

Stoneybrooke Annual HOA Meeting
April 12, 2024

- I. Call to Order
Sara Heatherly opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

There were 42 homes represented.

Amanda Miller introduced the guest speaker, Wesley Cox, Traffic Engineer Director for the City of Montgomery.

Wesley Cox:

- 1) There are many ways to control traffic (Ex: traffic lights, speed bumps, striping, ribbon strips and portable radar speed signs which discourage speeding)
- 2) There are many neighborhoods throughout the city dealing with speeding issues.
- 3) The process for his department is to study, collect data and then present the data to the neighborhood and the police department.
- 4) Portable radar speed signs record data in 15-minute increments so they can determine what times the most offenses are taking place; then this information is shared with the police department; they don't necessarily have to write tickets, even a warning is a good deterrent.
- 5) Speed humps are an option, but they also have their challenges when being retrofitted on an existing corridor.
- 6) Whatever Stoneybrooke residents choose to do with a consensus from the neighborhood residents the process would be a) Data gathering b) Design for the changes to be made c) Budget d) 70% or more consensus of the neighborhood for approval required.
- 7) The most effective method is to say something if you see something and to have respect for your fellow neighbors and your neighborhood.

Mr. Cox asked if anyone had questions:

- **Ed Poorbaugh (612 Stoneybrooke Way)**

The cost for speed humps and roundabouts is horrendous. Are there any options more cost effective to deter speeding?

Wesley: Battery or solar powered radar speed units could be placed permanently; still \$8-10 k per sign); people over time do tend to get de-sensitized to them. Ripple strips are an option, but they are very loud and would, most likely, disturb residents whose homes they were installed near.

- **Luke Smith (10576 Duncannon Trail)**

Could you place a patrol car as a speed trap in the neighborhood?

Wesley: Traffic engineering's #1 goal is to get police in the neighborhoods to enforce traffic laws and deter speeding; the challenge is not having enough traffic officers to enforce.

- **Irene Campbell (640 Lismore Place)**

Could stop signs be installed?

Wesley: Yes, it can be done. This is a cheap solution but often times this causes more crashes because people either completely ignore them or roll through them. Installing new stops signs sometimes results in more crashes.

II. Sara Heatherly opened the HOA portion of the meeting.

She introduced herself, Amanda Miller, and Dawn Starnes from Lowder New Homes.

Sara asked attendees to reference in their handouts the 2023 HOA Meeting Minutes and asked if anyone had any corrections.

Page 4: Tracey Roberts should be Tracy Roberts.

Page 4: Stevens should be spelled Stephens.

With no other corrections, the 2023 HOA Meeting Minutes were passed.

Sara asked attendees to reference in their handouts the 2023/2024 Budget Comparison. She noted that operating expenses stayed about the same (around \$150k) for 2023 and were projected to be about that in 2024. She asked if there were questions; there were none; the budget passed.

Sara moved onto explaining the transition process for Lowder New Homes to turn the HOA over to the residents of Stoneybrooke. There are 657 homes completed in Stoneybrooke with 35 lots left to build on and homes to sell. We project to close 25 homes in 2024. We closed 28 homes in 2023. The turnover process should start sometime in the next year and a half. There will need to be a minimum of 3 but no more than 7 volunteers for the HOA board. Before the turnover can take place the subsidy that Lowder New Homes paid on behalf of the Stoneybrooke HOA would have to be completely paid back. It is currently \$71,000. We also like there to be a surplus in the budget of at least one year's operating expenses. She explained that running the HOA is not an easy job and if there aren't enough volunteers, the neighborhood could consider other options, such as hiring an outside firm to run the HOA for them. There still would need to be a board in place, as well. Please let Sara or Amanda know if you are interested in serving.

Sara addressed the issue of unpaid HOA dues in Stoneybrooke. The process now is to send 3 letters, offering payment plan options, for any residents past due over one year. If still no resolution in payment, a collections attorney is sometimes involved. She tries not to use the attorney because it's very expensive and costs the HOA money. The decision has been made, because there is \$60,000 in unpaid HOA dues that moving forward on placing liens on anyone's property in the neighborhood that has not paid their HOA dues. Once the lien is placed the homeowner is restricted from getting a loan, refinancing a loan, or selling their home until the dues are paid in full. She asked if anyone had any questions.

- **Bonnie Herndon (592 Glenmede Lane)**

How many people have unpaid dues?

Sara explained that she does not have the exact number of residents that are delinquent.

- **Paulette Williams (600 Stoneybrooke Way)**

Was the increase in dues last year to cover for those who are not paying their dues?

Sara: Everything has increased in cost over the last couple of years. Dues were increased only by \$2 per month last year which, if everyone paid, would add an additional \$14,000 to the HOA funds. There was no intent to punish those who are doing right by paying on time. It just helps fund and keep the neighborhood in great condition. Lowder has a responsibility to save/spend HOA monies wisely and LNH take this very seriously.

- **Annette Russell (639 Glenmede Lane)**

Did Amanda research the cost effectiveness of taking homeowners with delinquent dues to Small Claims Court? How time consuming is that process?

Amanda: Did research that as an option but it's labor intensive.

She would have to file each claim, pay for each claim filed and be present to argue each individual claim in court. She can publish the process for anyone that is interested in knowing about it. We might consider this for habitual, heavy violators of HOA non-payment. It would be nice if she could take volunteers to help with the process but unfortunately, she cannot share personal information with anyone so she must do all of it on her own if she chose to use this option. She also manages multiple neighborhoods for Lowder so this would be a very difficult option to choose.

III. Open Discussion

Amanda begins by reading the purpose of the HOA and then opens the floor for general discussion and questions.

The purpose of the Association is to properly maintain the common areas in the community, manage insurance, contract services, utilities and other needed materials and services. The HOA is a partnership between the builder and the homeowners. The Board, Lowder New Homes at this time, is obligated to make ethical and legal decisions that best serve the entire neighborhood. An HOA is only concerned with what effects the entire subdivision, which helps maintain your individual home property value and your quality of living in the community. Fiduciary duty requires the board to ensure that the assessments you pay are used properly to maintain a neighborhood.

- **Mary Billups (10524 Duncannon Trail)**

After the turnover of the HOA, will the new board have the same power that the Lowder board has now?

Sara: Yes, they would have the same rights as the current board has.

- **Debra McClain (10747 Lismore Circle)**

How do I get a copy of the by-laws?

Amanda: They are always on the Stoneybrooke HOA website (www.stoneybrookehoa.com) but that if you wanted a printed copy, she would get one to you.

- **Yolanda Christian (10401 Treviso Place)**

We need a more detailed budget. She understands that there were new cameras purchased for the entrance to the neighborhood awhile back. Why do the homeowners not know when those purchases are made?

Sara: We don't put the entire line-item budget into this HOA meeting handout just because it is long and detailed, however, every penny spent is kept in detail. She will provide you with a copy of the detailed budget. The board has the power to make purchasing decisions on behalf of the neighborhood. They do not have to consult the members of the HOA about every purchase. The cameras had been discussed as an issue by the homeowners for the past two years, and the decision was made by the board to make that purchase. We also make decisions regarding replacing things that may be broken and landscaping changes/upkeep. This all falls under the purpose of the HOA, which Amanda read earlier in the meeting.

- **Cheryl Collins (10428 Treviso Place)**

We need to address PEX pipe issues in the neighborhood and the fact that another neighbor complained about the moving pod in my driveway.

Sara: Explained that the PEX pipe issues have nothing to do with the HOA and will not be discussed in this meeting. Amanda noted that any complaints are kept anonymous. But complaints are not necessary for someone to receive notice of an HOA violation.

- **Tonia Stephens (604 Evanwood Lane)**

How long will it take to completely transition the HOA from the Lowder board to homeowner run? In addition, how long will it take to clear the \$71,000 subsidy?

Sara: The transition process would start in about a year and a half and then Lowder would stay on an additional year just to make sure the transition is a smooth one. She would estimate that it would be fully transitioned in about 2 years. Regarding the subsidy, the transition cannot be completed until the subsidy is cleared.

- **Debra McClain (10747 Lismore Circle)**

The asphalt in the street is a problem. Are dues connected to the subsidy? How does the Board make decisions regarding the neighborhood?

Sara: Explained how the City determines that it's time to put on the final wearing surface and once that is completed, after one year passes, the City takes over any street upkeep or repair. She said that yes dues go towards paying down the subsidy. Currently there are no plans to increase dues. Once the turnover is complete the new Board will make all decisions regarding how the HOA money is spent and whether to increase/decrease dues. Sara suggests leaving dues as they are or over time increasing them, so the neighborhood continues to do well and keep up with inflation.

- **Mary Billups (10524 Duncannon Trail)**

Does the subsidy continue to accumulate? I have fears of the transition of the HOA.

Sara: The subsidy is what it is and does not increase.

Amanda: Typically, she does not see a neighborhood decline after a turnover. It usually gets even better because the residents that live in the neighborhood see all that goes, will have the power to control their own neighborhood and the rules and restrictions usually become tighter. Amanda does not work on weekends, only weekdays but when turned over, it will be in the hands of those that live on site 24/7 and can better monitor what is going on.

- **Brendan Tate (318 Stoneybrooke Way)**

If we decided to hire an HOA Management Company, what would the cost be, and would our HOA dues increase?

Sara: The cost is usually about \$50,000 per year; after a transition she has seen neighborhoods struggle to maintain the HOA on their own and have turned to professional management companies. Dues could increase but it's in the by laws that dues can't be increased more than 10% each year. Even if you use a professional management company, you will still have to have an HOA board.

- **Scot Shaffer (512 Stoneybrooke Way)**

There are some green irrigation covers that need to be replaced.

Amanda: Will get with the landscaper for out there the following day.

- **Joy Simmons (708 Charlemont Lane)**

Two questions: Can streetlights be brighter? Is there anything that can be done about solicitors?

Sara: Did talk with AL Power after the last meeting regarding getting brighter bulbs for streetlights. It will be around \$200 per pole to change out the lights. She would like to get pricing from an electrician to see if it can be done any cheaper than that and will check into that.

Amanda: There are city restrictions during certain hours. She has stickers in her office that you can place in a window or door that say NO SOLICITING. If you would like to have one of those, please reach out to her and she will get you one.

- **Yolonda Christian (10401 Treviso Place)**

Wanted to inform everyone of apartments that are proposed to be built just down the road on Atlanta Highway. Encouraged everyone to sign a petition and call their council person opposing the re-zoning and building of more residential areas and apartments in that area which is already congested.

At this point, Amanda reminded the residents to please let her know if they would like their name added to the list of people that may like to volunteer to be on the new HOA board.

Amanda Miller distributed door prizes.

Sara Heatherly adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.