

**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 19, 2025**

Board Members attending:

Tom Jones - Co-president
John Manoush – Secretary
Sharon George – Membership Chair (had to depart following HRT section)
Roger Effron
Terry Leary
Dr. Steve Hefler
Darlene Schimberg
Taras Kowalczyk *v/a* Zoom

Guests present: There were 4 residents attending in person, including John DiPierro representing the POA and Mary Rau Foster, leader of our HRT. There were 1-3 residents on Zoom at various times.

Call to Order: Tom Jones called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Secretary's report: John had distributed a final draft of minutes from our April 21, 2025 board meeting as well as the annual meeting of the same date to all board members on May 14; they were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: None

Membership Report: Sharon George informed us that current membership stands at 831 or 61%, vs. 63.6% last May. She had distributed a spreadsheet of non-members to other board members who are urged to personally contact those in their neighborhoods. Roger suggested that it would show support and collaboration among our organizations if all POA board members were also CA members. The homes per sale has been at 41-43 for the past 3 months – significantly higher than average

Hurricane Response Team: Mary Rau Foster updated the board on previously discussed plans for using Facebook as a communication tool. Mary has met with the POA and will be meeting with the CDD and sub-HOA presidents to keep all updated about HRT activities. She has introduced a new volunteer application form that can be filled out online, and it is working very well. She and other volunteers will be participating in the Venice Hurricane Expo on Friday, May 30, 2025 at the Venice Community Center. Materials will be available covering the history of the HRT to assist others that want to start such an organization. The Venetian's annual Hurricane Preparation meeting is on track for June 2nd at 5:00 p.m. The Venice police and fire chiefs will present, as well as the new director of emergency services for Sarasota County. HRT volunteer numbers are down a bit from 49 to 38. Tom expressed concern that Mary not personally assume too much work, and asked that she inform us if more help is needed (Joe Browne has already offered to help with Facebook training). Mary has been working with the CDD to clarify the permitted uses of the River Club during an emergency. It is not a hurricane shelter, yet might be used for other purposes to provide relief to residents. There was discussion about how the Facebook page will be controlled to avoid disinformation. Mary explained how she will review and control the flow of information to prevent this. There was discussion about "good Samaritan" laws with respect to the HRT. Mary explained how the risk (of being sued) was very remote when one is providing assistance during an emergency (i.e. "reasonable under the circumstances"). Roger referred a group at Talon Preserve to Mary for advice in setting up a HRT, and announced that the Citizens Advisory Board has just issued its final report on Venice's response to recent hurricanes.

Treasurer report: In Chip's absence, Tom very briefly summarized the report, stating that we had \$58,115 cash on hand, of which \$2,516 is reserved for HRT use. Total assets are \$66,000.

Seminar planning: In Mark's absence **Darlene** informed us of plans. She commented on the difficulty of reserving the River Club. She recounted the "traditional" events that are already booked, starting with Bike o Rama in January. She will email the board with all details. SharpFest will be held twice next year. There will be no candidate forum this year because there are no CDD or City Council elections. Tom stated that elections in 2026 might well involve as many as 5 council seats plus a CDD election. We may need to hold separate forums. Darlene asked attendees to feel free to send suggestions to our seminar committee.

External Affairs: **Tom Jones** noted that the Northeast Park construction has begun. There was general discussion about the opening of possible retail establishments in our vicinity. We expect a hotel, a Sprouts and an Aldis (replacing current Winn-Dixie) on Jacaranda. Roger will announce developments in *Parcels* as more solid information becomes available.

Website: **Joe Browne** could not attend today but had sent a brief email indicating that usage remained robust, though slightly below our monthly average. He predicted increased viewing during hurricane season. John commented on the fact that the HRT application form on our website appeared to be the first instance of a form that could be filled out online. Mary informed us that she (with help from Dick Foster) utilized a currently free service from a vendor called Jotform. The information is summarized in a spreadsheet, freeing the owner from transposing data from separate forms and reducing the chance of errors. We will investigate the possible use of this technique for our membership form or other uses.

Old Business: **John** briefly summarized the progress and plans of the Revenue Team, following a written summary sent out earlier. He and Joe have suggested October 15 as a goal for "going live" with a complete donations program. Web consultant Joe Santucci is currently working on the web functionality, while next steps will involve designing the actual web pages and planning our communications. Roger stressed the importance of seizing the right "moments" (for requesting donations). In reply to Darlene's inquiry about the *Parcels* sponsorship program, Roger informed us that there were 4 or 5 prospective sponsors.

New Business: **Tom** introduced the topic of updating our by-laws (raised at our last meeting) and suggested a small group work on this. The current document was last revised in 2020. John volunteered to lead this effort, and identified two areas that appear to need updating while Steve pointed out a third. These are responsibility for external affairs, requirements for officers (now requires 3 VP's), and no provision for less than 11 directors. John will suggest initial revisions and circulate them to all for comments and edits.

Taras asked about plans for another retreat and whether that might be an opportune time to review the by-laws, but consensus was that the by-laws should be handled as described above, since there is no retreat planned for 2025. We generally agreed that retreats should be held every two years, probably in April-May. Tom suggested a social gathering in the off-years.

John DiPierro mentioned that there will be a meeting of the neighborhood sub-HOA's on June 17 at 4 p.m., at which Mary will represent our HRT. He invited the CA to send a representative and Darlene volunteered. She and John D. will discuss content prior to the meeting.

Tom noted that flag placement will take place this Friday morning for Memorial Day. Tom will coordinate the effort in Terry's absence.

Terry recounted a conversation with Cyndi Snizek regarding reporting of wildlife concerns. Most members did not feel the CA had a role to play in such matters except to refer questions to the CDD or appropriate government agencies. Educational information in *Parcels* or on the website may be considered.

Board Member Comments: **Taras** reported no progress to date regarding the "collaborative group" attempts to work with the Neal group on the shopping center. He made a request on behalf of the POA that there is a great need for people to work on committees such as the ACC. We agreed that personal appeals to friends and neighbors are more effective than broad appeals.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting is on **Monday, June 9, 2025** at 10:00 a.m. at the River Club. We moved to the 2nd Monday because Mark, Tom and John will be unavailable on June 16. We considered skipping the

meeting entirely but instead chose to move the date. Roger opined that skipping meetings was undesirable in terms of maintaining momentum and “flow”. John will also be unavailable on June 9. Tentative future meeting dates are July 21 and August 18.

There was additional discussion about the weaknesses in the River Club scheduling process (or lack thereof). Darlene has taken the lead in working to reserve times for our seminars.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Manoush, Secretary