

Draft Minutes
December 3, 2024
Uplands Homeowners Association Board of Directors Meeting
6:00 PM via Zoom

Board Members Present:

Jerome Williams, President
Dan Fuhrman, Treasurer
Stuart Prince, Secretary
Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, Vice President
Ron Wagner – Member at Large

Homeowners Present:

Rebecca Wright	Zina Jacque
Leslie and Michael	Floyd Steele
M Scott	Lauri Stevens
Tanishia Harding	Natasha O'Reilly
Melissa Jividen	Adriel Roberson
Al Gibbs	Alex Cole
Anthony Hughley	Billy Taylor
Brianna Cole	Candice Jones
Christian Burnett	Christine Gilbert
Clyde Moore	David Schonberg
Deb Ellis	Denise Polk
Frank Everson	Jim Suhr
Justine Yingling Gayle	Luis Aybar
Mechel Nelson	Mia Liley
Mike and Sarah Stansfield	Rebecca Wright
Rosalyn Moore	Ryan Barretta
Denise Polk	Everson
Robert Larino	Melissa J.
Kevin Foster	Lacretia Caldwell Adamski
Melitta	Ryan Barretta
Paul Washington	Shalisa Bates
Sharon Smith-Neal	Smita Sharma
Sonia Torres	Yvonne Summerville
Tyler Megahan	Will Plummer
Fred Robinson	Lisa Mason
Lisa Mason	

Representatives of Management Present:

Abaris Realty: Shireen Ambush, Andrew Moorman

Other Attendees:

Julie Krachman, Adiscov LLC

1. **CALL TO ORDER** –Jerome Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. The meeting was held virtually.
2. **PROOF OF QUORUM** – Quorum was met as required by the documents.
3. **PROOF OF NOTICE** – Notice was received as required by the documents.
4. Homeowner Comments – 20 Minute Maximum - 2 Minutes per homeowner
 - a. Clyde Moore – asked about water and sewer costs and the increased association fees.
 - b. Denise Polk – asked about the water overage and had questions about the budget process. She wants to understand why the choice was made for a one-time special fee and wants to know if WSSC has claimed some responsibility for the error. She would like a breakdown of the overage.
 - c. Everson – asked about the option of merging the POs and standardizing fees for all homeowners.
 - d. Deb Ellis – asked about the individual PO fees and said she was told by the sales office that fees would be coming down
 - e. Melissa J. – asked about the Board’s expectations and asked what the Uplands takes care of.
 - f. Candice Jones proposed an independent investigation by a third party review the financials. She also wants to be clear on what aspects of the water (e.g. broken sprinklers that the homeowners are paying for.
 - g. Floyd Steele – asked about costs going up and wants to understand the water bill
 - h. Fred Robinson – agrees with an independent review and is concerned with the shortfall relating to the water bill.
 - i. Laurie Stevens proposed that a review be done of water bills since the community began
 - j. Mike and Sarah – asked about individual water and sewer for each home.
 - k. Melitta – asked about possible economies of scale and if the assessment should be spread over time.
 - l. Lisa Mason – PO 9 E – wants to make sure the bills are allocated properly
 - m. Billy Taylor – asked if there was an attorney on retainer or budgeting to retain an attorney
 - n. Kevin Foster – PO 5 has concerns too about the water bill and thinks that individual meters should be looked at.
 - o. Natasha O’Reilly 708 Fair Winds – asked about how the newer homes will be assessed with the water bill.
 - p. Rebecca Wright – feels the Uplands has not been budgeting properly for the water bills.
 - q. Mia Liley – asked about the Errors & Omissions insurance relating to the water bill or failure to provide appropriate services
5. Board/Abaris Response to Homeowners Comments
 - A. Dan Fuhrman gave the Treasurer’s report to answer the water-related and financial-related questions. He explained the organization of Potomac Overlook relating to the National Harbor Owners Association and the Uplands HOA. Dan has received and reviewed every bill and invoice from the last several years and his analysis found the following reasons for the overage:
 - the transition between property managers in April 2022 created challenges.

- WSSC issues – WSSC has not been billing correctly. In one case WSSC did not bill Uplands for a new water meter for an entire year. The Board is currently working on this and expects a refund.
 - WSSC bills are not separated by POs in all cases.
 - There were issues with the prior irrigation contractor. He noted that Peterson Companies has contributed nearly \$40,000 in irrigation upgrades which will greatly reduce water costs.
 - Going forward Dan will continue to review and look for efficiencies including securing lower electricity rates, converting lights to LED, reducing water usage, working with vendors to get the best prices, having the Uplands financials audited and considering individual meters which could cost about \$2,000 plus a monthly fee. The current trash contractor has been overbillin which is also being addressed. Lastly he requested volunteers for the the Finance Committee.
- B. Jerome addressed merging POs. According to the rules of the State of Maryland this could be done but it would be extremely difficult because each individual homeowner would have to support it. He recommends discussing this at the next Presidents’ meeting. Stuart Prince added that Uplands is a homeowner association and when the property was developed individual condominium regimes were required. 100% of the homeowners would have to support merging the POs which would be a very difficult legal hurdle to cross.
- C. Jerome addressed the change in property management in April 2022. He explained that switching to Abaris from GHA had improved management considerably. Specifically there have been improvements in contract management, property maintenance, financial reporting, and management responsiveness. Shireen explained that Maryland Condo Law applies to the Uplands HOA and that the HOA’s financial records are open for residents to review.
- D. Jerome explained how the amount of the assessment was determined and why the Board decided it had to be a one-time special assessment. According to Maryland HOA Law as of January 1 there must be a minimum of \$215,000 in the Uplands HOA Capital Reserve account which the special assessment will fully fund. When each unit is up for sale, financials are provided to the prospective homeowner. If the Capital Reserve is found not to be fully funded it has to be resolved at closing and could affect the sale of the unit. The HUD certification rating could also be affected by the shortfall. For these reasons, the one-time assessment is the appropriate course of action to put the community on a sound financial footing in compliance with Maryland HOA law. He explained that this is a typical transition issue when a new community leaves developer control – similar to what the individual POs have experienced.
- Jerome then addressed the increase in the Uplands HOA fees. The main reason is the ensure sufficient funds to cover our water bills moving forward. Bills from WSSC typically come in late and as soon as they come in they must be paid or risk a water shut-off. Any analysis has to happen after the bill is paid. The other main component of the increase will cover items that the individual POS have been reserving for. When the individual POs update their reserve studies they will probably find that they can reduce their reserve contributions.
- E. Stuart Prince addressed the E&O insurance question. The E&O insurance would not cover the water bills.

The Board will work with the management company to prepare a summary of management company responsibilities to share with the homeowners.

6. Review and Approval of the July 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Stuart Prince moved to approve the Minutes as read. Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed seconded. The motion carried.
7. Developer Update – Stuart Prince reported that Section 10 was coming along. After Section 10 sections 11, and 12 will be developed.
8. Treasurer’s Report – Dan Fuhrman reported earlier in the meeting. See above.
9. Contract/Proposal Approvals
 - a. 2025 Landscape Maintenance & 2024-2025 Snow Removal Services Renewal Contract – Dan Fuhrman worked with the Landscaping Committee on the contract with Complete Landscaping. Stuart Prince moved to approve the 2025 contract with Complete Landscaping. Jerome Williams seconded. The motion carried.
 - b. 2025 Pet Waste Station Removal Services Proposal – Dan Fuhrman reported that Doody Calls was asking for a slight increase which is still within budget. Some stations have been moved. Stuart Prince moved to approve. Jerome Williams seconded. The motion carried.
 - c. Electronic Voting Administration proposal – Stuart Prince moved to approve. Jerome seconded. The motion carried.
 - d. Irrigation proposal – Dan Fuhrman worked with Ronco to negotiate a better contract price and they reduced their proposal by \$20,000. Stuart Prince moved to approve. Jerome Williams seconded. The motion carried.
10. Proposed 2025 Budget – There were no more questions so Stuart Prince moved to approve the 2025 Budget. Dan Fuhrman seconded. The motion carried.
11. Landscaping Committee Report – Dan Fuhrman reported that the committee walked through the community with Abaris and the landscaper and has met several times since. They are working on a proposal with Complete to replace plant material throughout the community and are drafting Guiding Principles for the property. They continue to do regular walkthroughs. He thanked landscape committee members and Betty Robinson who had to resign. He asked for more volunteers.
12. Social Committee Report
 - a. Name Change Discussion – The Board proposed changing the name from “Social” Committee to “Community Engagement” Committee to better reflect the committee’s scope work which now includes disseminating information to homeowners in addition to planning community-wide events. Dan Fuhrman moved to rename the committee. Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed seconded. The motion carried.
 - b. New Member Appointments – Dan Fuhrman moved to appoint Yvonne Summerville to the Community Engagement Committee. Natasha seconded. The motion carried.
 - c. The Holiday Party will be held on Saturday at the pergola on Waterfront Street from 3:30 – 5:30 with food and music.
13. Energy Consumption Proposal – Dan Fuhrman asked for a motion to approve Constellation for a 36-month contract which will result in a 20% decrease in the Uplands’ energy costs over time. Stuart Prince moved to approve the contract with Constellation Energy. Dan Fuhrman seconded. The motion carried.
14. Special Assessment – There being no further discussion Jerome Williams asked for a motion to approve the Special Assessment. Stuart Prince moved to pass the special assessment. Dan Fuhrman seconded. The motion carried.
15. There being no further business to discuss, Dan Fuhrman moved to adjourn. Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51.