

# Hellgate Meadows

## Residential Neighborhood Association

2625 DUBLIN STREET, MISSOULA, MT 59808

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### General Meeting Notes

March 16, 2021 • 6:30 pm • Held Virtually via ZOOM

#### Call to Order

President Sucheski called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm

#### Board Member Introductions

Board members Kathie Snodgrass (Secretary), Debbie Goertzen (Landscape Upkeep Chair), Jason Suchecki (President), Roberta Smith (Treasurer), Drew Rieker, and Laurie Fliger introduced themselves and explained where they live. Board members Carol McKenzie, Jim Polk, and Hannah Sackett were unable to attend.

#### Neighbor Introductions

Neighbors Cindy Thiel, Christine Hastings, Lisa Robertson, Dori Brownlow, and Shayla Suchecki introduced themselves and explained where they live.

#### Meeting Minutes from Last Year's General Meeting

Kathie read the minutes from the March 19, 2019 General Meeting. Due to the COVID pandemic, there was no General Meeting in 2020. Debbie moved and Drew seconded that the minutes be accepted as read. The motion carried unanimously.

#### Accomplishments

Jason summarized the accomplishments of the Association during the past two years, including:

- Improvements to the mail house (bulletin board and sidewalk)
- Addition of sturdier and accessible picnic tables in the Dublin common area
- Addition of three new Board members (Jim Polk, Lauri Fliger, and Drew Rieker)
- Learning to conduct Board business via ZOOM
- Dues have remained at the same rate for the last seven years.

#### Budget and Financial Issues

When we adopted the 2021 budget in November, we were \$10,365.50 under budget with \$26,430.85 in the bank. We consider \$12,000 to be a desirable standing emergency fund. At the end of 2020, there were \$1,520.00 in accounts receivable, which is lower than it's ever been. Most owners are paying their dues regularly and most transfer fees are paid promptly upon sale of properties. However, by the time of the January 2021 Board meeting, the increase in landscape maintenance charges for 2021 due to the extra expense of picking up dog waste before mowing can occur, unexpected size of the bill for the irrigation relocation at the mail house, and the lower-than-normal receipt of transfer fees due to the very stable

home ownership during the pandemic made it clear that we would not be able to do the major improvement to the Dublin common area that we had included in the 2021 budget without completely depleting the emergency funds we like to have on hand in case of major irrigation failures or other expenses. See the New Business section for more information.

Dues will once again be \$260 per year per lot. There are 117 lots in HMRNA. Please see the attached budget document for the breakdown of what we expected (last November) to collect and spend in 2021, but please keep in mind that available funds for improvements are not as high as we had expected and the contract for landscape upkeep has risen to \$1850 per month (budget item 6200).

## Old Business

**Mail House Improvements:** Those in attendance agreed that the Mail House improvements are really nice. There was praise for the new bulletin board and also gratitude for having a cleared sidewalk to park beside to access the mail boxes. Cindy commented that the paint on the mail house is beginning to look a little sad, and the mail house should be repainted this coming summer. She also asked whether lights could be installed so the items on the bulletin board are visible after dark. Board members thought there might be a way to install a light that was hooked into the photosensor that turns on the lights in the mail box access areas.

Drew is in discussion with the Business Owner's Association (they own the oval where the Mail House is located), because we feel that the irrigation relocation work performed and charged to HMRNA was more than was necessary to accommodate installation of the new sidewalk, which we feel should have consisted of just relocating a couple of sprinkler heads. Instead, the entire irrigation supply line and controls were re-routed so they would not be under the new sidewalk, so that any future repairs to the lines and controls would be easier. We feel that work cost should be borne by the Business Owner's Association, and they should reimburse us.

ProSweep has also not yet re-sodded the area where they removed sod to perform the irrigation relocation work. If they do not do so by spring, we will be in contact with them to make sure that is completed.

## New Business

**Sidewalk Replacement Reimbursement:** A resident asked whether the HMRNA paid for sidewalk replacement. Kathie explained that adjacent homeowners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalks next to their property (per standard City requirements), but HMRNA is responsible for maintaining sidewalks in or adjacent to common areas. HMRNA does have a policy that if a homeowner replaces a hazardous section of sidewalk, the HMRNA will reimburse the homeowner up to \$250 towards that expense, if the owner submits a copy of the sidewalk invoice to the Board.

The resident then asked whether it would be OK just to make the place where one section of sidewalk has lifted above the adjacent section with yellow paint to point out the hazard. Board members responded that this is a City issue, as the sidewalks are on City property. Maintenance of sidewalks must conform to City requirements. See Missoula Municipal Code 12.16 (<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/268/City-Laws-Regulations>).

**Boulevard Tree Maintenance:** Dori asked whether the boulevard trees are maintained by HMRNA. Board members responded that the boulevard trees are technically owned by the City, and per City Code must be maintained by the adjacent property owners. However, HMRNA has taken on certain tree trimming, aphid control, and tree replacement to maintain the neighborhood's appearance. The HMRNA must perform these maintenance tasks in accordance with City requirements, which include using a City-approved arborist and not pruning tree limbs more than 12 feet above sidewalks and 16 feet above streets. If a boulevard tree limb is endangering a home's structure or interfering with use of porches, decks, or so on, homeowners are supposed to contact the City Forester to get a permit and use a City-approved arborist to do the pruning, per the City's Urban Forestry Standards (<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/46376/1997-Urban-Forestry-Standards-and-Specifications?bidId=>).

**MuttMitt Stations:** Th Board announced that Rich Kain, our long time MuttMitt servicer, "retired" from those duties at the end of February. He has trained our new MuttMitt servicing contractor, McKenzie and Son, and briefed them on supplies, disposal, etc. The new contractor appears to be doing a very good job. Jason will call and remind them that he has not yet received the contract containing the agreed terms (which were the same as with Mr. Kain).

Unfortunately, MuttMitt supply expenses are rising, partly due to inflation, but also because more pick-up mitts are being used – about 1/6 more – probably due to apartment dwellers using the Dublin common area. It costs \$400 every 5 months for pick-up mitts.

A property owner suggested that the Board with each dues billing a notice of how much MuttMitt supplies cost and an option for people to donate a little extra to help pay for MuttMitt supplies. Another owner suggested that a notice be posted in the Dublin common area stating that the common area is the property of HMRNA, which maintains the MuttMitt stations, and asking for contributions to help cover the cost of supplies via PayPal.

**Dublin Park:** Besides the new picnic tables last year, based on comments from the last General Meeting, the Board had planned to construct a small shelter meeting ADA requirements that would hold a picnic table or two at the Dublin common area. The Board received bids for both a shelter and the Mail House improvements, but there wasn't enough funding to do both, so only the Mail House improvements were accomplished. A resident commented that the Dublin common area seems to be mostly used by people outside our HMRNA. Several people felt that if we were going to turn the Dublin common area over to the City to become part of the adjacent 4½ acres that will eventually be a City park, the City might remove our shelter if it didn't meet City standards. Another person was concerned about potential vandalism and upkeep expenses. One person suggested just placing concrete pads for the picnic tables to make them easier to mow around and for people with disabilities to use. One person commented that she's seen a lot of people with their laptops working at the picnic tables, and a lot of kids use the park, not just dog owners, and felt that if we were to build a shelter, it should be located where it wouldn't interfere with current uses. In general, there was not much enthusiasm for building a shelter among those

attending the meeting, so it was generally agreed not to pursue shelter construction this year.

**Dues:** Property owner dues were last raised in 2014, but costs have risen since then. In addition, we are not collecting as many transfer fees, since ownership has been more stable during the pandemic. As a result, our reserves are not accumulating. If there should be a major problem with irrigation or boulevard trees, we may not have enough funds to cover the bills, and would then have to implement an Emergency Assessment, which would likely not be well received by property owners. A homeowner commented that if we do raise the dues, we should tell people what services cost. Another homeowner said we get amazing services for \$260 a year, and suggested that the dues be raised each year by the maximum allowable amount they can be raised without a general membership vote, so that we'd have enough to do more improvements. A board member suggested raising the dues some amount every year, unless the Board decided to declare a "dues holiday" if more funds aren't needed. A homeowner suggested notifying property owners with an enclosure in their second half billing about a dues raise for next year. The Board can raise dues 15% each year without requiring a general vote of the Association.

Shayla moved and Debbie seconded that property owners be notified with their second half dues statements that 2022 annual dues will be raised to \$290, and that all owners will be billed at the higher amount in 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Grounds Maintenance:** Debbie will post a notice about the spring aphid treatment at the Mail House and call Dirtman to remind them the treatment must be done between ground thaw and bud burst of the Ash trees.

Columbia ground squirrels will soon be out of hibernation and invading our neighborhood, especially in the west side of Dublin Street where their tunnels are disturbed by construction of Hellgate Village. A property owner asked that people not try to poison the rodents, because birds of prey and dogs who might eat the dead animals would also be poisoned. There are no herons or foxes in the area anymore to keep the populations down. Their burrows may damage gas lines or other utilities. Laurie and Jason will investigate to learn who can trap or otherwise eliminate the excess ground squirrels.

**Future Annual Meetings:** Several property owners commented that it was far easier for them to attend the ZOOM meeting than in-person annual meetings, and hoped that there would be a ZOOM option even after in-person meetings were again possible.

**Adjournment:** Shayla moved and Debbie seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 8:29 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

*Kathie Snodgrass*  
Secretary

**2021 INCOME AND EXPENSE BUDGET STATEMENT**

Annual Due: \$260

**2020 Budget**      **as of 10-31-2020**      **Over/Under Budget**      **2021 Budget**

**ORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE**

**INCOME**

4000	Association Dues/Fees	\$ 30,420.00	\$ 30,420.00	\$ -	\$ 30,420.00
4100	Transfer Fees	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
4105	Paypal Fees		\$ 9.54		
4110	Late Fees	\$ 50.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 50.00
<b>Total Income:</b>		<b>\$ 31,970.00</b>	<b>\$ 33,059.54</b>	<b>\$ 1,089.54</b>	<b>\$ 31,970.00</b>

**EXPENSE**

6115	Annual Report-Secretary of State	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	\$ -	\$ 20.00
6120	Bank Fees	\$ -	\$ -		
6490	Collection Expense	\$ 25.00	\$ -	\$ (25.00)	\$ -
6495	Filing Fees	\$ 25.00	\$ -	\$ (25.00)	\$ -
6180	Liability Insurance	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 1,758.34	\$ (441.66)	\$ 2,200.00
6200	Landscape Maintenance/Snow Removal (\$1700/Mo)	\$ 20,400.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ (3,400.00)	\$ 22,200.00
6210	Park Improvements	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 24,000.00
6220	Property Repairs and Maintenance				
	6220-1 Mail House	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 3,000.00 *	\$ (1,000.00)	\$ 1,000.00
	6220-2 Street Lights	\$ 250.00	\$ 369.64	\$ 119.64	\$ 250.00
	6220-3 Mutt Mitt Stations	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,497.22	\$ 497.22	\$ 2,000.00
	6220-4 Well Pump	\$ -	\$ -		
	6220-5 Sidewalk Repair Reimbursement	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ (250.00)	\$ 250.00
	<b>TOTAL 6220-PROPERTY REPAIRS/MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$ 6,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,866.86</b>	<b>\$ (633.14)</b>	<b>\$ 3,500.00</b>
6250	Utilities-Electric (Well Pump/Street Lights/Mail House Lights)	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 712.10	\$ (1,037.90)	\$ 1,750.00
6270	Professional Fees				
	6270-1 Accounting (Annual Tax Preparation)	\$ 135.00	\$ 130.00	\$ (5.00)	\$ 135.00
	6270-2 Bookkeeping	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,815.70	\$ (184.30)	\$ 2,000.00
	6270-3 Postage and Supplies	\$ 400.00	\$ 380.28	\$ (19.72)	\$ 400.00
	6270-4 Legal (incl. filing fees, collections)	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ (200.00)	\$ 250.00
	<b>TOTAL 6270-PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>	<b>\$ 2,735.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,325.98</b>	<b>\$ (409.02)</b>	<b>\$ 2,785.00</b>
6280	Special Association Events	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ (250.00)	\$ 250.00
6285	Miscellaneous Supplies	\$ 125.00	\$ 60.00	\$ (65.00)	\$ 125.00
6290	Telephone Voice Mail	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
6295	Website Hosting	\$ 50.00	\$ 72.00	\$ 22.00	\$ -
6391	Village Core Contribution	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>\$ 44,080.00</b>	<b>\$ 27,815.28</b>	<b>\$ (16,264.72)</b>	<b>\$ 56,830.00</b>

(For the picnic shelter - this would come from the \$25,296 reserves)

Renewal 2022

**NET ORDINARY INCOME**      Builds Positive Reserves/Protects Negative Deplete      **\$ (12,110.00)**      \$ 3,244.26      **\$ 17,354.26**      **\$(24,860.00)**

**YTD GROSS RESERVES (Bank Account):**      **\$25,296.00**

\* There's another \$3400 + bill for the rest of the mail house work that must be paid in November or December.