

Stone Creek HOA Annual Meeting Minutes, October 24, 2023
Meeting held at Homegrown Restaurant (Upstairs Special Occasion Room)

Members Present: Chad Beckett, Chad Detamore, Jessica LaRosa, Leslie Mason, Linda Matkowski, Jon Reichard, Thomas Roth

Board Chair Tom Roth opened meeting at 7:01 pm and addressed the assembled homeowners, giving a general update and introduction of board members.

Jim Buyze, managers of the Atkins Golf Course, provided an update and answered general questions. He indicated that the Course would likely close the following Sunday for the season, but that the pro shop will stay open, and season passes will be made available. Season and per round price structure should stay similar in 2024 with a HOA discount. He added that league play will continue to be encouraged. Jim said that a new tee is being built at Hole #3.

Questions for Jim:

On the issue of golf balls in members lawns, Jim indicated that there had been three reported incidents of golf balls breaking windows this year. Golfers are expected to take responsibility and homeowners insurance usually covers damage. The Court is not liable for damage but the U of I management will assist to track down offenders when possible.

Asked about plans to dredge Course ponds, Jim said that was unlikely. He told the group that this had been done last year and the offensive vegetation has returned anyway. Efforts are focused instead on working on movement of water and the installation of additional fountains as possible solutions. Throughout the winter there will be some changes in trees species to improve beauty, playability, and sustainability. Draining is loud, chemicals would kill the turf as well as weeds so creative solutions will be employed to address this issue.

When asked about the volume of rounds during the season, Jim said that the amount was “good” but that he would like it to be better, particularly encourage neighborhood involvement. He reminded the group that the course is designed to challenge the best collegiate golfers in the world. It’s hard course. A lot of people won’t want to do that week after week. He was pleased with the turn out for the men’s spring invitational, but the weather wasn’t good (45 degrees, 30 mile/hr. winds). Tournaments will continue. A special tournament in July ’24 will shut the course down for 5-6 days.

Jim confirmed that Urbana Country Club players will be playing at Atkins next year while Urbana tears up their course and rebuilds from scratch. There is an agreement in principle but not a signed contract. Jim is anticipating a total of 2000 rounds as a result of the agreement - maybe 20 rounds more per day on average (but more on the weekend).

A member asked whether individuals could walk on the paths once the course was closed. Jim very politely said know. He indicated it was both due to ongoing maintenance (just because the

course is closed doesn't mean that no one is working on it) and a liability issue. He described one incident where management had to deal with someone using a bow and arrows. Others included people using dirt bikes electric bikes. People who were walking by a stump grinder with rocks flying through the air. Open holes. Chemical spills. In short, Jim felt it the paths were just not a safe place for non-golfers to be.

A member asked for a way to obtain registered events at the course next year; Jim indicated he would follow up on this request.

Jim reminded everyone that Kathy Hugg is associate athletic director with the UIUC with responsibility for the Course; Her office is on site at the Course.

Jessica LaRosa, committee chair, gave the grounds committee report. Copies were provided to members. Jessica thanked many volunteers, including Cindy and Ed Harvey, Diane Durbin, Dave Tjaden, and Paulette and Jim Cantrell for their hard work weeding and watering through the year. Installation of water spigots have reduced watering labor considerably.

Jessica discussed the City's tree planning program, including trees to be planted in boulevard and right of way. The city will plant trees (with many species options) and include a watering bag. Jessica said that 26 trees were planted since last year. Some have died, want more. The deadline for requesting trees is November 16th, 2023, and will cost \$125 each. Plantings are guaranteed for one year; the list of trees came from the city arborist.

Jessica called for more volunteers, including a 2-4 hour per week commitment during growing season (planting annuals, weeding, cut back, watering). She said that the bid that came back for hiring out just weeding, trimming, and mulching every other week would be \$27,000/year. The HOA has saved \$27,000 by using volunteers for these services.

There was no neighborhood cleanup day due to insufficient response. Jessica stressed that a regular commitment was what was needed.

A member asked about lighting in the boulevard. She reminded the audience that the HOA does not own the boulevard; the city would have to address that matter. Solar lighting in the Blvd?

Jessica was asked whether the HOA has a landscape consultant. She said that Country Arbors has helped in the past but there was nothing formal (or paid) for that service. She said that Diane Durbin and Cindy Harvey were themselves good gardeners.

Linda Matkowski, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's report, copies of which were provided to members. [Specific numbers not included in this report; please see Treasurer's report for details]. As of the meeting date, 31 owners out of 335 lots had not paid their \$150 annual assessment. She said that this presented an accounting problem but ultimately the amount owed should be paid as the HOA has a lien on the property until dues are paid (even if overdue

for several years). Linda described various strategies employed to collect information about owners and those who have not made timely payment and encouraged members with this effort (volunteers were present to update HOA member rosters for contact information).

The report shows that the HOA is growing the “core principle” fund, up approximately \$17,000 above what was turned over by the Atkins Groups in 2020. HOA is in good financial shape. The here were funds turned over to HOA when Atkins gave up. We still have that money + \$7000, and we will have another \$10,000 or so, we are growing to core principle. Future events (e.g., mowing costs going up or down, depending on weather; other projects) will determine whether cash flow remains positive.

Jon Reichard, chair of the architecture committee, gave that committee’s report. Copies were provided to members. Jon stated that he was impressed by Jim Buyze’s report and what UIUC is doing to improve the golf course. He said that when golf course looks good “it makes us look good.” Jon encouraged members to take advantage of the neighborhood’s amenities. Jon gave a brief introduction as to the members of his committee, its responsibilities, and how to get in touch with him about requests and approvals.

For the year, Jon indicated that his committee received 42 requests for review in last 13 months (40 requests during the same period in 2021-2022). Of these, 18 were for new houses being built (17 last year). The remainder were 7 fence, 10 landscapes, 6 solar installations and one misc. request.

A member asked how many lots were left for sale. A member in the audience (Spencer Atkins) indicated that 2 were left for sale.

A member asked if there were any provisions in design review to consider the effect of a design on adjacent homes (i.e., are builders encouraged to differentiate new builds from existing homes next door). Jon said that feedback is given, but practical considerations (square footage, rooms configuration expectations) often limit choice of style; colors and other external factors are considered.

A member asked what happens with proposals that are not approved. Jon indicated that the committee worked with the builder/owner to address deficiencies, and details are worked out. He said that parties usually reach a good resolution.

Tom Roth spoke again and honored outgoing Board Member Leslie Mason, who has served as the Board’s secretary.

Tom also indicated that 4 board positions were being voted on electronically; Leslie was resigning at the end of her term, while the other incumbent members (Chad Beckett, Jon Reichard and Matkowski) were seeking re-election. HOA Member Kamil Tamimie was identified as a candidate for the 4th spot, and she gave a brief biography. Tom and Linda provided details on electronic voting to members present.

Further discussion was had regarding the installation of fountains and development along West Stone Creek Blvd (between Amber Lane and Colorado Ave). Todd and Nolan Atkins are developing this area, currently known as Fieldstone Subdivision. Tom indicated that no additional fountains were likely (one currently used had been borrowed from the U of I). As for development, he indicated that efforts were ongoing to bring the lots west of Stone Creek into the HOA and that the Board would act on that issue in due course. The members present indicated support for this effort.

A member asked whether the U of I Chancellor was still planning to move to the area in a U of I-built home. HOA Member Spencer Atkins indicated that this had been discussed but did not believe it likely to happen in the near term.

A member asked about a neighborhood watch; a general discussion ensued about all HOA members making sure that their contact information with the HOA Board was up to date. It was noted that some neighborhoods had more activity than others and that member vigilance was very important.

A member asked if there were any plans to enhance the north (Smith) entrance or from Colorado Avenue. Tom indicated that the HOA did not own any real estate at the Colorado entrance and that it was not clear what if any common property the HOA owned at the North entrance. Efforts continue.

It was confirmed that there would not be a playground installed at the HOA.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chad S. Beckett
Board Member/Board Secretary, Stone Creek HOA