

Branford Village Home Owners Association, Inc

Member's Meeting Minutes

15 Nov 2023

Minutes of the membership meeting of the Branford Village Home Owners Association, Inc., East Fallowfield, Pennsylvania, held hybridly at the Chester County Council, Boy Scouts of America, in Exton, Pennsylvania, and Zoom at 7p.m. EST on 14 November 2023.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board member Mike Borrello called the meeting to order at 07:05pm EST.

II. ROLL CALL AND QUORUM

Officer roll call took place at 07:05 pm EST

Board members present are as follows:

Mike Borrello, President, 06:35pm EST

Bob Flinchbaugh, Treasurer, 06:56pm EST

Others present are as follows:

Samantha Chalfant, Social Committee, 06:35pm EST

Board members absent are as follows:

All other members of the Board are at present vacant

A quorum was not needed as no actions were to take place at this meeting.

III. PROOF OF NOTICE OF MEETING

Agenda and notification were hand-delivered to residents not online as requested.

Signs were displayed at the Community entrances starting on 08 Nov 2023 until 15 Nov 2023.

Online disclosure was given via Facebook, email and text messaging as such limitations set by such avenues of communication allow.

The Village Voice newsletter was displayed and available at the Community entrances and online starting on 08 Nov 2023 until end of the month.

IV. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Board elections were set to be completed on 14 December 2023. A brief overview of candidates and voting process was given by Samantha Chalfant.

Mike Borrello followed up with a review of duties for each role of the Executive Board before opening the forum for questions as applicable to voting, the Board, and candidates.

Minor question from Kelly Ann Kelly about Board how the Executive Board is constructed and the length of term.

Denise Kitson: How many non-Executive Board members can there be?

Mike Borrello: There should be no more than 11 total members of the Board. This allows a quorum and a large enough variation in view and opinions.

No other questions were asked online or in-person. Samantha Chalfant concluded that ballots will be available via any primary contact request, and Facebook by end of day 15 November 2023.

Instruction to voters: For the election of Directors, each dwelling unit may cast a total of five (5) votes. A house may vote up to five (5) times for any one candidate or split the five (5) votes between candidates. A total of more than five (5) votes will void the Ballot. Ballot must be returned so it is received NO LATER THAN 6:00 PM ON DECEMBER 14, 2023.

Three options are available for returning (1) print, fold and place it in a sealed envelope labeled "BALLOT" and deliver to 315 Ivy or (2) hand-in in-person as instructed during the December 14th meeting performance or (3) Email to branfordsocial@gmail.com

Agenda item discussion concluded at 07:35pm

V. Parking Proposal

Mike Borrello gave a reiterated summary background from 21 Sept 2023 meeting.

There is a need to address the parking issue from new Police Chief with a desire to obtain proposals to have a constructive discussion with the Police Chief. Proposed options are:

- a. Allow sidewalk side only but will need a variance to the Board of Supervisors.
- b. To use the East Fallowfield Township Park public lot as overflow/longer term
- c. Use the additional Community Lot for a parking lot but would require clearing and Plat change for non-meadow and woodland preservation permissions.
- d. Designating areas within the Community as safe parking spaces.
- e. Create a permit parking option for Residents and/or Guests.

Samantha Chalfant updated the City of Coatesville is proposing residential permit parking and thus the Board of Supervisors might be so inclined to agree to such an option. Also, the current CC&Rs should be enforced which dictates parking stipulations. Mike Borrello added that any fines or parking fees might be a minimal passive income for the Community.

The floor was open for any questions and progression of ideas.

Ross Nicolini: If we allow people to park on sidewalk side only; can we park in wrong direction?

Mike Borrello: No, cars should follow the law for safety reasons to both pedestrian, vehicle, and passenger safety.

Mike Borrello confirms all enforcement will be by the Police as the streets are public Township owned streets unless HOA parking passes are imposed.

John Collier: Can we propose a group mailbox or move mailboxes to other side from sidewalk. This might allow additional areas in the Community for parking.

Mike Borrello: This is done in sister property Brook Crossing and has not been received well. Also, Post Office permission might be needed and would need to consider how much space would we get relating to any associated costs of installing and/or moving mailboxes.

Ross Nicolini: Can we designate to do certain sections of parking? As there are many cars that currently while parked on the sidewalk side and in front of homes are parked unsafely near corners and curves within the Community.

Mike Borrello: Yes, we can assess the limitations of where cars can legally be parked. Bob [Flinchbaugh] this might be an area where your knowledge is helpful. We might have to consider how people will react to limited number of spaces and as seen in the city the chair/cone reserving happen and what we would like to do about that.

Laura Ehrhart: Can we investigate the use of honeycomb for parking lot applications for open space areas which would not be considered non-permeable?

Bob Flinchbaugh: We can discuss but a certain amount of open space must remain open space per Planned Community Development requirements.

Mike Borrello: We have and can allow temporary use of the open space with permission for an event and/or using the Park parking areas.

Courtney Himes: I think we should consider the additional cost of maintaining any option and any changes in insurance.

Ross Nicolini: Would like to remind anyone with thoughts that we don't forget when it snows what should be done; no parking during potential heavy snow.

Kelly Ann Kelly: Can we encourage people to clean their garage out to increase their space?

Samantha Chalfant: Note the garages are an average of 20' x 20' and any standard size truck would not be accommodated by them.

Mike Borrello: We can encourage but several have been converted over the years with carpet and cabinets, etc for storage.

Jody Van Ness: When I have my children visit, I allow them to park on the lawn for the short time they visit. Can this or the option of expanding driveways be allowed?

Mike Borrello: Short term parking on the lawns that doesn't impact the look of the yard has been allowed for those able. There have been a few instances when this has been abused and caused muddy yards and roadways as well as nuisances to neighbors. As for the expansion of driveways, there is a limited amount of non-permeable space for each lot [20%] and with the 20' separation between houses having been spilt as 5' and 15', not all driveways are capable of being expanded to accommodate another car. Most of the expansion have been to widen enough to accommodate stepping out of the vehicle and not into a potential mud puddle, as I, myself, do currently.

Courtney Himes: How much of a parking issue is this that we need to formally discuss at length?

Kerri McFadden: It's really bad. I saw fire truck without lights on come through when school busses were also passing through. They couldn't get through with cars parked on the street, normal traffic, and delivery trucks. It might be a bottle neck area when traveling to the back of the neighborhood, but the Community should be concerned for each other and the efficacy of allowing emergency personnel to reach each other. I know how much of a hassle having to jockey cars can be but if that's something that needs to be done for the safety of the Community, we should all be willing to make such a sacrifice.

No additional questions or concerns were raised online or in-person. Mike Borrello ended the agenda item discussion by ask for more proposals and clearer opinionated feedback for further review and discussion at the 14 December 2023 meeting. Agenda item ended 08:04pm.

VI. Landscaping Review

Mike Borrello initiated the discussion by sharing the information the Plat had been shared and reviewed with an initial response from residents that the original areas designated to be meadows was extensive and impacts more than realized. The Landscaping portion of the budget [63%] has increased over the years and potentially will continue to increase. Per the 21 September 2023 meeting the discussion, a need to address mowing costs [41% of the Landscaping Budget] was presented and a review if returning to the meadows would be welcomed and cost effective.

John Collier: It would be beneficial and has become very culturally popular to ring the meadow back but also will take a long time at 3years with minimal upfront cost before any reasonable area change would be enjoyable due to the current conditions and growth rate. I like the visual pictures people have in their minds might not be in-line with the potential for the areas. Has there been any pictures of the original meadows from the development stage?

Samantha Chalfant: No current residents that I spoke with have any pictures or knowledge of such areas from the initiation of the Community and it's of opinion that they were never maintained as meadows from the start.

Kelly Ann Kelly: The meadows were never installed correctly after the development period. They were mowed and fertilized from the start as lawn areas. This is a point that should be taken into consideration that meadows do not get fertilized and this cost [\$5,6430/yr] would be lowered by going to meadow areas.

John Collier: Visualization efforts might help with opinions beyond a basic cost analysis. There are resources to help with the initial overhead cost for re introducing the areas but if they have never been properly implemented or maintained then the timeline could be longer or initial costs be higher than expected or above the return on investment.

Laura Ehrhart: I have contacts to discuss obtaining funding and/or seeds for stewardship. There are several conservation societies that will supply at a minimal to no cost for improving and conserving such areas. These resources should be utilized to help off-set any initiation costs.

Kerri McFadden: While I have no strong opinion as this doesn't directly affect my lot, I have heard there is a strong objection to growing things that are not maintained and having encroachment being caused to those that maintain their lawns.

General room sentiment: Yes, and rodent/pest potential increase.

John Collier: The Community currently has fox, deer, and other natural wildlife. The determination of meadows shouldn't be based on this information, but I would like to see more butterflies or hummingbirds in the area. Meadows should be designed for these efforts and any flowering or seeding plant in any area has the potential to float from one area to another such is nature.

General room question: What would the impact be if these or any areas be meadow?

Samantha Chalfant: I've performed a quick cost analysis and review of the areas. Currently, approximately 25 acres are mowed at a cost of \$700 per mowing, at an average of \$900/acre/year. Area F, the area by Arden, Branford Blvd, and the Park, is a great starting point to creating a prairie area. To Kerri's point of encroachment this site has natural boundaries with the residential areas and is a reasonably sized area, spanning nearly 2 acres. By changing this area to meadows and performing 26 cuts per year on the remaining 23 acres the HOA can save an estimated \$4,900 per year. This increases as the areas of the meadows increases to upwards of \$14,000 per year. These estimates do not include any impact on the fertilization cost and assumes that the current vendor and rate will not change and is able to accommodate maintenance of a meadow.

Area G is another great location as it has a similar situation to Area F. However, it should be noted there is a small 1-acre stormwater pond in this 4-acre area. This is also the ideal place to create a bioretention area. The 3.5-acre Area B, from Sarah's Way to Crescent Circle, with a nearly 1-acre of retention basin runs along the wooded barrier between Brook Crossing and Branford Village. If bioretention area can be created, this can increase the visual appeal of that natural boundary. A small conversion of the approximate 2-acre lawn area to a meadow will increase wildlife enjoyment by creating space for birds and butterflies. We already have hawks that attempt to nest in the area and as my neighbor will tell you I have 10-15 deer in my backyard every night.

There's an opportunity for initial cost savings by collecting seeds and propagating current plant life from resident's gardens. You're welcome to my milkweed and coneflower seeds. Several conservation associations will donate plantings or seeds. Before you clearly are residents that are willing to assist in time for a potential in labour cost reduction. And if phased in would help to maintain costs over time. I have shared pictures with Mike [Borrello] as I do agree the pictures many people have are of those of tall grass and similar to East Fallowfield Park but we can create areas that are more in line with *Sound of Music* or the meadows at Longwood Gardens. More flowers than grass and perhaps not even as tall.

As I back up to East Fallowfield Park, I do understand the need to weed when things like poison ivy encroach into my yard but if the meadows are set up correctly there should be a setback or buffer strip on the periphery maintained. Vegetation behind the setback can be unregulated except for the control of noxious weeds. Changes to the areas stated will create approximately 11.5 acres of wildflower plantings and approximately 5 acres of bioretention lands. Since such areas will not require fertilization and require mowing less frequently if at all, the 25 acres currently maintained will be significantly reduced to maintaining 10 acres as traditional lawns.

Also, we should keep in mind that we maintain the basins at \$90/month and there is an East Fallowfield ordinance that requires payment into a Municipal Stormwater Control & BMP Operation & Maintenance Fund. As Bob [Flinchbaugh] has mention that while we have not been required to pay anything into this account, this could be required at some point in the future, and it is likely that the frequency of Township inspections will increase thus a cost we should anticipate and be aware of for budget impact.

Kerri McFadden: Why is the current contractor mowing more than the required mows? If he's mowing 31 times and we expect or required to only mow 26 times why is that?

Samantha Chalfant: These numbers are from the Original Open Space Management Plan mentioned on the original Plat.

Mike Borrello: These numbers were more than likely never passed down over the years to contractors and none have read or been given for any reason the Community Plats.

Samantha Chalfant: Is there a contract for the vendor stipulating the number of mows, conditions that could be addressed to make such a small change? Is the Board collecting bids?

Mike Borrello: The landscaper has never been given a contracted amount for number of mows etc. This has always been at the discretion of the contractor, if there's an increased need to mow because of high rainfall he comes and mows. If there's a period of less rain and no need to mow, he doesn't. Conversely if I notice there's a need to mow and he hasn't been out I'll call and let him know. The Board is currently getting bids and as always, any additional local in-house business or friends who would like to submit bids for services please let the Board know.

Mike closed proposal for landscaping asking for additional feedback and proposals from residents to review and make decision from the Board. Agenda item closed 08:22pm.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 08:23pm EST.