can ask Sellers to transfer their keys to a new Buyer. John Fitch, based on his Real Estate experience, said that was unlikely. He further thought that many keys have been handed out to friends and relatives and no one knows the true number outstanding. John said the records show over 1000 keys issued over the years.

Steve Arata (Lots 77 & 76) suggested Bass Lake Key as an alternative supplier.

Michael Favagrossa (Lot 147) suggested using keyless locks similar to a combination lock but the group thought the combo numbers would get too easily handed out and would not be secure.

Road Committee Report – none assigned. Rick Edgeworth (Lot 45) iterated the earlier idea of using “Cold Patch” on a volunteer basis to fill potholes in front of each person’s lot. Rick also described the process by which the Board selected Jacob Moren (Lot 130), Owner of Billy Goat Construction to perform the grading work on the two entry roads and the repaving of the Pond road.

Pond Committee Report – Mark Romeo (Lots 22, 23 & 73) said the water is cool and there are lots of Bullfrogs this year. The problem in that area is the invasive Thistle plant. Kim Workman (Lot 2) said that her, Sam Workman and their son cleared thistle along the damn face, in the Warhurst Lot and across the road into Lot 44 and the Open Space Meadow.

The mention of thistle opened a lengthy discussion among many members as to how each flower can produce 500 seeds, how it must be dug up before flowering and the need to be vigilant in removing this invasive and noxious plant.

Asked about the catfish, Mark Romeo said he is seeing few signs of this once numerous fish. Again, much discussion about effects of drought to previous tries at stocking the pond with other fish types, to the now proliferation of the frogs. John Fitch mentioned that Fish and Game offered to exterminate the frogs as they are not considered native.

Water Committee Report – Richard St. Marie talked about how he and his brother, Robert (lot 84) spent almost 6 weeks this Spring working on leaks but that the system has been working well of late.

Question was asked as to the expected water shut-off date. Richard said it is historically the weekend nearest the November 11th Veterans Day.

Steve Arata was called upon to explain his plan to rebuild and replace all Lot Water Main Valves in a multi-year project that begins this Fall. He showed the group a set of the original 1969 Water Plans that were located after months of

detective work which gives him the true layout of our water network. From those plans, he has identified a total of 89 Lot Mains that will be replaced. Some mains serve a single lot, but most serve two adjacent lots.

Steve and Rick described the plan whereby Jacob Moren will dig out the existing mains, after which Steve will install an A.W.A. (*American Water Association*) approved; and State of California approved; assembly with a Back Flow Contamination Preventer and positive gate shut-off valves, all enclosed by a heavy duty irrigation valve called a “Christy” box so our system would be “code-approved”.

Question was asked about installation of pressure regulators. Answer was that such a device is the individual Lot owner’s responsibility.

Question was asked about whether Steve would reconnect the Lot owner’s feed lines to their cabins, etc. That decision has not been finalized but would be discussed in a follow-up meeting later that week.

Rick Edgeworth explained that we are only beginning this project now as the team decided to hold off until the peak of fire season passed as well as not wanting to incur excessive costs for reinspection and possible re-disinfection of the system.

John Edwards asked if we could create a map showing which sections each street valve controlled. Steve said that as part of his project, he would create “Zoned” maps color-coded in such a way as to identify which valves controlled which sections of lots.

A group discussion ensued over whether it was a good thing to have everyone know how to turn off streets. Some spoke of inconvenience, others spoke to being able to control a major blow-out.

A question was asked as to considering a priority list of the “most- leaky” lots. Steve said it was not practical to hop-sotch this – that he will work the project in contiguous sections only.

In the end, Steve said his goal was to make us code-compliant, to eliminate the threat of contamination and to give us a reliable water system for the next fifty years. The group was receptive.

5. **Election results for Board of Directors Vacancies** – Richard St. Marie explained that as we had three positions up for renewal this season, only two nominees agreed to run; those being Rick Edgeworth and Hannah Moren. In accordance with the By-Laws, no election was required, and both nominees were declared. Rick Edgeworth (Lot 45) and Hannah Moren (Lot 130) accepted and were seated on the Board. However, we still need a fifth person to complete the Board assignments.

Richard went on to say that anyone who wished to serve as the fifth member of the Board should merely raise their hand and they would be seated. Amid much laughter – none did.

- 6. Board Business Topics** – Rick spoke briefly about the advances made this season towards completing the Fire Compliance Project. He mentioned we are down to a handful of lots where either ownership is in dispute or we have unresponsive Trustees.

Mention was made about using Splat-Verb which is a repellent for the Pine Bark Beetle. A couple of folks had compelling testimonials in favor of its use. A number of folks offered good information on how to obtain and apply this material.

Rick said that we will be conducting another burn of collected trees in the Meadow again this winter. There is a good likelihood that a third burn will be needed next season as well.

Rick relayed a story about being asked by a new Owner as to why is the Annual Meeting always held at the end of the season – meaning why Labor Day? Our only answer is that it has always been done that way. Instead, Rick and crowd asked what if we hold the Meeting at the first of the season during the Memorial Day weekend.

The group said there are usually no fires, it's not hot and there are no meat bees! Additionally, any community projects needing done can be kicked off at the start of the year – not at the end when we usually carry them over to the next year – or forget about them.

So, with permission granted, Richard St. Marie said the Board will hold it's Annual Meeting on Memorial Day weekend next year (2019) to see what the results are of doing so. We had a motion and second with no opposition.

- 7. Richard called for Open Business Topics from the Members** –

Kim Workman reminded us to speak about complaints of dogs being off-leash and excessive barking. Richard asked dog owners to be responsible.

John Fitch asked about the dust created by speeding vehicles. Richard asked drivers to be respectful.

A question was asked about any grants or programs from groups such as Cal Fire to help with tree removal. Richard and the Fitches talked about a grant program that could reimburse up to 900 dollars per three acres cleared. The entire community would need to combine and apply to be certified then would we become eligible for grants. An offer from USFS would also provide ponderosa pine seedlings for replanting. Richard has in fact been in contact with a Dennis Dudley regarding this possible grant.

Sam Workman (Lot 2) reminded people to be safe with their kids by not letting them ride ATVs and Scooters at high speeds and without helmets. Also causing dust and noise and exceeding the 15 mile per hour speed limit.

8. **Gift Raffle** – almost forgotten, we did remember to hold the raffle for prizes. The lots that won a gift were – 147,95,11,61,1,72,150, and 57. Congratulations to the Winners.
9. Steve Arata took the microphone and informed the group that Terry Kaiser, our past President had passed and asked for a moment of silence from all.
10. A call for helpers to break down the tables and chairs was made and the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm by Richard St. Marie.