

**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 June 17, 2024**

Board Members in attendance:

Tom Jones – Co-President
Mark Faford – Co-President
Chip Melvin – Treasurer (via Zoom)
John Manoush – Secretary
Sharon George – Membership Chair
Roger Effron (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Hefler
Taras Kowalczyzn (via Zoom)
Joe Browne
Terry Leary

Guests present: There were approximately 6 residents attending in person and 3 joining via Zoom (not counting the 2 board members above)

Call to Order: Mark Faford called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm

Secretary’s report: The minutes from the May 20, 2024 regular meeting, previously reviewed by all board members, were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: One resident spoke expressing support for the CA and expressing hope for less contentious relations with some POA board members.

HRT (Hurricane Response Team) Report and Update: Mary Rau Foster reported that she and her team recently updated their Purpose and Policies document, and provided board members with a folder containing this and 7 other documents that together spelled out all team guidelines. All board members voiced approval for the update, which will include a couple of minor edits that will be submitted by Mark and Steve and ultimately posted on the vgrcca.org website. Mary will also add a brief mention of training procedures as suggested by Taras. A seminar for all residents will follow this meeting at 4 PM, then training for HRT members. Expenses are staying in line with a judicious approach to spending, however, Mary will ask the board to approve an expenditure next year for new T-shirts for the HRT. Following investigation of mass texting services, the HRT has decided the expenditure is not justified; they will rely instead on a “phone tree” approach. The HRT has also investigated the use of drones and concluded they did not provide enough value to justify the expense. Mark asked about responsibility for the boardwalk. The expectation is that Tim Schimberg will continue being responsible under the POA and it will not be a priority of the HRT.

Treasurer’s report: Chip reported that our YTD income is \$30,663 less expenses of \$20,927 for a net of \$9,736. He stressed that the \$8,475 received last month for the traffic study refund made up most of this net income, such that overall, we remain in a situation where income barely covers expenses. Our \$37,865 check to the CDD has not yet been cashed, although the CDD last week voted to accept it. Steve recommended the CA investigate another insurer based on his experience with his HOA, and Chip agreed. They will work to obtain one or more estimates.

Seminar planning: Mark provided a handout listing 13 events already committed, 3 additional proposals confirmed at this meeting and perhaps 5 additional topics under consideration. The first event will be two candidate forums on October 7, one each for the CDD and City Council. The choice of a single day will save

some \$900 on fees for recording the events. We also agreed on the recommended date of March 10 for the Town Hall Meeting. The team will continue with a “Knock Your Socks Off” flyer. Steve had investigated the cost of providing a gift to each speaker in the form of a 16 oz Tervis tumbler. In quantities of 50-74 they would be \$20 each or \$18.75 each for 75+ (50 = \$1,000). Additional cost for adding the CA logo is possible but not known. Concerns were raised about storage, about how we would handle speakers who return year after year and, above all, about cost. Considering our current financial position, we decided to hold off on implementing this idea. A gift certificate was mentioned as an alternative, but no decision made.

Membership: Sharon reported that per cent membership increased slightly for May to 64.4%, the highest level YTD. She proposed that we allow new residents a grace period such that those who sign up in the last half of a year will be considered members for the following year as well. This was approved by consensus. Sharon plans more outreach to new residents including a slightly scaled-down orientation meeting. Of 145 new residents only 45% are members, indicating there is ground to gain here. Tom raised the matter of voluntary contributions that we have previously discussed without resolution. Sharon expressed reluctance to add an appeal to our membership form, but we agreed that a method for soliciting “gift” contributions is desirable. It remains to develop a mechanism that will be convenient for members while not introducing confusion or complications in record-keeping. Joe has already spoken with Joe Santucci about adding a “donate” button to our site, and will report further on this at our next meeting. Taras additionally suggested an upsell approach, i.e., a popup appears when a fee is being paid which asks the member if they would like to make a contribution to the Community Association. Note: Mary Rau Foster made an excellent appeal for CA membership at the well-attended HRT seminar that followed this meeting.

External Issues: Tom reported there are no newsworthy issues at present except for the June 12 decision by Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court Judge Danielle Brewer to reject the writ of certiorari appeal filed by the NVNA and other parties. This has been covered in the local press and by an email to residents from the POA, and Joe will add the press release to our web site. The next opportunity to influence the process would be at Planning Board meetings dealing with site development plans -- yet to be announced.

Web site report: Joe’s report showed excellent traffic numbers for May with 542 users and 1,307 views, both higher than May, 2023. He attributes much of this to recent improvements on Hurricane Corner, organization, the addition of a FAQ page and the incorporation of local news reports. John and Joe have been working on updating the Accomplishments and Board Members pages.

Strategic Goals Special Meeting: John announced that the meeting is set for Thursday, July 11, and briefly described plans for the meeting. We will use the same process used at the March, 2023 retreat (Situation, Target, Proposals). At Roger’s suggestion, John contacted the Venice Fire Department to secure the use of their Community Room for this meeting. We agreed on the time of 1 to 4. We’ll plan on having coffee and light snacks. John will follow Tom’s suggestion of sending out some “pre-work” to board members so that we can hit the ground running. He will also follow Roger’s suggestion to ensure that Wi-Fi is available -- a necessity.

New Business: Joe proposed we investigate raising funds by selling advertising on *Parcels* or possibly at seminars. Roger reported that he had some experience with this and it might well be explored again. He felt that actual ads for products or services might be inappropriate, and recommended a simple statement of “sponsored by –”. He also suggested we explore having issues of *Parcels* sponsored by individual residents. Tom pointed out that we should have some standards if we embarked on this. Roger, Terry and Joe will confer on this and provide input for our next meeting.

John will not be able to attend the July meeting (even remotely) and asked that another board member take the minutes. He also asked that other board members (preferably 2 or 3) learn to operate The Owl so they could serve as meeting hosts in July and whenever John was not available. Mark, Sharon and Tom offered.

John will work with Fred Baughman and Chip to alter our Zoom account to allow for the additional “licensed users”, and will contact at least one of the 3 volunteers for a brief training session soon. Chip reported that we pay \$47.99 monthly for our Zoom account. I will look into whether we need this costly a plan, as it appeared that plans costing about 1/3 of this might serve our needs adequately.

Mark – Laurel Rd cleanup that was scheduled for today is postponed to next Monday, June 24th at 8:45 a.m.

Steve – Discussed the potential event, “Venetians Got Talent” and ways to publicize it and solicit participation of residents who at least think they are talented. Roger reported that the River Club was very interested in coordinating this event with a dinner and will follow up with them.

Board member comments: Steve expressed the hope that our community will soon move beyond the accusations and conspiracy theories that have existed. He paraphrased the facts that Jerry Jasper recently introduced at the most recent CDD meeting regarding the AJAX agreement. The CA was not legally obligated to spend the remaining AJAX funds on buffering. Tom supported this view and recapped the fact that our board voted at its May meeting not to use the remaining funds on the golf course and explained why the CDD was in the best position to decide how these funds would be used for the benefit of the most residents.

Additional Public Comments: One resident offered several suggestions. She felt that much of the conflict referred to above might have been avoided by an early meeting of all of the Venetian organizations regarding AJAX. She additionally offered suggestions for speaker gifts, seminar topics and raising funds. Another resident suggested we consider possible help and cooperation from residents to help reduce the costs of our Town Meeting.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting is on Monday, July 15 at 3:30 pm at the River Club.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by John Manoush, Secretary