

Cheshire Forest Neighborhood Security Committee – Minutes of meeting no.1 held Wednesday 17th Feb - 6:30pm In person at the clubhouse also via teams online meeting.

Recording of meeting is online in the teams group under 'files' tab.

Committee Chair: Jane McKlveen

Members present:

Christopher Bowers

Bobby Cullipher

Mitch Gold

Cheryl Griner

Cliff Krebbs

Coleen Lively

Jane McKlveen

Aaron Pomeranz

Greg Seplak

Agenda items

Discussion

Do outs

1. Set expectations – explain purpose.

Purpose – to document ideas to address security concerns in and around the Cheshire Forest Community. Ideas will be presented to the Cheshire Forest HOA Board for board members to consider and implement if agreed upon.

2. Cameras at clubhouse, Aaron Pomeranz

Insert details of idea here – I believe Jane has pricing; We need to provide the board a comprehensive plan since they are opposed to cameras.

I have submitted cost estimates to the board for specific camera systems. The more I think about it though, the more I think that a local security company would be the best to hire to put in a system. Greg Seplak , also in this group, expressed interest in working on this subject but has been detained out of town on a family emergency. (Jane)

Jane had put together an email to the board with costs for the board and a suggestion for hardware. WiFi at the clubhouse isn't secure – we need new router for clubhouse. Jane will work with the HOA board and our HOA

manager to request an updated router from our provider.

New cameras provide good quality video images with cloud storage. Need to talk to a local security company for a quote. We determined that we don't currently have any cameras. The last ones we had were very old and obsolete. Concerns about monitoring common areas (Mitch) who would have access to the video? What would be the retention policy? Perhaps we need to add to bylaws so that policy is set. If law enforcement need video footage, we can give it to them. If someone in the community needs it for a criminal matter, then we could give it to them. As long as cameras are recording just video in the common areas there is no expectation of privacy.

Law enforcement can't prosecute a crime that didn't happen in their presence, but an individual can bring a prosecution using video to back them up.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that security issues happen multiple times a week. Colleen – how are cameras deterring behavior? Can we hire somebody to patrol?

It was suggested that we have signs posted saying that you are being watched by cameras. If we take a child or two to court then the others would probably go away.

Do we prosecute for littering? We agreed that we are probably only prosecuting more serious things. It was asked whether video is going to help in the case of a threat. We think that identifying the kids with video footage is the thing that will help. Identification of who is at fault is key.

Cliff suggested that we have to call police and the more we call police the better. Calling the police is a deterrent. We need to educate the members to tell them to call the police. It was pointed out that the police don't come immediately.

It was suggested that we need a layered approach to security. Downsides to cameras were discussed, namely cost, who is in charge of tech?, someone needs to be responsible for admin of video and providing that to interested parties. The HOA board doesn't want to be responsible for everything, it was suggested that we can find a couple of volunteers to do that – possibly the head of the neighborhood watch and one other trusted person.

The question was asked - how much vandalism have we had in the last 2 years? (we don't know for sure) it was suggested that our neighborhood has now a 'reputation' which could possibly affect property values. Questions were asked about how do we identify the kids/parents involved?

Greg pointed out that we need to clarify what is the expectation of the system? It was discussed that we should only be worried about the more egregious things – vandalism etc.

the question was asked – if the problem is on HOA property then does it have

to be a member of the HOA board that prosecutes? – we decided to break off a smaller group to work on these questions and bring some answers to the wider group at a later date. Voted on who present at the meeting was for obtaining cameras? Vote yes from: Christopher Bowers Bobby Cullipher, Coleen Lively, Cheryl Griner, Greg Seplak, Aaron Pomeranz, Jane Mcklveen – this group will get together to determine an acceptable use policy and pricing.

3. Assess Neighborhood watch program, Aaron Pomeranz

From the little that I know, they block captains haven't been provided any guidance to actually patrol neighborhood, may be able to integrate and App such as whatapp to link the block captains. Al Jacobs is stepping down as the head of our Neighborhood watch. Cheryl Griner has expressed an interest in taking over from Al. She is here in this group too. Also – I am in the process of proposing a new website to the board – the site proposed makes it easy to communicate with select community members and comes with an app. It would be an easy thing to set up a group within the new website, for the community watch and or /security committee. Alerts could be pushed to the app whenever needed for emergencies or to have groups of members easily keep in touch. (Jane)

Cheryl Griner confirmed that she has agreed to be the neighborhood watch lead. Jane will be presenting solutions to the committee and HOA board that addresses the need for having an easy method of communication – for specific groups in a fast way (app with notification alerts)

Aaron – asked if the neighborhood watch organize patrols? What exactly does the neighborhood watch do? It was discussed that we have block captains that are supposed to be a contact for neighbors in the event of a security issue. In reality – that doesn't happen. We have a yearly 'neighborhood event'. Cliff asked if we have 'Safe houses' on blocks (we don't) and suggested that we have a higher profile with the police if we have a neighborhood watch. It was suggested that isn't really the case in practice. Cheryl will look into what makes neighborhood watches successful in other places and how we could make that happen here. Aaron can maybe able to help with legal questions – Cheryl will also check with her police contact.

4. Security Survey, Aaron Pomeranz

Chesapeake police department's crime prevention unit should conduct free security surveys of problem areas in the community, which could include the pool/playground/club house areas for things such as lighting, removing areas that attract issues etc.

(added by Al Jacobs) Chesapeake Police Dept – What can or can't they do? Private property (common areas) and trespass rules? Procedure for issues/complaints involving minors? Court prosecution; who represents the community or is it by individual complaint case?

Aaron talked about how the Crime prevention unit of Chesapeake PD can come out to assess the security issues around our common areas and present us with a report. The board members present thought it would be within the area of the neighborhood watch to arrange this and obtain the report. Aaron can help if needed. Cheryl will work on getting this report and let us know what it says.

The board members present confirmed that the HOA has given permission to the police to act on our behalf for trespassing.

5. Assess community plat to understand what property in our neighborhood is public versus private so we can decide if we want to use the trespassing laws to control access to private areas, Aaron Pomeranz

for example the playground, if all of the area from the sidewalk in is private property, then we would need no trespassing signs at each point of ingress and provide the Chesapeake police department a letter from the HOA granting authority to enforce. I went to the [ebuild section of the City of Chesapeake website](#) and looked up the plat around the clubhouse. See diagram below. It looks like it's from the sidewalk in. Al Jacobs would be the person to check with for sure. Signs could say "Private Property – for Cheshire Forest residents and guest only". Could we ask kids to leave and only come back when their parents contact the board to talk about the cost of damages?(Jane)

It was suggested that we need the private property signs to be at the entrance and exit of the clubhouse driveways (into and out of the parking lot) so it is clear where private property starts. Cliff confirmed that only part of the neighborhood that is public is Cheshire Forest park (city property)

It was discussed/confirmed that damage to flower beds is vandalism. Was suggested that HOA have a rule or policy that we can enforce – for instances where we see known kids or their guests damaging something could we contact the homeowner to repair /recompense the HOA? Coleen pointed out that we don't want to prosecute if at all possible as this labels kids – we should give them an opportunity to make it right first before taking legal action. We don't want to give them a record if we don't have to.

Reiterated that we should have a layered approach to what we do regarding security. We do need more community engagement so that the home owners report to us or to the neighborhood watch after having reported to the police (or not) We agreed that we do need a platform for neighbors to be able to easily communicate with each other so we can collaborate to deal with issues. noted that 90% of problems are caused by not in our neighborhood kids. A small group of kids are the ones that cause 90% of the problems.

6. Understanding the Security Issue. – Al Jacobs

What is the history of security issues in CF? (I would say CF is not a crime ridden neighborhood) Have there been systemic issues? (I'd say no, many of our youth issues are cyclic depending on the age of the youth) Could the security issues (kids at the clubhouse) in 2020 be a by-product of the pandemic? (partially yes for sure)

We discussed whether we thought this is a temporary problem related to COVID-19/school being out. We don't know for sure. We need to make a framework for our neighbors to report problems to us. Mitch says the HOA board has a fiduciary responsibility to the neighbors but not a responsibility to provide solutions for all security matters.

It was pointed out that our governing documents say that the HOA board are tasked with making sure the common areas are safe and can be used by everybody. A few years back even small kids could come to the park safely. Not anymore. Kids are now not safe. Youngsters are being harassed.

We agreed that we are all responsible for neighborhood security. Jane suggested that the HOA board doesn't have a responsibility to fix all security issues but we do have a responsibility to set up a framework for neighbors to work within. We need to set something up that everyone can access so that everyone knows what the collective plan is – so we can work together. We need to engage more people from the community to report issues – Any framework and advice can then be advertised in the Cheshire Chat. It was confirmed that Nextdoor is not an official (HOA sanctioned) place for discussion neither is FB. It was pointed out that the Cheshire Chat tells people

things but the Cheshire Chat is posted on the cheshireforest.org website which isn't frequented. This could be addressed by having the better communication system that Jane will propose to the Board.

It was asked - how do we separate the good kids from the bad kids? How do we address security issues without pushing good kids away?

We agreed that we don't want a 'vigilante' system. We are not asking good kids to leave - only people who are behaving badly. So how do we differentiate between them? (we agreed that a camera system would be useful) we don't want to be over zealous - prosecution should be for the worst offenders.

We discussed whether threatening language or bad language could potentially be reason for prosecution - Aaron confirmed that an individual can prosecute for threatening language if they wished. A prosecutor would need video evidence to prove the kid was there when the incident happened. Aaron confirmed that an individual can go to a criminal court and (without a lawyer) and prosecute a person. The individual could request camera footage to use as evidence and then prosecute. As a board we could tell all the neighbors that this is an option you have if you would like to prosecute. Let's give them a framework and advertise it effectively. It was agreed that the biggest thing we can do is to engage the membership. We discussed the fact that prosecution didn't have to be the only option - if we could identify kids then give camera footage could be given to a neighborhood parent/member first - to see if the problem could be addressed within the neighborhood first, it would probably help.

7. Neighborhood Engagement – Al Jacobs

How to address? Parent Involvement? Who are willing to help?

This agenda item was covered in previous items.

7:35pm - Meeting was adjourned.