

# Cranberry Township HOA Neighborhood Forum

**MONDAY, September 13, 2010 – 6:30 P.M.**  
**MINUTES**

## **Members Present:**

*Duane McKee - Assistant Twp. Mgr., Operations*  
*John Turner – Autumn Hill*  
*Sally Jack, Oakview Estates*  
*Jim Sines – Woodlands*  
*Valerie Steinmetz – Hampshire Woods*  
*Chris Hickey – Winchester Lakes*  
*Kathy Newcomer – Stonefield & Farmview*  
*Mike Berman – Spring Meadows*

*Linda Rocco – Admin. Assistant, Operations*  
*Laura Norris – Creekwood Commons*  
*Angela Rankin – Glen Eden*  
*Kevin Bablak – Highland Village*  
*Mary Lynn Kasputis – St. Leonard’s Woods*  
*Rosemarie Warren – Freedom Woods*  
*Chris Bondurant – Ehrman Farms*

Moderator Angela Rankin called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Introductions were made and members were asked to sign-in and make any corrections to their contact information. Angela stated that there are over 90 developments in Cranberry Township, which means more HOA’s need to more pro-active and attend the Neighborhood Forum meetings to discuss and share ways on how to work out issues with the different HOA’s.

Attorney Ed Kress, who represents various HOA’s in Cranberry Township, gave some advice on how to handle the following HOA issues. (He can be reached at 412-719-4659)

- Unpaid dues – it was recommended to set a certain amount of money aside in the budget, send a couple of reminder letters, and refer case to Ed Kress if you’re still unsuccessful in collecting dues.
- In order to gain support of District Magistrate Dave Kovach office to enforce HOA rules and regulations, Angela Rankin questioned if it would be productive to send a letter, as an HOA group, to explain the importance of HOA. Ed explained that he already wrote a letter and sent information to the Magistrate’s office informing them that according the PA Planned Communities Act and most HOA By Laws, legal fees are for the cost of the resident when the Association must take legal action for the resident to comply with the rules and regulations of the community. He is not quite sure that sending another letter is necessary. Angela stated that, “Having active HOA’s helps maintain our property values.” HOA must follow the rules and regulations of the State of PA Planned Communities Act and our own By Laws. Within these guidelines it clearly states that if an HOA must file legal action against a property owner, legal fees are awarded to the

HOA. The Magistrates office is the HOA first line of defense, “If we can not gain his support than our rules and regulations are useless.”

- Ed stated that when a judge doesn't follow the laws, they aren't helping anyone out, because the legal fees just keep adding up. (HOA's are allowed to be awarded legal fees.) The Court of Common Pleas can award unlimited amounts. It may cost more, but sometimes it's worthwhile. The Court of Common Pleas also rules individuals to make changes to the appropriate rule. Whereas, when you take a case to a Magistrate, it's usually for fees under \$8,000. It was suggested that if a resident is not abiding by the HOA rules, to send them a warning letter, set up a time to meet before the Board, enforce fines of \$10 or \$20/day or \$50/month. This is highly recommended, because it's the most effective. It costs less to fine them versus taking them to court. He stated that you can also file a Judgment against them at the Court of Common Pleas.
- Before you decide to send a warning letter to a resident regarding garbage cans being left by the road, etc., make sure they are not associated with a disability. Some situations, such as a disability, do trump the declaration.
- HOA's have to allow satellite dishes to be installed on resident's properties, but can require a certain size. The FCC does have guidelines that you could check into. Ed Kress recommends working with the resident to accomplish what they would like to do, in the most least expensive way.
- The HOA Board has the right to set and approve rules and send those rules to the residents.
- It is highly recommended that your HOA has liability insurance.

### **Discussion Topics:**

Winchester Farms HOA is voting on whether to allow synthetic grass to be installed in properties within their development.

Once you approve a particular structure to be allowed to be built in your development (shed, fence, etc.) you basically let all of the residents do the same thereafter.

Whenever a home goes up for sale, call the realtor to make them aware of the active HOA in your development, and to make sure they provide information to new buyers with the HOA rules and regulations.

Resale Certificates should be available at all real estate closings, otherwise, you should not sell the property.

Parking fines in neighborhoods – Duane McKee stated that the Township is working on getting the fines lowered to \$20 - \$50 per fine. They are working on a business plan on how to accomplish that.

It was mentioned that all HOA's have a newsletter to help better communicate with homeowners on up-to-date information within their development.

Duane McKee said there is a three year funding plan for the new street sign toppers. In two more years, the rest should be completed.

The light at the corner of Rowan Road and Franklin Road is expected to be installed mid December.

Angela Rankin requested that if your HOA is going in front of the District Magistrate, to let her know, because she is interested in attending.

You do not need an attorney or legal representation to take a resident to court. Anyone from your HOA can also act as a witness, by using sent warning letters, etc.

Duane McKee stated that PennDOT has completed their analysis of the multi-way stop request at the intersection of Glen Eden Road and Sunset Drive/Bayberry Lane. The stop sign on Glen Eden was not warranted, but PennDOT is requiring some additional signage on Glen Eden Road and moving the stop bar on Sunset Drive. The signs on Glen Eden will be completed by PennDOT. The stop bar will be repainted by Cranberry Township next week. The painters are schedule to work in the evenings next week, weather permitting. Cranberry Township's Public Works Department will be looking at the trees, mentioned in the letter to determine how they can be trimmed.

Call Eric Ryan Corporation to see if your HOA can save some money on your utility bill – (724) 758-2911.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

The next meeting will be **Monday, December 13, 2010 @ 6:30 PM, Rm. 203.**

Moderator will be Mike Berman, Spring Meadows HOA.

i:\administration\neighborhood forum\minutes\2010\06-14-10\_minutes.docx