

**The Birches at Sterling Woods
2015 Annual Village Unit Owners Meeting
September 9, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Stan Kishner who welcomed residents to the 2015 Birches Annual Meeting. In attendance were Stan Kishner, President; Tony Brzezinski, Vice President; Jim Harlow, Treasurer; and Dale Brown, Director. Sharon Fisher, Secretary, was not in attendance. Suzanne Wilcox recorded the Minutes in her place. Over 30 residents attended the meeting, a record for the Birches.

Stan introduced himself and asked people to introduce themselves. He presented the Proof of Notice and meeting and introduced the agenda. The Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting were approved unanimously.

The issue of the election of Directors was introduced. At least one third of the Board has to be elected each year. This is not possible with only five on the Board. This year, Sharon and Jim Harlow are up for office for a 2-year term. They can be re-elected, and have both agreed to serve. The vote took place. Suzanne Wilcox served as Inspector of Elections. For Sharon there were 16 votes in favor and 1 opposed. For Jim Harlow there were 19 votes in favor and none opposed. There were no proxies brought to the meeting.

Because of changes in CT law, the village representative to the Master Board has to be directly elected by the residents. Stan Kishner will continue as Birches President, and was elected to represent the Birches on the Master Board by a vote of 20 in favor and none opposed. The other Directors agreed to keep their current positions on the Birches board.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Since Stan Kishner is the Treasurer of the Master Board, he read the Master Board Treasurer's reports for the months of August and September.

ROAD PAVING - The question was raised regarding which streets were chosen for repaving. Stan said that on streets other than Logging Trail Road and Heartwood, no driveways would be paved until the roads were paved. Bouchard Construction was chosen to pave Logging Trail Rd and A&J Paving was chosen to pave Heartwood Lane. Choice of these contractors was made jointly by the Paving Committee and REI after the receipt of bids. Further work on Revere and Bradford will be done next. Cypress, Hancock and Pinnacle construction is down the road. The decision was made to use two different companies to pave the two roads.

Stan went on to describe the paving process and the near-term schedule for paving of Logging Trail Rd, including the addition drainage work. There was concern by some residents with damage to irrigation system from the drainage work. Stan said that he did not expect any problems, and that any landscaping damaged during paving would be repaired by the contractor.

There was a discussion about speeding on Logging Trail Rd, and the possibility of adding speed bumps or stop signs was discussed. Stan said that he would bring the issue to the Master Board. Pam Harlow agreed to form a committee to look into the issue.

ROOFS - An engineering company is scheduled to assess the current condition of the roofs, and provide an estimate of costs. Roofs are going to be replaced in the next several years. George Holland is heading up this committee. Steve Griffing is heading up the Decks Committee, although decks seem to be in very good condition.

POOL – There was a discussion about pool rules and how they are enforced. Several residents expressed interest in joining the Pool Rules committee, and were instructed by Stan to contact Kim.

SOLAR ENERGY - Stan Kishner called on John Wilcox to speak about solar energy. The Wilcox's have been talking to Solar City about installing solar panels on their home. John reviewed the advantages of leasing the solar panels, including the fact that there is a cost savings because there is no delivery service charge from the electric company, and that excess energy generated during the summer can be used to offset the cost of buying energy from the electric company during the winter. He expects an average monthly energy bill of \$84. John noted that Solar City takes full responsibility for repairs to the roof, and the removal of panels as needed. Each house has a \$2 million insurance policy guaranteeing replacement of the panels and roof repair. John noted that he would not go forward with the installation of solar panels if the roofs are going to be replaced in the next 2 years.

Stan made some comments from the point of view of the Master Board. The Association must hold the homeowner responsible for any damage to the home. There are also aesthetic, legal, insurance and liability issues. It was noted that in Germany, where solar and wind power are already being used, an increase in the energy company's rates has already occurred. It was also noted that the federal tax credit for installing solar energy ends next year. The question was also raised as to whether solar energy is sustainable without the tax credit.

INSURANCE – Stan noted that there is a problem getting insurance company bids at Sterling Woods II. However, we have renegotiated with our insurance agent to change the term of our insurance policies to coincide with the budgeting process, insuring that we will know how much the premiums will be in time to properly budget them. This coming year, the premiums will be only \$3,000 more than last year.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE - Dale Brown noted that when he and BG moved in, they found that none of the neighbors took time to say hi and welcome them. He knows that people in Connecticut tend to keep to themselves. In other states, people are more hospitable. Dale suggested that perhaps some Board members could go over and introduce themselves to new residents. Pam Harlow agreed and will trade her "Speeding Committee of One" for a Welcoming Committee.

MISCELLOANEOUS ISSUES

- The Flu shot clinic will be held on Sept 29.
- Dumpster Day is October 24.
- Water heaters need to be replaced every 10 years. (20 years for tank-less heaters)
- The insurance deductible is now \$10,000 and if the homeowner is negligent, they can be asked to pay the deductible.
- Ginger Corbett thanked the Board for following through on suggestions made at the 2014 Annual Meeting.
- Ginger Corbett also offered compliments on keeping the pool open an additional week.
- There was a concern expressed about the presence of bats in the pine trees. Dale Brown spoke about issues with pine trees and noted that issues regarding trees should be reported to Kim Murray.