



## **GREAT OAK FARM HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION INC.**

**Thursday November 17th, 2022**

**Annual Board Meeting at 7:00pm**

**This was a mixed meeting - remote access was provided via TEAMS**

### **General session (Started at 7:02pm)**

**Board Members Present:** Anthony DePalma, Brian Lindwall-Thomas, David Orr, Eddy Rodriguez, Jonathan Thomas, Russ Simpkins, Veerat Kalaria.

Dave Reviewed the previous Annual Minutes - available online.

### **Summary of Announcements**

- **Announcement:** Great Oak Farm monthly dues will increase from \$140 a month to \$150 a month starting January 1st 2023.
- **Announcement:** We are coming into the winter storm season. Please remember to completely clear the streets before a storm including all cars, basketball hoops, etc.
- **Announcement:** There is an opening on the ARB, please reach out if you are interested, the email address is available at our website.
- **Announcement:** Pet Etiquette. Please clean up after your pets! Also make sure to keep all pets on your property or on a leash at all times. If you see roaming pets please feel free contact Monroe's Animal Control so that we can keep the pets and humans in our neighborhood safe.
- **Announcement:** It would be nice to update the website with current photos of Great Oak Farm. If you have any photos already, or are a photographer and would like to donate a little time taking some new ones for us please email the board, address is on the website.

## Summary of Motions

- Brian motioned to adopt the guidance outlined below in the Notice and Comment on Solar, even though it might change further in the future. Russ seconded. The board voted as follows: Anthony: yes, Brian:yes, David:yes, Eddy:yes, Jonathan:yes, Russ: yes, Veerat:yes. **The motion passed.**
- Dave motioned to install 2 speed tables, at the locations proposed below in the Notice and Comment on Speed Bumps, financed via the streets reserve not to exceed \$6,000, Eddy seconded the motion. The board voted as follows: Anthony: no, Brian:no, David:yes, Eddy:yes, Jonathan:abstain, Russ: no, Veerat:no. **The motion failed to pass.**

## Committee Chair Summaries

### Landscape Committee: Anthony DePalma

**Annual Summary:** Got the Gazebo removed and Pergola installed, will add more plantings around it in the Spring to finish off the replacement project. Most of the dead ash trees have been removed at this point, and all the trails are cleaned up. We will continue to maintain an on-going tree removal budget to deal with newly infested ash trees in the future as needed.

### Streets Committee: David Orr

**Annual Summary:** 8 street signs were straightened, and we performed crack sealing in the spring as well. The catch basins were sealed and repaired as well. We did not complete the curb repair this year, our job was too small for the market demand. The board will try again in the Spring of 2023.

### Septic Committee: Russell Simpkins

**Annual Summary:** Had a blockage earlier in the year, everything has been resolved and we are continuing to research whether there are additional steps homeowners or the board need to take to prevent and protect against future blockages. More information to come in 2023. We also renewed our DEEP operating permit for septic. Other than the blockage event septic is in good shape.

The Septic pumping contract renewal was significantly higher than last year. We requested bids from other companies, and our current vendor is still the most competitive provider by a wide margin. See the budget provided in the annual packet for details.

### **Finance Committee: Eddy Rodriguez**

**Annual Summary:** We opened a second account and split the reserves to stay under FDIC limits. We did our best to minimize the impact of inflation from 2022 on our budget. With the exception of the septic contracts so far we've done a good job keeping costs steady. However, we will need to raise the monthly dues.

### **Architecture Review Board (ARB) Committee: Brian Lindwall-Thomas**

**Annual Summary:** It was a busy year of requests! Things were handled promptly by the wonderful ARB volunteers and it's great to see everyone maintaining and improving their properties! There were 31 violation letters sent out after the Spring Walkthrough, only have 6 left outstanding. The gatehouse was renovated out front as well. Solar installations are now partially protected by Connecticut State law, see motion below for details. And finally Divina is stepping down as an ARB volunteer, we wanted to thank her for all of her wonderful contributions both for requests as well as creating new positive programs like the Spring Beautification Competition.

### **Social: David Orr & Adrienne Stepkoski**

**Annual Summary:** All of the events for this year so far have been wonderful and well attended by residents! We had our first ever Diwali Event this year, everyone really enjoyed it and we will make sure to include it as a line item in the social budget for 2024. The next event is the Holiday Sing-Along on December 4th at 6-7pm on the main green.

### **Website: Eddy Rodriguez**

**Annual Summary:** The Calendar on the website is current and being actively maintained. This is the best place to find information on future GOF Board meetings, including any login information for remote meetings. We are trying to also maintain all the social events on the calendar as well. We would like to refresh the website in 2023, anyone interested in helping can reach out to the board.

## **Notice and Comment - Solar**

During the 2022 legislative session, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act No. 22-25, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Clean Air Act ("Act"). The Act was signed by Governor Ned Lamont on May 10, 2022, and took effect on October 1, 2022.

**GOF ARB** would like to propose the following guidelines for solar roofs:

**Preferred style:** Low profile solar shingles or panels

**Placement:** Solar is restricted to rooftop installation. Rear of the house preferred where feasible. Ground mount systems are **not** approved at this time. As much as possible, wiring/conduits associated with the solar panels to be placed **out of sight** from street view. If not possible, the resident and or contractor installing the wiring/conduits will notify ARB **prior** to installation and advise ARB of a plan to conceal them as much as possible in order to maintain aesthetics. ARB also reserves the right to make suggestions in order to maintain the look and feel of the GOF neighborhood.

**Pilot program:** ARB recommends rolling out a pilot of 1-3 homes, then refining the guideline.

**Additional Solar Guidelines:**

- Resident to furnish detailed plans and pictures outlining the design, color, and placement of the solar panels with their ARB request.
- Resident to outline any tree removal required with solar installation with their request.
- Plans require approval by Eversource first, prior to submitting any solar roof request to ARB for approval. This is a requirement by Eversource to get their approval prior to any solar panel roof installations.
- Town approval is required.
- ARB-Committee and ARB board member approval is required.
- Residents installing solar will be wholly responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their solar panels/system.
- Residents/contractor are responsible for obtaining all permits required for installation
- Residents are wholly responsible for obtaining homeowners insurance for their solar system
- Residents will abide by solar easements should they come into play.

After review and discussion Brian presented the motion outlined above. The motion passed.

## **Notice and Comment - Speed Tables**

Two (2) Proposed Locations:

Extending across Old Colony Rd from 19 Old Colony to 5 Secret Hollow  
Extending across Old Colony Rd from 34 Old Colony to 31 Old Colony  
(One on each side of the pond.)

### **Cost (2022)**

#### **Speed bumps/tables:**

Tri-State Industrial Maintenance - \$5200 for 4 speed bumps (3' x 24' x 4") or \$1,300 per speed bump, or \$2,600 for two

Pavement Services - \$2,250 per speed bump (30" wide x 4" tall across <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the road), or \$4,500 for two

Burns Construction - \$1,450 per speed hump/table w/ markings (10' x 24' x 4"), or \$2,900 for two

#### **Signs:**

Safetysign.com

- \$46.20 / sign or \$184.80 for 4 signs
- \$136.40 for 4 posts w/ hardware
- \$169.95 for 32lb steel post driver

Myparkingsign.com

- \$46.90 / sign or \$187.60 for 4 signs
- \$113.12 for 4 posts w/ hardware
- \$178.95 for a 32lb steel post driver

Seton.com

- \$24.49/sign (different style)
- \$127.20 for 4 posts w/o hardware

#### **Estimated total cost for 2 speed bumps/tables**

Burns Construction	\$2,900.00
Safetysign.com	\$491.15

CEO Landscaping (installation)	\$500.00
<b>Total (approx)</b>	<b>\$3,891.15</b>

After review and discussion, Dave presented the motion above, the motion failed to pass.

## Voting for the Board

There are 4 positions open for a 2 year term. There are 5 candidates on the ballot. After introductions were given and votes tallied the top 4 candidates in alphabetical order are

David Orr  
Eddy Rodriguez  
Jonathan Thomas  
Veerat Kalaria

## Open comment

- There was a discussion about the pergola. Several ideas were raised to improve that area of the pond including painting the bridges white, plantings around the base of the pergola. These will be explored more in the spring of 2023.
- There was a request to change the bylaws to allow for above ground pools. Brian pointed out that the Town of Monroe won't allow them, but no one knew why at the moment. Russ pointed out in order to change the bylaws we need 67% community approval, and the last time they were changed it cost around \$15,000 in fees.
- A resident suggested we put up physical signs before the meetings again.

Dave motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:04pm, Russ seconded. All of the board voted yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Thomas  
Secretary