

**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 February 17, 2025**

Board Members attending:

Mark Faford – Co-president
Chip Melvin - Treasurer
John Manoush – Secretary
Sharon George – Membership Chair
Joe Browne – Web Administrator
Roger Effron
Terry Leary
Dr. Steve Hefler
Taras Kowalczyk

Unable to attend:

Tom Jones - Co-president

Guests present: There were 5 residents attending in person and one *via* Zoom

Call to Order: **Mark Faford** called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. We met in the River Club bar due to being pre-empted from other function rooms by the ACC and the CDD TekWave project.

Board Liaisons: **Rich Goodman** represented the CDD.

Secretary's report: **John** asked about the advisability of including parenthetical updates for known events that occur after the meeting. This was soundly rejected by the board. Joe will create a dropdown under the About tab on our website for “minutes, financials and others”. The minutes from our January 20, 2025 meeting, distributed on February 13, were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: None

Hurricane Response Team: **Mary Rau Foster** provided the HRT's recommendation on communication devices: a 10-watt long-range 2-way radio with a total cost of about \$440 for 6 pairs of devices. Aside from modest cost, other advantages include no reliance on cell towers or Wi-Fi and no need for licensing or monthly payments. Testing showed only minor issues with static in some areas. The board unanimously approved this expenditure and thanked the HRT for its diligence. Steve and Mark will assist in additional testing and Mary will prepare a short summary for *Parcels*. She also floated the idea of having a drawing for inexpensive hurricane supplies at the THM to draw more attention to the HRT tables. This sparked the recurring debate about members vs. non-members, but the drawing idea was ultimately approved by consensus, particularly because there is no cost to the CA.

Treasurer's report: **Chip Melvin** stated that we have started a new year with a monthly net of \$674. He advised us that several major expenses will occur in February, led by \$10K for insurance plus costs for Shredfest and the THM. There remains a need to increase revenue. We were not able to attain lower insurance rates as hoped at our last meeting and there are no ready options short of reducing coverage, which we are not inclined to do. There was prolonged discussion over the risks presented by the HRT (Good Samaritan, etc.) and whether “volunteer insurance” could replace GL. We left investigation of opportunities for savings in Chip's hands. **Joe** raised the topic of member donations and the need to inform residents of this need (see next section for more on this).

Membership: **Sharon George** reported that our membership is at 59.2 vs. 62.2% in the same month prior year. Roger asked Sharon to provide a list of members up for renewal to all board members monthly so that they may use a personal approach. There has been no further movement toward increasing dues, though it remains under consideration. Sharon, Mark and John have revised the membership application form to include a section for donations. It will be circulated for review before finalizing and posting. Steve pointed

out that modifying the enrollment form alone will not reach the vast majority of residents who are renewing membership rather than joining. Other ideas were discussed. Mark requested that John work with Sharon, Joe and Steve to develop a strategy for implementing a donations program. John asked Steve to assist because of his involvement with the widely valued HRT. Mary Rau Foster recommended the HRT launch an “adopt-a-radio” program, and this was approved by consensus.

Seminar planning: **Mark Faford** reviewed completed events: Venice Wildlife, Bike-o-Rama and Venice history with Josh Goodman. The latter was attended by a capacity crowd of over 180 residents, while the bike event was more sparsely attended this year due to cold weather. Upcoming events include End of Life Doula on 2/25, Town Hall on March 10, Sharpfest on March 17 and FL friendly landscaping on March 24. The tentative March 31 Roger Clark talk is postponed until fall due to the pending shopping center appeal. The River Club has asked us to minimize their setup labor where possible. Roger detailed plans for the Feb. 22 Shredfest, which will include a Goodwill station as well as a request for donations (“bucket boys”) for the 1st time. Volunteers will meet at 8 am to review assignments.

External Affairs: **Taras** informed us that the Laurel Rd widening is on schedule, with land acquisition as a current priority and the earliest estimate for completion being 2028. **John** mentioned that there is encouraging work at the POA led by John DiPierro and Bob Knight to more clearly define “who does what” at VGRC, and was optimistic that past friction over responsibility for external affairs will resolve itself in a cooperative manner. **Joe** brought us up to date on the Dona Bay water restoration program, phase III, and has posted details on our website under News/Events, along w info on the water booster station, which may be completed in April.

Website: **Joe Browne** reported that our website had almost 2,000 views, an increase of 17% over January of last year. Joe has recently posted information about our past seminars, the shopping center and a nearby eagle’s nest, with help from Rick Cordner. **Mark** mentioned that the chart of Venetian organizations needed a slight updating. **John** stated that he will be training as an alternate CA web administrator.

Old Business - Town Hall: **Mark** updated the group on the activities of the THM planning group, and has copied the entire board on those plans. **Roger** reported that he and John have prepared a survey to solicit audience feedback after the THM. Both POA and CDD presidents will give presentations. He named our 5 Gratitude awardees plus recognition for retiring town manager Ed LaVallee. Preliminary invitations will go out shortly. Board members should report to the school at 3:45 p.m.

New Business: Open Board Position – On behalf of the selection committee with Tom and Joe, **John** moved to approve Darlene Schimberg as a CA board member. She was unanimously approved, bringing our board to its full complement of eleven. She was present at this meeting and welcomed by all.

Board Member Comments: **Roger** suggested that if the post-THM survey works well that we consider additional feedback surveys after other CA events. **Joe** recommended that the HRT consider improvements for the safety of HRT gate personnel during an emergency, and whether backup is needed for Mary as the command post coordinator. **John** mentioned that his earlier suggestion on replacing boardwalk signs will not be funded by the POA, but that he will continue to study options for improvement.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting is on **Monday, March 17** at 10:00 a.m. at the River Club. Since Sharpfest is planned for the same morning, **Mark** will line someone up to oversee the event, held in the Golf Course parking lot. Our regular + annual meeting is expected to be on the afternoon of April 21, but a chance of conflicts remains. Mark will be in touch to confirm.

Respectfully submitted by John Manoush, Secretary