

Mt. Vernon Estates, Troy, MI Homeowners Meeting

2024-09-03 6:00 PM (Postponed from 2024-08-27)

- Welcome
 - Board Presence
 - Katherine Greig, President, MVEHA.president@gmail.com
 - Lived in Mt Vernon 22 years
 - Cathy Hoch, Treasurer, mveha.treasurer@gmail.com
 - Lives in MT Vernon for 7 years
 - Mike Zdanio, Secretary, mveha.secretary@gmail.com
 - ~ 34 attendees
 - 420 homes in subdivision
- Previous meetings
 - Held at Community Center, but cost became prohibitive
 - Seemed unnecessary for the amount of people who came. Meetings in the field have had record numbers.
- Board Openings
 - Kathy Bauhof has moved out of Mt Vernon and vacated the VP
 - 5th position according to bylaws is to be filled by past president, but this remains vacant.
- History
 - We are a voluntary HOA
 - Dues have never been mandatory
 - 2008 - City of Troy transferred responsibility of perimeter maintenance to homeowners whose lots back up to John R and Wattles.
 - HOA previously put liens on homes that did not pay dues, but it was concluded that the HOA has no power to do this. Dues are not mandatory.
 - HOA has always been a non-profit
 - Registers with state every year as a nonprofit..
 - \$25 annual fee
 - To become a mandatory HOA, all 420 homes would need to agree
 - Katherine contacted several people at local and state governments to confirm HOA status
 - Names and departments not recorded
 - Subdivision partially built by Pulte Homes
 - Rules
 - The HOA does not and cannot enforce rules regarding your property. Homeowners should consult the City of Troy Department of Code Enforcement.
 - Island Maintenance
 - Islands refer to the medians at the entrances of Mt. Vernon, Colonial Blvd, and Ramblewood.
 - Katherine spoke to someone with Troy Code Enforcement
 - City has no rule regarding islands
 - The City would probably maintain if no one else does and it becomes a problem.
 - There are a few volunteers who maintain the landscaping
 - If a homeowner fails to maintain their property according to the **City of Troy code**, it is the city that will contact and/or fine them, not the HOA.
- Questions sent to Board prior to meeting

- Where are the bylaws and how can community members access them? If they were provided at the time one bought a house-how do we get a copy?
 - <https://www.2020.mveha.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MVEHA-bylaws-7.pdf>
 - Realtors usually reach out to HOA. Once they learn there is not a mandatory HOA, they don't follow up on any other details.
 - Not distributed when new residents move in
 - Bylaws need to be updated
- What year did the bylaws expire? (Most do not actually expire but may need updating.) Is this the case for Mt. Vernon?
 - They never did, however they need to be updated to meet the needs of the subdivision today.
- Has the current board looked into reinstating the bylaws and at what cost might that be?
 - They never expired.
- If the bylaws are updated, would dues become mandatory once again?
 - No, dues are not mandatory. Mandatory dues would require all 420 houses within the subdivision to agree on starting a new HOA.
- Why, at the yearly meeting in August of 2023, were the financials not shared? The board is to provide copies of the budget/finances at meetings.
 - Current financial information is on the back of the meeting agenda
 - Financial information can be requested from Cathy Hoch. Please send email to mveha.treasurer@gmail.com.
- Why at the August of 2023 meeting when it was disclosed that Mt. Vernon did not have a signed contract with Greenline were bids not taken and then voted on for the 2024 cutting season? Did you consider another company?
 - A contract is not required by Greenline.
 - Cathy contacted 5-6 other companies to get quotes but were not competitive
 - Previous contact was Kathy Bauhof, but is now Cathy Hoch.
 - Follow up questions
 - How often do they cut - Biweekly frequency
- Is Greenline being paid for drainage areas, perimeter, and common/entrance areas? What is the total contract costs for 2023 and 2024?
 - City of Troy takes care of retention pond behind Greensboro
 - Greenline cuts 3 islands and the court
 - Islands: Mt. Vernon, Colonial, and Ramblewood.
 - Court: Lancashire
 - Contract Cost between 2023 and 2024
 - 2023: \$6,211.00
 - Fiscal year 2024 is not complete. Contact Cathy Hoch for the year-to-date total for 2024.
 - Additional follow up questions occurred during meeting, but not all information could be discerned.
 - Cathy Hoch looked up invoice information from her phone during meeting, but there was confusion about what time span and work to which the costs mentioned applied.
- Has MVEHA considered using a management company for lawn care and related needs?
 - No. This would raise expenses.
- Dues are no longer mandatory because we are not an HOA with up-to-date-bylaws so why did the board not project a financial disparity in the money collected and paid out? (I did bring this up last August.) It does look like we are still an official HOA according to LARA.
 - Dues have never been mandatory, we financially we are fine now but with less people paying dues every year it will be a problem.

- The Facebook page has one rule. See my screenshot:
 - Everytime a post has been taken down by Katherine, the poster has been notified by Katherine Grieg.
- Why are people censored (posts removed and/or closed) if questions and content do not break any rules?
 - Questions were being asked and Katherine wanted to make sure they didn't get ignored. She asked for them to be emailed so they could be answered. Katherine has taken two posts down ever and it was for this reason.
- Should the FB rules be updated to reflect board expectations regarding topics of discussion and questions?
 - Yes
- Should/could a new position of social media moderator be created?
 - Yes - looking for volunteers
- When the voting notice came out—why was it not shared as a PDF on FB or on the official MEVHA.org site?
 - Not everyone is on Facebook.
- Why is there no financial information on the voting document?
 - Not available at the time of printing.
- Why are the minutes to meetings not on the MVEHA.org site? (It appears that nothing has been added since 2020.)
 - Difficult to maintain.
 - Looking for volunteers to help with website maintenance.
- Is the MVEHA.org being used by the current board? If yes, how so?
 - Some information is posted by a volunteer, but they are stepping down.
- Where are minutes, budgets, and financials housed? Do you agree that all Mt. Vernon members have a right to review these documents?
 - On Google Drive
 - Send requests to a member of the board to get copies of information.
- Don't common areas require insurance? If someone is hurt when physically on a common area what happens? I think you mentioned that insurance was not needed. What is the source of this information?
 - Official response from City and State is “we don’t give legal advice”.
 - Only common areas are islands and the only one is on Lancashire Court
 - HOA does not own any property.
 - Katherine is seeking a meeting with a lawyer to discuss.
- Does this board feel transparency is pivotal to having positive relationships with the community?
 - Yes.
- Questions during meeting
 - Do we know how many rentals are in the subdivision?
 - About 6. Cathy Hoch maintains this information on a spreadsheet of all dues that are paid yearly.
 - Have homes along Wattles and John R paid their dues?
 - Some have, some have not
 - Is the trend of homes paying dues going up or down?
 - Going down
 - 2022: 89%
 - 2023: 74%
 - 2024: 58% as of August

- If trend continues to decline, what is lost next?
 - Everything
- What is length of term for board positions?
 - One year
 - How do elections work
 - Current board positions (according to bylaws)
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Past President
- Why do people not pay dues?
 - Not clear any one reason
 - Shaming those who have not paid dues is not a practice we wish to follow.
- How does the garage sale get advertised?
 - Cathy asked for volunteers this year to help advertise
 - Very little traffic last year. Looking for volunteers in 2025 to help with communication.
- Are more block captains needed?
 - 3 openings
 - Some block captains take multiple streets
 - Do a lot of hard work and save HOA money by distributing newsletters (and even returning envelopes)
- Shout Outs and Events
 - Jeremy Dewald
 - Pays for all cider and donuts for Halloween Parade
 - October 19
 - Candice Schnoblen
 - Arranges for Santa to join parade and “step off” location at Hill Elementary
 - Candy is all donated
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - Looking for someone to coordinate.
 - Collect eggs and prepare hunt.
 - Diwali
 - Fireworks are not legal on Diwali per State of Michigan
 - City permitted in the past with the expectation that fireworks stayed within a range
 - Garage Sale
 - New signs purchased from Wal Mart
- When does the budget (planning) start?
 - Budget starts January 1.
 - Expenses change very little so no planning is performed.
- Why is Greenline not cutting the perimeter along Wattles?
 - Cathy Hoch to follow up with Greenline
- What is the cost per cut? Or per week?
 - Last bill - \$375
 - 5 cuts \$45 per cut for three islands = \$265
- Signs
 - \$20,000 when installed
 - Letters have fallen off and the insides have warped
 - Katherine would like to see new signs rather than fixing
 - Mike doesn't think the signs need to be refurbished at this time.
 - City has lots of rules regarding signs

- Budget
 - Raised \$5,639 so far, goal was \$5,000.
- Requires special screwdriver to open
- Is the quote for repair available to share?
 - \$5000 to refurbish
 - Quote from 2023, but Katherine expects it to be honored still.
 - No warranty on work/ warranty has expired
- Previous signs
 - Painted bricks

Expected Income from dues: 420 homes * \$30/home = \$12,600

- Voting
 - Summary from Katherine:
 - In 2008, the City of Troy sent notice to all homeowners whose property backs up to John R or Wattles, that they would be responsible for their portion of grass that backs up to the main road. At that time, most houses paid their dues regularly, and the HOA board decided that, in an effort to keep the subdivision looking nice, it would pay to have the grass cut on the perimeter of the subdivision. Fast forward to 2024 - since only approximately 50% of houses have paid their dues so far, the HOA will struggle to afford the cost of maintaining the grass on the perimeters starting next summer.
 - Vote how to proceed
 - Yes, please continue cutting grass on the sub perimeter.
 - A "Yes" vote would require us (Mt. Vernon Estates) to continue to request dues from all residents. If enough residents do not pay to cover the costs, dues may be increased meaning fewer people will need to pay more.
 - No, please stop cutting grass on the sub perimeter. This would revert the responsibility to keep the grass maintained to each homeowner whose property backs up to John R or Wattles, according to the City of Troy officials.
 - A "No" vote would require homeowners with properties backing up to main roads to maintain the grass. This could be an incredible inconvenience to many as few if any properties have gates with direct access. Those with private lawn service agreements may need to renegotiate rates, and those without may need to push or ride lawn mowers around the block. Failure to do so may result in fines from the City of Troy to the individual homeowner.
 - Results:
 - Yes: 70
 - No: 32
 - Abstain: 1

●

- 2023 Financial Statement

○

Income	
Dues collected for 2023	\$ 9,295.00
Cash on Hand (12/31/23)	\$ 8,000.64
	\$ 17,295.64
Expenses	
Greenline	\$ 6,211.00
AutoOwners	\$ 1,307.00
Newsletters and paper	\$ 453.00
	\$ 7,971.00
Income after expenses paid	\$ 9,324.64
Savings as of 01/01/23	\$ 6,425.99
Signage collected from 2023	\$ 3,660.00
Savings as of 12/31/23	\$ 10,085.99
Total Cash on hand on 12/31/23	\$ 19,410.63

○

- Upcoming events
 - Food Trucks continue every Tuesday until October 15
 - Diwali Celebration: October 19
 - Halloween Parade, October 19

Please Sign Up

Please put your
first and last name and phone number

- President (Katherine Greig) *Christine Russell 586-201-8119*
- Vice President *Kylee LaRocce 248-417-2340*
- Treasure (Cathy Hoch)
- Secretary (Mike Zdanio)
- Board Spot _____
- Halloween Parade (Jeremy Dewald)
- Santa Parade (Candice Schnoblen)
- Easter Egg Hunt _____
- Diwali (Ashuma Dharphale)
- Garage Sale _____
- Help rewrite bylaws

*Theresa Drach
block captain
586-484-0957
Colonial Blvd.*

*Susan Musto
I can take over
the entrance
signs.
248-506-0967*

Social MEDIA - Mike Musto 248-506-0927

Attendees

Lou Simmet, 4101 Marywood
Mike Musto, 4174 Gatesford Circle
Gordon and Karen Moore, 2384 Greensboro
Bob Ohlert, 4162 Gatesford Circle
Ryan Cousino, 4034 Greensboro
Cathie Ruffner, 2327 Hillcrescent Dr
Ellen Thomas, 2198 Cumberland
Jo Ann Preston, 4458 Lancashire Court
Kristine Leone, 2120 Fairfield Dr
Douglas and Theresa Drauch, 4097 Colonial Blvd
Louise and Wes Bulik, 2177 Cumberland
Blake Kosech, 4119 Gatesford, Circle
Jim Russell, 4186 Gatesford Circle
Mark and Janice Brezenski, 2335 Hillcrescent Dr
Russ and Ann Marie Mathews, 4155 Gatesford Circle
Ken Sechnick, 4280 Gatesford Circle
Darrien Foster, 4415 Lancashire Court
David and Sharon Butcher, 4418 Greensboro
Mike and Megan Faucett, 2343 Hillcrescent Dr
Ryan Connors, 2185 Cumberland
Vic and Nancy Zambardi, 4241 Alleghany
Ken and Jen Fuhrman, 4120 Greensboro
Larry Bakka, 4099 Greensboro
Mia Shaffer, 4084 Greensboro