MEADOWS AT SHAWNEE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 475, MILFORD, DE 19963

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING
June 17, 2025 – 7:00 PM
Milford Police Department, 401 NE Front Street, Milford, DE

Board Member Attendees: Tom Chilton, Bob Sheats, Dan Marabello, Linda Steiner, Jacob Feist, Bob Shinholt, and Taylor Shunk

Absent: Mike Boyle

OPENING REMARKS:

Board President Tom Chilton called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and thanked all homeowners that were present for attending this year's annual meeting. He announced that a quorum had been achieved with **82 lots** being represented by both homeowners in attendance and by proxy. The 55-lot requirement (30%) was met as stipulated in the Bylaws and the meeting can proceed.

President Chilton first thanked the Milford Police Department for allowing the Meadows at Shawnee HOA to use their facility for our 2025 Annual Meeting and for providing the community room free of charge.

Tom then announced that tonight's guest speaker would be Domenick A. Peronti, the owner of Investment Property Services (IPS), who will inform us about the services a property management company can provide to an HOA community. The Board is exploring the possibility of hiring a management company because some of our experienced Board members are aging out and it has been difficult to find replacements that can carry out the duties. Tom then presented Mr. Peronti to the audience.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Domenick Peronti first gave some background information about his company. Investment Property Services (IPS) is a family-owned company that was started 16 years ago. He has a staff of 12 people and his daughter, Christina, heads the Property Management Division and his son, Dino, oversees Operations. He has two offices in Delaware that are located in Newport and Lewes and the company manages 60 community associations throughout the state.

Following are some of the services his company provides to HOA communities: They enforce the governing documents, collect annual dues, assist with collection of delinquent accounts, pay bills, assist with the annual Budget, perform on-site inspections every 2 weeks, report and follow up on violations, recruit for volunteers, obtain bids on insurance and will give recommendations for vendors.

Their offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every business day and they have a complaint department. On weekends, there is an emergency hotline available 24/7.

Mr. Peronti's daughter, Christina Peronti, also attended the meeting with her father and spoke before the homeowners. The cost to hire IPS to manage the Meadows at Shawnee would be approximately $15,000 per year plus added administrative fees for clerical items like letter writing, copying and postage. IPS has an online portal where homeowners can pay their annual dues using a credit card or bank account. The HOA's Architectural Committee would continue to make the decisions on the architectural requests.

Comments and Questions from audience:

There were a few comments from the audience regarding the presentation. One homeowner asked if the additional cost of hiring a property management company could be incorporated into the budget and that he was in favor of the management company. A second homeowner asked what the yearly fee would be if IPS was hired to manage the Meadows at Shawnee. The cost to hire IPS as a property manager would be approximately $100 a year per lot and there is a 3% increase every year thereafter to continue with their services.

Domenick and Christina Peronti concluded their presentation at 7:20 PM.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Chilton thanked Domenick and Christina Peronti for their presentations and then proceeded with the formal part of the meeting. Members were informed that there would be an election of eight (8) homeowners to serve on the HOA's Board of Directors for a one-year term of office. There will also be a vote on the Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget. Reports will be given by the President, Treasurer, and each Chairperson from the Architectural, Grounds and Neighborhood Watch Committees. There will also be a question & answer period at the end of the meeting.

Tom reported that in June of 2024, Mike Boyle stepped down from his position as Board President and he was voted in as the President for fiscal year 2025. Tom's goal was to get the enforcement of the Declaration of Restrictions under control. The two restrictions that are violated the most are the parking of vehicles in the street overnight and homeowners keeping their trash receptacles visible from the front of the home days after the collection. Delaware Code Title 25, Chapter 81, requires that restrictions be enforced. During the past year, the Board has mailed up to 80 letters to homeowners regarding non-compliance. In some cases, fines were charged and in one case, legal action was taken.

YEAR END REPORT:

Tom then gave the Board's Year End Report as follows:

1. The Board has established a violation log to record violations by household, date and type. Violations are reported weekly by Board members and household members. Board member Jacob Feist maintains the monthly log and forwards the results to the Board. Reporting is anonymous. The Board reviews the results and responds as needed.

2. The Board has joined the Community Associations Institute (CAI). The Institute provides training as well as daily discussion on-line of HOA concerns in the mid-Atlantic region. Five (5) members attended a leadership workshop where governing documents are reviewed; Board responsibilities clarified; information on financial management & association rules for conflict management. The Board has set a standard for resolving restriction violations. First, a courtesy letter is sent; if violation continues, a second letter is sent with potential fines with an avenue for meeting and discussion; a third letter is sent with fines, date for remediation, and avenue for meeting and discussion. Last letter with copy of invoice, final payment, then a lien or legal action will be taken. There is always time for discussion prior to liens or legal action. All of this takes a lot of time.

3. All members of the Board signed up with the Corporate Transparency Act which was later temporarily blocked for the inclusion of HOA Board members. The act required identification and sign up by all members.

4. A compilation Financial Report will be completed at the end of this fiscal year.

5. Established a buy-in fee for new homeowners. A fee of $150.00 is charged to all new home buyers in the community. This has become a budgeted item.

6. A contract was signed with Whiteford Law to assist in handling legal cases and in reviewing all our documents for accuracy. They were selected because they specialize in HOA and Community Law.

7. Updated our signatories with PNC Bank.

8. Clarified Article VI, Section 7- Regarding Prohibited Vehicles. Provided a guideline for defining a commercial vehicle in the restriction. This can be found on the HOA website.

9. Reviewed Pond Maintenance requirement from the Sussex Conservation District. Though the ponds have been quite well maintained, work above normal maintenance will be required on the Big Pond.

10. Approved Policy 2024-001 regarding the enforcement procedures with schedule of fines for violations of MAS Bylaws and its Declaration of Restrictions.

11. Worked on a payment portal but held off until a decision is made regarding the hiring of a management firm for the HOA.

12. Additional updates of Board actions during the year will be reported by the Architectural, Grounds, and Neighborhood Watch chairpersons.

Nominations from the Floor and Election of Board of Directors

President Chilton gave some history on the original HOA Board that was established in 2009. He gave mention to the first President, Linda Boone, and Gloria Markowitz, who served as the first

Secretary. He thanked current homeowners who have served for 10 years or more on the Board, namely Dan Marabello as Treasurer, Mike Boyle, Bob Shinholt, Dave Markowitz and Linda Steiner. Tom also gave mention to Jacob Feist who came on the Board in 2024 and his wife, Elizabeth, who serves on the Architectural Committee. Tom was pleased to announce that homeowner Wanda Nesbit is on the ballot this year running for a seat on the Board.

Before the voting started, Tom asked if any members in the audience would like to add their name to the Ballot as a nominee. There were no nominations from the floor so member Bob Rodenberg made a motion that the eight (8) people on the ballot be elected to the Board of Directors and it was seconded by member Mike Zaremba. All members in attendance were in favor and none were opposed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

President Chilton commented that Dan Marabello has been the Treasurer of the Meadows at Shawnee HOA for nearly 15 years. The HOA has been very fortunate to have a person with such knowledge and integrity to handle our finances. Dan has kept the dues as low as possible and was able to meet all financial responsibilities over the years. Starting in 2009, the budget included an amount to be held in reserves for future pond overhaul. The goal was to save $120,000.00 by the year 2025 which was the budget figure given to the HOA by the Sussex Conservation District as an estimated replacement cost. Tom then turned over the podium to Dan to give his financial report.

Treasurer Dan Marabello referred all members to the financial report included in the annual meeting packet. The total cash, including the checking account and CD's, projected as of June 30, 2025, is $119,000.00. All funds are secured by a Dishonesty Bond for $100,000.00. Total accounts receivable due from homeowners is approximately $400.00. Projected accrued expenses as of June 30, 2025 are $4,200.00.

Dan then reported on the actual income and expenses for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025 as follows:

FY2025 ACTUAL INCOME

The total assessment fee income collected this fiscal year was $29,508.00. Initial Assessment fees $300.00. The interest earned from money in reserves in the CD's was $3,820.00 and delinquency fees in the sum of $293.00 were collected this past year. **Total income: $33,921.00.**

FY2025 ACTUAL EXPENSES

Grounds maintenance and tree removal - $10,219; Retention ponds maintenance - $3,716; Insurance - $3,214; Office and postage - $531; annual meeting expense - $569; Miscellaneous general administration - $1,218; New computer - $1,820; Neighborhood Watch signs - $303; Professional fees - $3,841; Federal tax and DE Franchise tax - $1,141; Reserve (future pond maintenance expenses) earned interest income of $3,820. **Total Expenses: $30,392.00.** Income over expenses is $3,529.00.

Dan then reported on the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2026 as follows:

FY2026 PROPOSED INCOME

Homeowner assessment fees for FY2026 - 183 lots x $195 per year = $35,685.00; Initial Assessment fees: $600.00; Retention Pond reserve interest income - $3,400; delinquency fees - $300.00. **Total income: $39,985.00.**

FY2026 PROPOSED EXPENSES

Grounds maintenance and tree removal - $10,500; Major large pond repair - $18,000; Retention ponds maintenance annual - $3,800; Insurance - $3,600; Office and postage - $450; Annual meeting expense - $600; Miscellaneous general administration - $750; Neighborhood watch expense - $300; Professional fees - $4,500; Contingency - $1,000; Federal tax and DE Franchise Tax - $1,100; Reserve (future ponds maintenance expenses) earned interest income $3,400.
Total expenses: $48,000.00. The income under expenses <$8,015.00>.

Comments and Questions from the audience:

The goal for 2025 was to have $120,000.00 in reserves for future pond maintenance expenses. The total cash as of June 30, 2025 is $119,000.00. If $18,000.00 is spent now for the pond repairs, there will be $101,000.00 remaining.

An original homeowner commented that the storm water ponds were the responsibility of the HOA and the cost to overhaul them back in 2009 was estimated to cost $120,000.

Another member commented that $120,000 was the estimate given 16 years ago for future pond repairs. The cost to overhaul the ponds now could be more at this point.

The Board has been proactive and had the Sussex Conservation District do inspections of both ponds over the past few years. The last inspection in April of 2025 showed eroded areas in the Big Pond that have to be regraded, filled in with dirt, textile replaced and riprap installed.

One homeowner had a question about the insurance and what does it cover. The HOA has liability coverage in case someone is hurt on any of the common areas. There is also Directors and Officers bond coverage to protect Board members in case of any legal action taken against the HOA. The funds are secured by a Dishonesty Bond for $100,000.00 in case money is pilfered from bank accounts.

A homeowner on Little Pond Drive commented that when the little pond fills up with water, his sump pump runs constantly until the water level goes down. A second homeowner who lives on Meadow Lark Drive also complained about the same problem caused by the little pond. The sump pump goes on every few seconds when the pond is filled with water.

Another homeowner asked why trampolines were not permitted. There is a restriction in our Declaration, (**Article VI, Section 14)** that states "No trampolines of any kind whatsoever shall be

erected or maintained on any lot." Restrictions can be changed but it requires a vote of at least two-thirds of record owners or 122 of the Lots to vote in favor of the change.

At this time, Dan asked all homeowners in the audience to fill out the green ballot forms in their packets and cast their votes for the approval of the proposed budget of **$48,000.00** for Fiscal Year 2026 and an annual assessment of **$195.00** per lot. The results of the voting will be given after the three (3) Committee Reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Architectural Committee:

Tom Chilton reported that he has been the chairperson of the Architectural Committee for the past 6 years, during which time approximately 100 architectural requests have been reviewed and approved. He has had the pleasure of working with the following 6 members of the committee who, along with himself, are responsible for the review of all architectural requests: Mike Boyle, Kent Del Rossi, Robert Sheats, Robert Rodenberg, Robert Shinholt and Elizabeth Cavallaro-Feist. Tom thanked them all and recognized them for their work.

Tom explained what the Architectural Committee does. The committee provides advice to the Board of Directors concerning the compatibility and compliance of any Architectural Request form submitted by a homeowner to make modification, on any lot, subject to the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants. The committee is charged to base all of its recommendations upon a just and equitable application of the HOA's restrictions.

Tom also explained how to prepare the Architectural Request. Applicants should get all their information together such as the name of the project, architectural drawings, if necessary, colors, pictures, and a plot plan showing the location of the project. The Bylaws and Restrictions should be reviewed to make sure the project meets the restrictions. The application can be submitted by either completing it online and e-mailing it directly to him or by printing out the application, completing it, and dropping it off at his house at 38 Meadow Lark Drive. It can also be mailed to the HOA but that will slow down the process. If applications are properly completed with no additional information needed, the turnaround time for approval or disapproval should only take 2 to 3 days.

The MAS website includes not only the HOA Architectural Requests but also the City of Milford Codes and Permit Application form. Completing this on line will make the process much smoother and save a lot of time. Please remember that in most instances where a City of Milford permit is required, the city will require an approval letter from the HOA.

One homeowner from East Bullrush Drive asked if an Architectural Request has to be submitted for a change of color on the house. Tom replied that a Request would be required for this.

Another homeowner from Meadow Lark Drive asked if metal roofs are allowed. Tom replied that metal roofs are <u>not</u> permitted.

Grounds Committee:

Chairwoman Taylor Shunk reported that volunteers are always needed to help with the weeding at the front entrance. Tom Chilton has helped Taylor with the weeding and she prefers to use vinegar to kill the weeds instead of chemicals.

There will be maintenance necessary in the Big Pond that will cost approximately $18,000.00. Erosion was found in the pond and sediment buildup due to flooding. This amount is included in the budget for the next fiscal year.

Taylor is in favor of hiring a management company. If a management company is hired, there would still be the need for a Board of Directors. Right now, the Board is looking for members with an accounting background and secretarial skills. If all members were to resign from the Board, the HOA would go into a receivership and a court-appointed attorney would take over, resulting in higher yearly fees.

Neighborhood Watch Committee:

Chairman Dave Markowitz started his report by asking all members in the audience if they know the phone number for the Milford Police Department. The number is **302-422-8081** and everyone should have this number on their speed dial just in case you need to report a suspicious event, or in fact you see something that you know should be reported. The Milford Police have always been responsive, even if you are not sure what you have witnessed. They usually respond within 10 minutes.

Dave stated that he hopes all homeowners think of themselves as part of the neighborhood watch even if they are not officially participating. For those people who get up during the night, they should take an extra minute to look out at their driveway, especially if you leave cars out overnight. In the past, we have had cars entered overnight, usually because they were left unlocked. If you look outside and see a flashlight in your driveway, you know you have unwanted company. This seems to happen more in the warm weather, so from June until the fall it is a prime time for this to happen. It is important not to leave your garage door opener in the car and keep your garage door into the house locked at all times.

The Committee is always looking for more volunteers to join the team. There have never been enough volunteers to cover without some committee members doing more than one day a month. We are on a four-week rotation, so when we have enough volunteers, it only involves one day for every four (4) weeks and doesn't involve a lot of time.

Overall, there has been a low crime rate in our development in the past 20 years. "CrimeMapping.com" is a website that can be found on the Milford Police Department website which shows all reported crimes in Milford by street and the Meadows at Shawnee very rarely shows up on that site.

One of the ways the Neighborhood Watch is effective is limiting the number of "cruisers" that occasionally wander through the neighborhood scoping out empty houses and people who leave

their garage doors open at night. If they happen to see a car with our signs on them, they tend to leave the development quickly. This has happened to Dave 3 or 4 times and other NW volunteers have had the same experience.

Dave gave one last reminder. Until last year, residents were able to call the Milford Police Department for a medical emergency as well as a police issue. Now residents should dial **911** for medical emergencies and if you call the police, they will direct you to call **911**. Everyone should keep this in mind.

Voting Results of the Board of Directors election and the Budget referendum.

As reported earlier in the meeting, there were no nominations from the floor and a motion was made and seconded that the eight (8) people on the Ballot were elected to the Board of Directors. President Chilton announced the names of the eight (8) homeowners that will serve on the Board for Fiscal Year 2026 as follows: Thomas Chilton, Jacob Feist, Dan Marabello, Wanda Nesbit, Bob Sheats, Bob Shinholt, Taylor Shunk and Linda Steiner.

President Chilton also announced that the green ballots were tallied and the total count was **40 "YES"** votes approving the budget and **10 "NO"** votes. Letters will be sent to all 183 lot owners in the Meadows at Shawnee by the end of June notifying them that the annual assessment of **$195.00** is due by **July 31, 2025.** If dues are not paid by July 31, a second letter will be mailed out in early August which will include a $10.00 administrative charge and one month's interest.

OTHER BUSINESS and final Q & A from the Audience:

One homeowner asked about abandoned or unregistered cars that are kept in driveways. The City of Milford has a Zoning Code regarding this matter (Chapter 230). All vehicles requiring tags must be valid at all times. If a vehicle is reported to the City, they will send a Code official to the property to check it out.

Another homeowner asked about lawns with tall grass. The City of Milford also has a law regarding Property Maintenance (Chapter 174). If the height of grass goes above 6 inches, they will send a Code official out to the property and post a notice for the grass to be cut within 5 days.

After the "Question & Answer" session was finished, homeowner Mike Zaremba made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by homeowner Joe Palermo. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

A transition meeting with the newly elected Board Members immediately followed at the end of the annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:
Linda Steiner, Board Secretary