

# Nature Trail Homeowners Association, Meeting of the Board of Directors

Minutes of the Meeting – July 17, 2019

Location: 8775 Foxtail Loop, Pensacola, FL 32526

Board of Directors in Attendance: Bob Barron (President); Russ McCormack (VP); Joshua Jackson (Treasurer); Peg David (Secretary); Mark Meece; Laurie Robertson

NT Residents in Attendance: 7-8 residents; no sign in

## 1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 6 PM by HOA President, Bob Barron

## 2. Proof of Notice

- Noticed posted at the Lodge in accordance with NT By-laws and Statutory Requirement on July 16, 2019.

## 3. Agenda Topic – Carr & Company Resignation

- HOA President, Bob Barron informed the Board this is an **emergency board meeting**, called due to the receipt of NT's Property Management Company - Carr & Company, Inc.'s - resignation letter, dated July 12, 2019.
- Carr's resignation letter provided the required 60-day notice, in accordance with the NT contract, and announced they desired to terminate their management of Nature Trail Homeowner's Association. Carr & Company looks forward to a smooth transition and will continue to support NT during the transition process.
- Carr & Company is willing to stay until the contract date of Mar 2020 if required.

### Board Discussion.

- Bob Barron opened discussion to Board members regarding options for a path forward to replace the Management Company. Options to hire another Property Management Company or hire a CPA firm – two HOA management options employed by other HOA communities - were discussed with pro/con considerations:
- Laurie Robertson presented option to hire a CPA Firm/POC vs a Property Management Company.
  - As HOA Board Member, with her former neighborhood, the HOA removed their Property Management vendor and hired a CPA for overall fiscal responsibilities; in tandem with their HOA board taking on greater roles and responsibilities.
  - 'Property' oversight was augmented by resident volunteers responsible to oversee and address areas such as: Lodge, grounds; pool, common areas; and coordinated maintenance with vendors holding maintenance contracts; and reported to the HOA. They had 'community manager' resident who oversaw the pool; rode thru the neighborhood to identify areas needing upkeep -- all provided monthly reports to HOA/community; posted info on HOA website.
  - Their HOA procured/implemented HOA software (presented at NT July Board Mtg for review); pay dues online; create newsletters; FAQs; minutes; report maintenance issues, etc – complete package for less money vs what their Management Company was using.
  - Using a CPA and augmenting some routine duties with resident volunteers, gave their HOA better oversight over several areas; and an important consideration – those actions, combined with HOA software, saved their resources (\$)/budget – then used in other needed areas.

- This management approach was embraced by residents and resulted in improved relationships across the neighborhood and the HOA.
- Russ McCormack (VP) raised issue and discussion regarding accountability. How to hold volunteers accountable? Given Laurie's former neighborhood was 200+ homes; vice 600+. Pointed out management of a large community (like NT) infrastructure is valued into millions of dollars; and may have potential adverse effect on home values in the neighborhood should such a short-sighted cost cutting alternative fail.
  - Relying on volunteers and committees to prioritize expenditures and manage resources, though noble, may not provide HOA members with the level of professional oversight and expertise they demand.
  - That's a key performance measure NT HOA should seek from a professional and bonded management company and HOA Board membership. Recent history example: it's proven difficult to gather a sufficient forum of homeowners to vote for new board members. Most "committees" may be made up of unelected residents - few in number and zero accountability when their "good ideas" fall short.
  - Pointed out management by committee is both ponderous and wildly inefficient. Decisions and resource provisioning often requires actions within hours/days. That's the role of a management company. A management team has a clear understanding of HOA priorities, rules and budget that can act unemotionally and without bias to get the job done.
- Josh Jackson (Treas) mentioned the Board may want to explore option to keep only the bookkeeping with Carr & Company if the HOA moved to a self-management type of option
  - Mark Meese asked why we would leave bookkeeping with Carr & Company vice moving it to a new management vendor along with everything else?
  - Josh mentioned his reasoning was only under the condition if our HOA moved to a self-management type of operation. Under that circumstance, it might be worth exploring as Carr & Company has generally done a good job with that piece.
- Peg David (Sec) raised dialog re transition related requirements; i.e., notification to banks; fiscal elements required in a management company turnover; timelines and what actions the Board needed to do and when – given need to act quickly.
- Bob Barron (Pres) already requested an 'inventory' list from Carr - listing all Mgmt Team roles/responsibilities, maintenance contracts; turnover items; to review and ensure all pertinent info is in hand. Peg David recommended it be in MS Excel to easily manage, sort, etc.
- Board agreed the first priority is to draft a Request for Proposal to distribute; review type and number of responses received. This may involve follow-on round(s) of Questions/Answers with prospective management companies or CPAs who wish to submit a bid. HOA Pres/Board agreed the final selection authority rested with the Board and time was of the essence.
- **RFP – Request for Proposal**. Bob Barron offered to draft an initial RFP as initial focus point; cover broad set of current management duties – not 'how' but 'what' NT requirements cover.
  - The final RFP will receive widest dissemination to Management Companies and CPAs – Board members can provide input on companies.
  - Board estimated several weekly meetings will ensue to work closely on Transition requirements.
  - **Action.** \*\*
  - Bob Barron's draft RFP will be provided to Mark Meese for review by **Mon, 22 July**
  - Forward to rest of NT Board for review/input by **Tues, 23 July**
  - Draft RFP/input to be reviewed at next **emergency Board Mtg scheduled: Thurs, 25 July**

### Other Items – Updates while Board in Session.

4. **Streetlights Update.** Bob Barron indicated he did a neighborhood drive-thru; and the last streetlight to be added to NT Gulf Power contract (at ~\$100 monthly) will be installed at the end of Rush Lane by the lift station. This light had been requested for several years due to the very dark area there at end of the cul-de-sac.
  
5. **ARC.** Bob Barron indicated the ARC Architect had resigned recently. As most homes in NT have been developed, the current ARC members have been reviewing all ARC items – home plans, landscaping plans, etc. and can continue in that role. Discussion ensued if the Board needed to hire a new architect or simply retain one as needed.
  - Motion made to save resources, hire architect when required; with funds earmarked in budget appropriately. Approved unanimously by Board members present.
  
6. **24x7 Visitor Front Gate Access.**
  - Based on Resident feedback and ongoing security concerns discussed at Apr HOA Board Mtg, a Change to Nature Trail Guest Entry Procedures was drafted, by Russ McCormack (VP).
  - Effective **1 Aug 2019**, all unaccompanied guests must have approval from the Resident they are visiting BEFORE entry is permitted.
  - This will be effective 24 hrs a day / 7 days a week.
  - This does not impact any changes to current process in place now during late evening/overnight hours – it simply extends the access controls to 24/7.
  - Residents whose family members have a 3 or 6 month visitor pass will not be impacted by this change.
  - **New Visitor Guidelines will be communicated/distributed to Residents and CES soonest.**