

Country House Service Group V, Inc.
Community & Board of Directors Meeting
February 18, 2025 | The Gathering Place

Board members present: Glenn Alexander, Bonnie O'Connell, Tom O'Connell, Martha Martin, Diana Sinisi, Sibyl Wilmont

MHP present: Michelle Johnson

Community members present: 8 in person/6 on Zoom

Minutes of Meeting

1. Consent Agenda.

- a. Approve annual meeting minutes, January 21, 2025
- b. Approve this meeting's agenda
- c. Read approved motions into the minutes

MOTION 02-03-2025; Diana Sinisi moved to approve consent agenda. Martha Martin seconded; all approved.

2. **President's Remarks.** Diana explained the utility and operation of OWL device for meetings going forward for increasing participation and enhancing documentation. Welcomed Sibyl Wilmont, new board secretary/communications chair, and asked for brief introductions from community members. Described new/additional objectives of expanded Communications Committee (CC) to include, among others:

- a. *Business processes & procedures.* Diana discussed the necessity of developing and publishing written guidelines clarifying and streamlining business processes and procedures in several key operational areas such as finance, maintenance (planned and emergent), communications (with MHP/BOD/Committees), and expanded use of AppFolio.

Preliminary drafts for RFPs for expenditures > \$1,000 and excavations are under BOD and MHP review. A guideline for excavations has been prioritized due to a water line break at 388 Linfield by a vendor who had contacted 811 but still managed to cause serious damage. Work is under way to create a map of all water lines to prevent future incidents. A suggestion was made to

contact 811 before any digging.

- b. *Training.* MHP has volunteered to work with the CC to develop training for new BOD members and property managers on key documents including the Homeowners' Guide (HOG), Bylaws, and Covenants; and on best practices for responding to homeowners' requests.
- c. *Emergency notification campaign.* Development and dissemination of materials and tools to streamline communication of emergency maintenance requests.
- d. *Brightspeed.* Board and community members discussed Brightspeed's (cable internet provider) attempt to secure a service contract with CSG as they have done with other service groups. After meeting with other HOAs and company representatives, the CSG BOD decided not to sign, deeming it risky, especially after the company has accidentally hit four gas lines.

3. **Property Manager's Report [attached].** Michelle Johnson reported opening 11 work orders 1/22-2/19/2025 and updated the group about maintenance and special projects underway. She emphasized the importance of using AppFolio for all maintenance and architectural approval requests and correspondence; she will provide training to community members at our next meeting on March 18th.

- a. *Routine maintenance.* The group discussed the necessity of a water line map and that such maps did exist but were reported lost by Fitch some time ago. Bob Ford specified that an "As Built" map is needed to show the locations of original structures. Rex White asked if it's true that when the water is cut off, fire hydrants are inoperable. Michelle answered that Chatham County confirmed hydrants work even when water is off. Betty Robie asked if we could require all contractors to use sonar and Alan Ziegler asked if the new sonar plan will also include gas lines and it was confirmed that sonar would be used for any digging and would be required for all future projects.
- b. *Landscaping and trees.* Michelle explained that storms have delayed tree project by a few days, but Davey has updated their calendar and generally work is going as planned. Brian Paren gave kudos to Davey for doing a great

job and using a woodchipper to clear debris in real time, asking what will be done with stumps. Tony Daniels said that each stump costs \$600; if surplus funds are available at the end of the fiscal year, stumps *in front of homes* would be ground down and flattened. Rex mentioned that stump removal affects home values and asked to put guidelines to majority vote by board. Tree committee will recommend guidelines for BOD approval when the time comes.

Helen Thompson mentioned that erosion due to overgrown tree roots have exposed cable and is posing problems; Diana said to call provider, as cable maintenance is their responsibility. The group discussed the use of RootX, a chemical solution to prevent cracks in sewer lines. Noting potential toxicity concerns, it was suggested that experts should be hired for this task, as the committee members are not qualified.

- c. *AppFolio*. Michelle reiterated the importance of using AppFolio for maintenance and architecture requests and encouraged all homeowners to attend the upcoming training session on 3/18/2025 at the BOD & Community Meeting.
- d. *Month ahead*. Michelle reported that NC Drainage won the bid and will start in mid-March, weather permitting. Betty explained the three phases as follows: 1. Jetting drains to clean out debris; 2. Meeting to be held with FHA on what will be done to support Crossvine/Lassiter; 3. Obtain NC Drainage advice for solving erosion problem.

Bids for reserve study and audit are in process; MHP will share details with BOD when they are available.

Michelle and BOD emphasized homeowners should call MHP's 24/7 answering service during off hours in the event of emergent CSG-covered work, rather than hiring their own contractors and risking the possibility of not being reimbursed for expenses. Materials including magnet stickers with emergency contacts will be distributed with the revised Homeowners' Guide.

4. **Treasurer's Report.** Martha Martin reports that we ended 2024 with lower revenue than expected. Monthly revenue should be \$86k but is \$83k. Cash flow is good, but some homeowners are in arrears; the Finance Committee is addressing this.
- a. *Roofing schedule.* The board plans to include garage roof replacements in the budget for the next three years ('26, '27, '28), allocating \$60k per year, while continuing the current pace of home roof replacements.
 - b. *Insurance renewal.* Martha reported that the insurance renewal quote of \$180/sf is slightly higher than budgeted \$160/sf but is the industry standard for the age of our homes. Attorney advised to continue as is and work with agent to amend as necessary after renewal.
 - c. *Risk management committee.* Heartfelt thanks to Pat Arnold who has resigned as chair but added robust knowledge of insurance needs and issues that will help restart this committee after a pause to regroup.

5. **Open forum.**

Re: Emergency work orders, Joe Lopez described sewage emergency and that he wasn't aware of the requirement to report emergencies to MHP for CSG-covered work and called Roto-Rooter. He asked about the status of his expenditure and was advised by Diana to petition the BOD for reimbursement. Michelle noted that, in an emergency, the MHP vendor charge will be lower than what an individual would be charged. Martha and several audience members asked if a "short cut" would be possible that allows homeowners to contact the MHP emergency plumber (for example) directly.

Sibyl asked if there is a timeline for responding to emergency reports and if not, it would be helpful to have this information to set up and manage callers' expectations in stressful situations. Michelle stated that this will be covered in explicit instructions on emergency procedures that are currently in development and will be discussed in detail at our next meeting on March 18th.

Re: Insurance, Brian asked if CSG insurance covers damage to the roof of a house from a tree limb; Michelle and BOD answered yes. Helen mentioned that it may be cost-effective for homeowners to add a rider to their insurance that covers drain/sewer back-up.

Re: *RootX*, Josie Dickson and John King have done research on toxicity and there is plenty of information available on the Web. Close representatives may be helpful in delivering/administering *RootX*.

Re: Meeting frequency, Rex proposed that committees be mandated to meet on a monthly basis.

Re: John King, with gratitude, the BOD and all attendees acknowledged John's encyclopedic knowledge, multi-faceted expertise, and remarkable generosity of time and spirit. [Where would we be without him?]

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sibyl Wilmont, Secretary

Abbreviations:

BOD – Board of Directors

CC - Communications Committee

CSG – Countryhouse Service Group V,
Inc.

HOA – Homeowners Association

MHP – Mill House Properties

RFP – Request for Proposal