

Minutes of the January 4, 2024 Silver Ridge Park East HOA Meeting

Trustee Debbie Moriarty presided over the meeting in the absence of President Oliver Oramas. She called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Presentation and Q&A on maintaining and improving our mental health as we get older

Bernadette Davis is a licensed social worker and the Senior Guidance Program Coordinator at Preferred Behavioral Health, a large community mental health center in Ocean County.

The Senior Guidance Program is funded by a grant from the Ocean County Board of Commissioners. Most of the services – including person-to-person counseling at the office, via teleconferencing by phone or at home, and in group sessions – are provided at no cost to Ocean County residents over the age of 60. They may bill your insurance company, but there is no co-pay or out-of-pocket costs to you. The services are confidential.

During her presentation and in response to residents' questions, Ms. Davis made the following points:

- Loneliness, grieving, struggling to deal with a new illness of your own, or struggling to care for a sick spouse are not uncommon feelings as people grow older and their life circumstances change.
- Grieving is not always about the loss of a loved one. We also experience grief about lifestyle changes, like not being able to drive or do the things we used to be able to do so easily because of loss of mobility. Or financial anxiety. Or suddenly, after a decades-long marriage, becoming the person who has to do everything in the household because your partner is not capable of helping you anymore.
- "Caregiver fatigue" is a real thing, as is depression caused by SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), which often occurs in the winter, when the days are shorter and we don't get as much sunlight in our lives.
- There is also an epidemic of loneliness. Everyone has felt lonely at some point in their lives, but when it begins to lead to other problems like depression or anxiety, it's important to try and reach out to other people and stay as active as you can. Everyone needs some level of human connection.
- In that vein, check on your neighbors if you can, especially if they are elderly and alone. If you haven't seen them in a while and no one answers the door, call the main police number and ask them to do a wellness check.
- **So when should you seek counseling help from Senior Guidance?** When you start feeling so overwhelmed by the circumstances in your life that you are struggling to cope. Or when you start feeling like "nothing really matters anymore." Grieving and anxiety over things is normal, but you can't let it control your entire life. Often, just speaking with a trained counselor once in a while helps calm things down and re-focus your priorities.
- If you would like more information, call Preferred Behavioral Health at (732) 367-4700, extension 7550. Leave a message saying that you are interested in the services of the Senior Guidance program, and someone will get back to you promptly.
- There are also many other mental health and support group resources throughout Ocean County. The staff at the Senior Guidance program can help you identify and get in touch with them.

- The personal counseling offered by Senior Guidance is different from psychiatric treatment. If it is determined that you need a higher level of assistance, the staff at Senior Guidance will work with you to access it.

Roll Call of the Board of Trustees

Trustees Trudy Venskus (Section 1), Joan Ward (Section 3), Susan Swain (Section 5), James Clarke (Section 6), Mary Conery (Section 10) and Debbie Moriarty (Section 12) were present. Trustees Peter Szybel (Section 4), Kathy Conte (Section 7) and Michael Joffe (Section 11) were not present. Sections 2, 8 and 9 are vacant.

Twenty-two residents signed the attendance sheet.

Announcements by Presiding Officer Debbie Moriarty

We have been working on improving the microphone system, but if you cannot hear us, let us know right away. We don't want you to miss any important information.

We are also working out some glitches with the automatic notification system. If you are not receiving these notifications in the way you requested them – text, e-mail or a phone call – please contact the office.

The 2024-2025 budget ballot will be mailed to all homeowners this week. On Monday, January 22, at 7:00 p.m., we will hold a special information session to explain the budget and answer homeowners' questions. The deadline to return your budget ballot is Friday, January 26.

The trustee and president elections will be held in March. Included in the budget ballot mailing will be a form you can use to nominate yourself or someone else to serve as president of the association or as a trustee. The return date for nominations is also January 26.

Thanks to the enthusiastic response to the soft plastics recycling effort, we are very close to qualifying for a second free park bench from Trex. If anyone has any ideas as to where this bench should be placed, please let us know. The first bench will be installed on Stanford Drive at the suggestion of a resident as soon as it is warm enough to dig the footings.

The board has created a new Violations Committee, and we are looking for volunteers from the community to help. Violation notices and letters will still be issued by the office. If you would like to help maintain the standards that have been established for our community by participating in this effort, please contact the office.

And a reminder: On the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., a professional from the Ocean County Health Department will be at the clubhouse to provide screenings and answer questions. This is a good opportunity to get yourself checked out professionally once in a while outside of your regular doctors' appointments.

Finally, we would like to thank the Italian American Club for their donation of a new American flag for the clubhouse. They hold their monthly meetings here, and they noticed that our old flag was a bit tattered. They saw a need and they filled it, and we are very appreciative.

Approval of the Minutes of the December 7, 2023 HOA Meeting

Joan Ward made a motion to amend the minutes of the December 7, 2023 HOA meeting so that the first sentence of the Election Update report on page 3 reads: "Debbie Moriarty reported that nomination forms for the 3 vacant trustee positions and the 5 seats up for election in 2024 will be mailed in early January."

The amendment was seconded by Mary Conery and approved unanimously. James Clarke made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. It was seconded by Joan Ward and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Dru Sangemino reported that this month we have almost literally reached the break-even point. In addition to the expenditures for the defibrillator, the clubhouse appraisal and the automated call service, the Sutherland Court island was cleaned up and a few trees were planted. This is part of an ongoing plan to upgrade more of the islands in the community using funds raised by the Beautification and Grounds Committees.

Barring any serious storms or unanticipated expenses, we may end the year with just a minor shortfall. We have enough money in the operating account to cover this, so we may not have to dip into the savings account at this point.

Trudy Venskus made a motion to approve the report, which was seconded by Susan Swain and approved unanimously.

Administrative Report

Trustee Mary Conery reported that 12 homes are for sale. There were no closings in December. There are seven flippers working to remodel or sell their completed homes. One flipper was issued a stop-work order for failure to comply with community guidelines.

As of January 1, 2024, arrears collected by the office staff for attorney fees, late fees, HOPA fines and other violations totaled \$1,583.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Handicapped-Accessible Bathroom Update – Mary Conery said the architect's plan was received this week. Once it is reviewed and approved by the board, it will be submitted to the various contractors for bids.

Election Committee Update – Debbie Moriarty said ballots for the president and trustee elections will be mailed to residents in early February. There will be a "Meet the Candidates" night at the clubhouse on Monday, February 12. Ballots must be returned by Wednesday, March 6, and will be counted at the HOA annual re-organization meeting on Thursday, March 7. Volunteers are needed to count ballots that night. Contact Debbie if you can help.

AED Update – Debbie Moriarty noted that the defibrillator should be used on a person who is unconscious and unresponsive, not on someone who has simply fainted.

Berkeley Township Senior Coalition Report – Susan Swain said there was nothing new on the various legislative proposals affecting 55+ HOAs. Many communities have been having problems with unlicensed contractors. It was noted that residents can find out immediately if someone they are considering hiring is licensed and insured by calling the Ocean County Office of Consumer Affairs at 732-929-2105.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no motions.

SECTION REPORTS

Most of the trustees had nothing new to report. Mary Conery noted that a homeowner has begun erecting a major fence on their property, and she reminded residents that all fences – no matter

what size they are – need Architectural Committee approval. Fencing is very costly, but if you erect a fence without approval that does not meet the community guidelines, you will have to take it down at your expense.

CLUB AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Architectural Committee – They received a few new applications in late December and will be working with the residents who submitted them.

Billiards Club – They play on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Entertainment Committee – The committee is taking a break in January and February. The next event will be a coffee house featuring the very popular Amanda Rose for a return engagement on Wednesday, March 13. Upcoming 2024 events include dances, a luau, and a picnic. Details in the Park Echo.

Flea Market – The next event will be an indoor flea market and bake sale on Saturday, March 16. The committee is looking for a few more volunteers to help with the advertising for these events and set up. Contact Gail DiNicolas if you are interested.

Gray Power – A new chair with DIY skills is needed for this committee, which meets twice a month to take care of chores related to the maintenance of the clubhouse and the landscaping around it, saving the association a considerable amount of money. Contact the office for more information if you are interested.

Hospitality Committee – The committee reported they are doing well and that more people are bringing in baked goods for the HOA meetings.

House Committee – They could use a few volunteers to replenish supplies and check to make sure groups using the clubhouse maintain it appropriately. Contact Gail DiNicolas if you can help with this.

Park Echo – The deadline for the February issue is January 7. Gail DiNicolas reminded residents that the deadlines are usually more than three weeks before the publication date, so if they have a submission for the Park Echo, they should tell her as far in advance as possible.

Pins and Needles – They meet every Tuesday from 1-3 p.m. in the library.

Sunshine Club – Elva Hall sent four Park Echos to former residents, two get-well cards, and four sympathy cards. She thanked all the residents who get in touch with her when they know of a neighbor who would appreciate a card.

Trees Committee – Tree costs remain a major expense.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A resident asked what, specifically, has been the problem with the microphone system. Trustees explained that they were all on the same frequency and did not work well together. The resident said that many in the audience still cannot hear what is being said and perhaps it is time to purchase a new system. Debbie Moriarty said this will be discussed at the board's next agenda meeting.

Two residents complimented the group of volunteers who decorated the clubhouse and the grounds for the Christmas holidays. One person said they had never seen SRPE looking so festive.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 1, at the clubhouse. It will start at 6:30 p.m. to accommodate a guest speaker from CenExcel AMRI – a nationwide clinical research network – on current studies relating to memory loss and dementia.

Kathryn Forsyth, Recording Secretary