

Minutes of Pine Orchard Association Annual Meeting
Monday, July 8, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.
Pine Orchard Union Chapel

Agenda Item 1 Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by President Robin Sandler.

Board Members present: Rick Ross, Peggy Haering, , Richard Greenalch, Seth Chaucer, Robin Sandler, Robert Dahill, Carol Redden, Bruce Calderone.

Absent: Matt Moran, Joseph Thomas, Niall Ferguson, Jon Schlesinger.

Agenda item 2 Upon motion and second the minutes from the July 9, 2018 Annual Meeting were approved.

Agenda item 3 President's Report: There are four open seats on the Board. Robert Dahill and Joseph Thomas are up for re-election and we have two additional nominees, Linda Sachs, of 57 Island View Avenue and Len Farber, of 14 Ozone Road. Robin Sandler reviewed the Board's activities over the previous year. He said that the association is a party to two cases involving Crescent Bluff beach access. These cases should go to trial in late 2018 or early 2019. The Branford RTM had on its Agenda an item which was to exercise eminent domain with respect to Crescent Bluff Avenue, but that has been tabled by the First Selectman so negotiations can occur with Barbara Saggese. During the past year the Board passed an amendment to the Pine Orchard Zoning Ordinance regarding short term rentals and a process for imposing penalties for violation.

Robin stated that the Board has been studying the installation of sidewalks within the community and introduced Peter Hugret, the chair of the Sidewalk Committee, to provide an overview of the initiative. The hope is to install sidewalks along Route 146 from Blackstone to Elizabeth Street on the north side of 146. It is hoped that the plan may be eligible for receipt of funds from the state. Peter has discussed the sidewalk plan with the Town Engineer and First Selectman and understands that there may be as much as \$65,000 in town funds to support town wide sidewalk construction. The town has indicated that it would maintain sidewalks, if erected. However, snow plowing would likely be the responsibility of the Association.

The Association has scheduled 4 weekly musical events to be held at the Pine Orchard Chapel, on Sunday afternoons beginning at 4:00 p.m. on August 25, 2019 (the Elm City Winds), September 8, 2019 (the Whiffenpoofs), September 15, 2019 (Jovial Crew) and September 22, 2019 (Tony Ariardo and Friends).

Agenda Item 4 Treasurer's Report. The Association has total cash available of \$143,304.82. Tax revenue is approximately \$53,000 per year. A budget report with year to date performance will

be presented in the Board meeting following the Annual Meeting. Upon motion and second the Treasurer's report was accepted.

Agenda Item 5, Committee Reports: a) Bylaws (nothing to report); b) Nominating (included in President's report); c) Planning and Zoning Dick Greenalch reported that during the past year the Board passed an amendment to the Pine Orchard Zoning Ordinance making it clear that short term rentals are not a permitted use of property in Pine Orchard and establishing penalties for violation. d) Communications (no report); e) Shoreline Maintenance—Carol Redden has finished her first year as beach access chairperson. She reviewed all the beach access sites: 3 on Island View Avenue (near the club) near 41 Island View Avenue) and at the end of Chapel Drive); Spring Rock Road, Halstead Lane, Yowago/Selden Avenue, Juniper Point. Carol, a longtime resident of Crescent Bluff Avenue, said that historically Crescent Bluff was included in the beach access points; however, its status is currently under dispute. Carol has carried out repairs at the following beach access points: **Island View breakwater:** repaired cement on the seawalls/sidewalls that were damaged by waves, repainting of railing. **Island View/Chapel Drive:** new gate at Chapel Drive access point, repaired cement walkway due to cracking, replaced several planks on main stairs. **Halstead Lane:** repairs/replacement of three planks on bottom steps. **Spring Rock Rd:** repaired small side wall. **Selden Avenue:** repaired lower cement step.

f) Building Maintenance—Seth Chaucer reported that the Board had completed installation of a generator at the POA Headquarters building and that the building would be made available to Pine Orchard members during power outages as a place to charge electronics and warm up. The doors of the Headquarters building have been repainted and a new landscaping service has reseeded the lawn. The Board is searching for additional lighting near the parking lot. g) Municipal Interface—Bruce Caldarone reported that he has been consulting with the Town over concerns about a blind spot and traffic on Pine Orchard Road and Totoket. The solution has not been arrived at yet. He has also been consulting with the Town about flooding on Pleasant Point Road. There is some question whether it is a Town problem or a State problem. Tom Brockett, the district's RTM member is trying to schedule a meeting with the Town Engineer. h) Tax Collector—Rick Ross said that last year's taxes were 100% collected and that year to date collections (due 7/30/2019) were about 30% collected. i) Short-term rentals (included in Planning & Zoning Report); j) Beautification-- Bob Dahill reported on that the Committee with the assistance of Gary Zeleski from the Branford Dept. of Public Works and support of First Selectman Cosgrove, had made improvements in the Triangle. The committee has installed benches in the Triangle and at the end of Spring Rock Road and is working with the Branford Land Trust to identify future sites for bench placement and is developing a plan for clearing brush in that area to enable people to connect with hiking trails. Bob asked that any members with hedges alongside roadways should trim them back so that they do not obscure drivers' view. k) Sidewalks (included as part of the President's report above).

The President introduced Barbara Colley, President of the Pine Orchard Union Chapel. Barbara stated that the Chapel is a separate organization from the Pine Orchard Association. The Chapel was dedicated in 1897 and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Chapel is in need of restoration. Eric Rose has been donating his time to evaluate the work needed. The exact amount will be known at the end of the year; however, it is likely that hundreds of thousands of dollars will be required. Barbara introduced the members of the Chapel board and thanked them for their work. They are Jenifer Aniskovich, Geoff Hotz, Eunice Lasala, Melodie O'Connor, Sheri Peterson, and Wendy Wheeler.

Agenda Item 6, Election of Board Members. The president reviewed the four nominees for the Pine Orchard Board and asked whether there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, upon motion and second the Board voted to close nominations. The president then requested that the nominees be elected by acclamation. Upon motion and second, the members of the association voted to elect the four nominees (Robert Dahill, Joseph Thomas, Linda Sachs, and Len Farber) to the Pine Orchard Executive Board.

Agenda Item 7: Public Comments. Karen Wies of 33 Thimble Island Road requested an update on the status of the Town of Branford meetings over eminent domain. The president advised that the meeting previously set for July 9th had been canceled due to ongoing discussions between the town and the property owner. Karen asked for and received assurances that the board would keep the membership informed about the process.

Jay Pottenger of Thimble Farms Road said that he had attended the Branford Planning and Zoning meeting and asked whether it was appropriate for the Pine Orchard Association to express its support for exercise of eminent domain on Crescent Bluff. Mr. Pottenger said that he was concerned about not having received notice. The president said that the issue was raised at the board meeting in January 2019 and that the board voted to send a letter to the town in support. Mr. Pottenger asked whether it was within the purview of the Association to take such action. The president responded that in his view it was appropriate to express the Association's view in support of the action. Peggy Haering pointed out that any exercise of eminent domain was within the province of the Town of Branford and that Pine Orchard had merely expressed support for that action.

Barbara Saggese, of 3 Crescent Bluff Avenue state that she is the owner of the street (Crescent Bluff Avenue) and that she objected to the Board's support for a taking. Rich Colbert of Halstead Lane stated that he felt the Board's support of eminent domain was a violation of the Charter. Judith Liebmann of Ozone Road said that she had attended the Board's January meeting and took issue with the notion that anything about the Board's position had been done in secret. She also wanted to know how Ms. Saggese got her email address and used it to send materials about the Crescent Bluff dispute prior to the meeting. The president said that Ms. Saggese may have obtained the email list for the Association from the office manager, and that going forward the Board would put limits on using it to send email blasts to the entire membership.

Vinnie Giordano of Pine Orchard Road said that he had lived in Pine Orchard since he was five years old and that access to the beach had always been important especially for those who did not belong to the country club. He said he is uncertain who has the rights to use the road on Crescent Bluff. The president pointed out that residents of Crescent Bluff were the ones who petitioned the Town to exercise eminent domain over the road.

Judith Liebmann made the point that positive things happen when people work together. She recounted that a 65 foot log that had washed up on Spring Rock Road and Flirtation Point and created a hazard. After calling around various town offices without success, she was able to locate someone who carving up the log and removed the hazard without charge.

Upon motion and second the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.