

**Minutes of the September 3rd Board Meeting
Pine Orchard Association**

Time : 7 pm

Location : Pine Orchard Association Offices 180 Pine Orchard Rd

Chair : Vincent Giordano, President (attending)

Attendees :

Frank Telo (Community Liaison)

George O'Dowd (Nominating)

David Silverstone (Vice President)

John Grathwol (Treasurer)

David Scheer (By-laws and Beautification)

Niall Ferguson (Long Range Planning)

Peter Robinson (Office manager)

Karen Jubanyik (Waterfront maintenance and Access, Community Liaison)

Thomas Roche (Zoning)

Matt Barez (Zoning)

Andrew Ruff (Building)

Kerri Beckert (Clerk)

Quorum : Yes, with 12 board members present.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vincent Giordano at 7 pm.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion : Approval of minutes from the July 7th Executive Board Meeting- John Grathwol
Seconded by Thomas Roche.

Result : Approved unanimously.

3. Housekeeping Issue, Vincent Giordano, re: Zoning Board of Appeals Vacancy

There is one vacancy on the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate. Two candidates were proposed: Christian Bing Miller and Dr. Richard Young.

Decision Method : Coin flip.

Outcome : Dr. Richard Young was selected to fill the vacancy.

4. Treasurer's and Tax Collector's Reports : John Grathwol

Treasurer presented a summary of receipts and expenditures for the first few months of the year.

Key Points

- Approved Budget: \$96,790.
- Tax revenues collected: \$89,463 (92% of the total expected).

- Disbursements are within expected ranges.
- Account Balances as of 8-31-2024:
- Checking: \$129,000.
- Savings: \$67,856.

Discussion : No significant deviations; everything is on plan.

5. Zoning Report :Matt Barez and Tom Roche.

Key Updates :

- Two applications processed: one for a generator, one for a deck.
- The Connecticut Supreme Court upheld a decision regarding a rental case, remanding it back to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Executive Session : Planned for further discussion on the court decision.

6. Bylaws and Beautification Committees Reports: David Scheer

Bylaws :

- No activity since the previous updates; modest changes were made earlier this year.

Beautification:

Three areas of focus: Spring Walk common area, Triangle Park, and Crescent Bluff Path.

Action Items :

- Evaluate town vs. POA responsibilities.
- Discuss potential budget needs.
- Review contractor proposals for necessary maintenance.

Discussion : Interaction with the 146 Plan was mentioned, with further details to be discussed in the next meeting. The plan under discussion is more of a strategic document to guide future repairs and upgrades rather than an immediate action plan.

New Business

(Vincent Giordano asked to place this item out of order in deference to Officer John Abby's attendance.)

Neighborhood Watch Program:

7. Bob Dahill, chair of the ad hoc committee investigating the possibility of a Pine Orchard Association neighborhood Watch summarized the findings of his committee:

The idea is to create a system where residents can report suspicious or criminal behaviors or acts to designated captains in their zones, who would then aggregate this information and share it with the community. This aims to increase awareness and possibly deter crime. This would be after any activity is reported to the police. There was some skepticism about the effectiveness of such programs, particularly in how much they truly deter criminal activities versus simple measures like locking doors.

Law Enforcement Perspective:

John Aply, a 20 yr veteran of the Branford Police Dept emphasized that while neighborhood watches might have some deterrent effect, criminals often do not care about signs or community efforts. The real deterrents are practical actions like locking homes and cars and ensuring that valuables are out of sight.

The group seems to be weighing the benefits of a neighborhood watch program against the practical realities of criminal behavior and law enforcement capabilities. While community cohesion and proactive measures are encouraged, there's an understanding that these alone may not be enough to significantly reduce crime without other supporting measures.

There was discussion concerning various security measures, including educating residents on how to protect themselves and their property. This includes potentially setting up seminars or distributing informational materials.

The idea of revisiting the hiring private security was discussed, with concerns about the cost and effectiveness.

There was also a discussion about the possibility of setting up a database or communication system to alert residents when incidents occur, potentially using text or voice alerts.

Some members feel that the most productive action might be a focus on prevention through education rather than implementing additional security measures.

Vincent asked a board member to make recommendations to the ad hoc committee, Kerri Beckert volunteered.

8. Waterfront Maintenance: Karen Jubanyik, David Silverstone

Reports that 4 areas are being addressed:

- Sea wall at the end of Island View Avenue where the beach is has been repaired.
- The pathway leading to the beach off Chapel is in need of repair and is estimated at approx \$5600.
- The temporary repairs which lead directly onto the beach via the Crescent Bluff access are great quality and are in excellent condition, therefore a repair estimate for the connecting stairs at the top of the access which lead to the temporary stairs would cost \$16000. This would not include a railing which would cost an additional \$10,000 approx.
- The east and west steps and landing which grant access to the beach from the Selden Avenue access are a hazard and need repairing. There is uncertainty about who owns certain parts of the access points (pathways and stairs) leading to the beach. The town of Branford may have a right of way, but some property owners believe they own portions of these areas. It was suggested that the POA work with the town attorney to gain clarification. There is a proposal to repair the steps, with estimated costs between \$35,000 and \$39,000.

9. Dog Issues :

The presence of 2 aggressive dogs within the association has raised safety concerns among residents. Although the dogs are contained within their property by a radio fence, their behavior is intimidating, especially for other dog walkers.

10. Recognition of Contributions :

There was a discussion about recognizing Dr. Wheeler, a resident who significantly contributed to resolving a recent issue on Crescent Bluff. Suggestions include dedicating a walkway or installing a plaque in his honor.

11. Executive session commenced.

12. Motion for Adjournment was made by David Scheer, and seconded by Thomas Roche :
The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm

Next Meeting : [Date and Time of the Next Meeting]

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerri Beckert
Clerk, The Pine Orchard Association

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