

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of
The Venetian Golf & River Club Community Association, Inc.
Held at the River Club and via Zoom on May 20, 2024**

Board Members in attendance:

Tom Jones – Co-President	Sharon George
Mark Faford – Co-President	Joe Browne
Chip Melvin – Treasurer (via Zoom)	Terry Leary
John Manoush - Secretary	Roger Efron (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Hefler	Taras Kowalczyzn was unable to attend

Guests present: There were 4 residents attending in person and one joining via Zoom (not counting 2 board members above)

Call to Order: Mark Faford called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm

Secretary’s report: The minutes from the April 15, 2024 regular meeting and the April 15, 2024 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: Two residents spoke expressing support for the CA and the hope that we and the POA would seek to improve strained relations.

Treasurer’s report: Chip reported that our cash on hand position is approx. \$93K. Regarding the “AJAX funds”, the original 2 checks that were written to the POA and the CDD were voided and the amount added back to the cash balance and the liability of \$37,865 restored, as shown on our balance sheet. As of 4/30/2024 the AJAX funds are pending distribution. Although our statement shows a net profit of \$10,275 for April 30 YTD, this was atypical because \$8,475 of income was due to a refund for the Patel traffic study. The entire year’s insurance (\$9,456) was paid in Jan. Chip expressed concern about our financial position due to lower dues income and higher expenses, particularly for legal fees.

Web site report: Joe reviewed his report of usage trends of our web site. There has been a 30% decline in users compared to the previous month and 39% vs. April, 2023, but there is no immediate concern based on this single point, partly because the website had been redesigned and advertised to the residents at that time, thereby drawing much traffic initially in the first full month of operations. The board complimented the work Joe has been doing keeping the website current, which is vital in keeping users’ interest. Joe initiated a discussion about the pros and cons of more frequent email blasts. It was generally agreed that items of high interest such as hurricane warnings and *significant* local news items should be sent out as needed, even if more than once per month. There was consensus that the use of *links* was generally preferred to placing an entire article within the email. Later in the meeting, Roger cautioned against diluting the relevance of our email blasts by making them *too* frequent.

Membership: Sharon reported that per cent membership has dropped from a 2022 high of 70% to the current 63.9%. Sharon continues to work to obtain contact information for new residents in order to invite them to join. She anticipated attending a new resident orientation by the POA as an observer though there was confusion over exactly when it was being held.

Mark initiated a discussion about adding a line to the membership form for voluntary contributions beyond dues. There was agreement that the Membership Committee should explore methods that would be

convenient and effective. Tom asked Joe to work with Joe Santucci to explore placing a “donations” option on the website.

This led into a related discussion about whether non-members should be allowed to continue taking part in CA events. Some voiced the opinion that the costly events should not be free for non-members, but most board members felt that the number of non-members “taking advantage” was not causing a significant loss for the CA. Tom pointed out that charging for events at the River Club would place us afoul of CDD requirements for public access. The discussion was eventually tabled but there is hope that a successful voluntary contribution program would lessen any concern about loss of revenue from non-member attendance at functions.

Seminar planning: Mark, Steve and Terry now form a subcommittee on this important topic. We expect 15 or more events. A candidate forum is planned for Oct. 8, but since there are both CDD and City Council seats open, there was agreement that 2 dates should be booked. Several of last season’s popular seminars will be held again. Some new ideas were introduced and briefly discussed. We discussed the pros and cons of paying speakers and resolved (without voting) that we will continue a policy of no pay for speakers. The alternative of a token gift was raised and there was consensus that a Tervis tumbler with the Venetian or CA name would be a suitable gift. Steve volunteered to look into pricing. Steve floated the idea of expanding our candidate forums to include Sarasota school and hospital board candidates. Following some discussion, we passed a motion on an 8 to 1 vote NOT to hold forums for either school or hospital boards because these might be seen as too political. Placing nonpartisan information in Parcels about upcoming school or hospital elections was considered acceptable.

Following this discussion, Steve introduced additional ideas for seminars including a Venetian talent show.

External Issues: Tom reported there is little of major impact going on presently. He had recently shared some local news about a group of Toscana Isles residents appealing to City Council for support on their desire to have a traffic light at their Knights Trail intersection. On the Venetian’s *writ of certiorari* appeal, Tom expects a decision by mid-June but there is no guarantee of the timing or outcome.

HRT Update: (Hurricane Response Team vs previous Readiness) Steve Hefler and Mary Rau Foster jointly reported on current activities and plans. They have been studying alternate services for issuing texts to residents during emergencies, and expressed intention to change from our lapsed provider EZ Texting to TextMagic, with the promise of lower cost and equal or better service. The board unanimously passed a motion to approve the use of TextMagic. A community meeting is planned for June 17th from 4 to 5 PM, and will be Zoomed and recorded for later viewing. The CA had a meeting planned for the same time but there was general agreement that we could meet at 2:00 instead of the usual 3:30.

Nominating committee: We decided to table this and select a committee when/as needed.

Board member comments: Tom encouraged board members to attend the June 10 CDD meeting, since he and others intend to speak in support of the CDD accepting the Ajax funds. Tom also appealed to board members to provide any CA meeting agenda items to him and Mark at least 10 days prior to all board meetings so that the agenda could be distributed 7 days before each meeting.

Mark mentioned the Laurel Rd cleanup that takes place the 3rd Monday ending each quarter. Mark has been the “ambassador” to the cleanup group. Tom volunteered to assist.

John proposed an executive session prior to our next monthly meeting for the purpose of reviewing long-term strategic goals. He will poll the board via email to try and find an agreeable date. Sharon pointed out that our three newest board members were not involved in the March, 2023 retreat.

Terry asked all available to meet with him and others in the parking lot to participate in the Memorial Day flag placement this Friday morning at 8:30.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting is on Monday, June 17 at 2:00 pm at the River Club. All other meetings are planned for 3rd Mondays at 3:30 with this exception made due to the June 17 conflict with HRT training mentioned earlier.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by John Manoush, Secretary

DRAFT