

# High Sierra Meadows Homeowners Association Annual Meeting & Picnic

## Meeting Minutes

Sunday September 3, 2017 12:07 @ Lot 109

Check-In began at 11:30 am conducted by Member Volunteers Dawn Arbogast, Kitty Fitch and Marty Fowler. At 12:07 pm, HSMPOA President Richard St.Marie called for the potluck picnic to begin. We feasted.

At 12:31 pm, the meeting was officially called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. President St.Marie introduced the Board Members in attendance - Richard St.Marie (P), Rick Edgeworth (VP), and Kim Workman (AL).

Note that the preliminary count of signatures shows approximately 32 Lots were represented and 60-65 people were in attendance.

1. **Roll Call** and introduction of Owners and their families. Richard St. Marie asked for all people associated with their Lot Number to stand and introduce themselves to the crowd as he read the Lot Numbers from the Sign-In sheets.
2. **Guest Speakers** - there were no representatives from Cal Fire, USFS nor the Madera County Sheriff's Office as all three agencies were involved in either the Railroad Fire in Sugar Pine or the Mission Fire in North Fork.
3. The **President's Statement** began firstly on the state of the Water System. Richard made mention of the unresolved leak during June of this season iterating the absolute need that ALL leaks be reported and ALL Lot mains turned off when not at your property. Mention was made of the extensive repairs to the Lower Well Generator and that the Solar System continued to function save for the recent failure of its booster pump.

4. **Treasurer's Report** – the group was told that the Board Treasurer, Mike Compton, was not present due to the smoke from the surrounding fires. Copies of the Operating Statement to Date were provided to all interested members. Richard St.Marie asked that any questions be forwarded via email to either himself or to Mike C.
5. **Fire Compliance** – VP Rick Edgeworth spoke to this subject and the ongoing mitigation project to create adequate Defensible Space as protection from wildfire. Rick lauded the group for their work in removing ground and ladder fuels. He did explain that lots not yet in compliance were either being sold by their disinterested owners or were being transferred to later family generations. The Board fully expects that ALL Lots will be in compliance by season end.

As for the Bark Beetle situation, Rick reminded all that the Fire Compliance deadline was not to be confused with the November deadline for dead tree removal. We did acknowledge that the Board realizes that the Bark Beetle Infestation will take upwards of 2 to 3 more years to be completed. Jesse Middleton of Whole System Management echoed that assessment of time to completion. Rick asked that we as a community continue to do what we can afford to through the end of this season with the assurance that the Board will not arbitrarily penalize anyone who shows commitment and progress. The crowd response was quite positive.

Jesse Middleton was then asked to describe his process for burning the two “decks” of logs currently being staged in the upper area of the Association Owned meadow. As part of his description, Jesse made mention of the periodic losses of upwards of 20,000 gallons of water. This opened a spirited group discussion as summarized below.

Questioned for details by Steve Arata, Jesse Middleton and Richard St.Marie described the isolation testing of the suspected leak at the “Artesian Spring” on South Meadow Lane. Richard also made point of the ongoing problem with people leaving hoses or faucets running which could use 1200 gallons per hour. Gary Holley asked why the Board has not yet employed “professionals” instead of relying on amateur volunteers.

Rick Edgeworth interrupted to remind all that the Association has entered into contract with McMillian Mountain Service to provide all

State of California required monitoring, testing and assessments of our water system.

Questions from the Membership led to either Jesse M., Rick E., Richard St.M., or Steve A. explaining the piping layout of our system, the process of valve isolation for leak detection, repairs to generators and heavy infrastructure and the recent failure of the Upper Well booster pump and possible effects from such.

Richard St.Marie restated the commitment of this Board that we ensure delivery of reliable water to our community. Applause was noted.

A discussion developed about repair or replacement of the main street valves and the individual lot mains. Steve Arata was called upon to describe his suggestions for lot mains. Citing a rough quote of \$7900 in materials, Steve explained his proposal to install uniform valve systems at each lot split to eliminate backflow contaminations and reduce our exposure to leaks and breaks at that level.

It was asked of the attendees whether they, as Owners, would be willing to allow the Board to continue the Special Assessment due to retire this fiscal year, for another 1-2 years to fund Steve Arata's proposal. The response was overwhelmingly in the positive.

Gary Holley then asked about dead beetle killed trees that are on his lot but are within the 15 feet right of way of the road – suggesting that any such tree was Association owned. Gigi Cardoza was called upon to explain the results of her investigation on this very subject earlier this year. Gigi explained that her findings were that each lot extended to the centerline of the roadway their property abutted. In short, those trees belong to the lot.

The mention of roads led to a quick group discussion about the condition of the roads both within and outside the development. Richard mentioned the ongoing collection of competitive bids for culvert installation and road repairs. It was brought to our attention that a new Owner of Lot 130 works for Cal Paving. We unanimously agreed to tap this potential resource.

Discussion also branched to the probability of obtaining State or Federal grants for help with cutting trees, removing trees or rebuilding roads.

Richard led an explanation of the use of flow meters on our wellheads and countered an Owner suggestion we meter each individual lot. Kim Workman further explained the recent laws regarding well draw reporting required by the Drought Relief Act signed by Governor Brown a few years back.

In the end, the stated opinion of the Members in attendance was that they support the proposal of Steve Arata to replace and upgrade local Lot mains. We agreed to place this item on the October Board Meeting Agenda.

6. **Architectural Committee Report** – David Person was not in attendance.
7. **Fence Committee** – John Edwards talked at detail about the effects of bark beetle tree mitigation on our perimeter fence. John asked that Owner's either drop the fence prior to cutting a dead tree atop the line. Otherwise, at least rewire the strand over the tree once downed. John asked the group to consider petitioning the Board to purchase 3-4 additional repair kits. Each kit would consist of stretchers, cutters and replacement wire. John would conduct seminars on tool use and repair. The Board will consider.
8. **Key Committee** – Kitty Fitch on behalf of John Fitch reminded all that keys are purchased through them at a cost of ten (\$10) dollars apiece.
9. **Road Committee** – none assigned. Rick Edgeworth mentioned that USFS will permit us to grade and install a culvert on the "S-Turn" section of the entrance road. Bids are being solicited for consideration. The group agreed with the idea to hold off on any major work on the interior roads until after all tree-related heavy equipment work has slowed.

10. **Pond Committee** – Mark Romeo stated that pond remains full with active catfish and frogs. Mention was made and kudos given to Bob Grooms for notifying the Board about the overtopping of the dam during this past wet winter.
11. **Board Election Results** – Richard St.Marie informed the group that since the only two candidates for reelection were himself and Mike Compton, that both were considered reelected by default without challenge. No objections were noted.
12. **Water Committee** – Richard stated that this topic was pretty well covered in the President’s Statement and during the discussion surrounding Fire Compliance.
13. **Other Business** – Jesse Middleton mentioned the need to watch for the growth of Russian Thistle. This invasive plant, he explained, is beginning to appear around our area as a result of the clearing work. Jesse asks that we become vigilant in cutting down any we find.

Question was asked about how to deal with a negligent Owner whose dead trees pose a hazard to another Lot. Richard and Rick said the Board will seek to enforce compliance up to and including using Board funds to have a lot cleared with a recovery lien placed on that property.

Kitty Fitch then educated all about the Real Estate concept of “fire sales” properties. In such, these are lands that the Owner deems too costly to repair, so will release at less than normal prices. According to Kitty, upwards of 5 such sales are occurring at this time. A number of attendees expressed interest in this revelation.

Robert Giholdi asked about installing a central alarm bell or siren that a person could use to notify the community of a medical emergency. Also mentioned was establishing a central depot of basic medical supplies.

Rick Edgeworth notified all that a second informational kiosk has now been installed at the Back Gate entrance. It was suggested that a third such board be place at the Boat House as well. Rick agreed to take this project on as well.

Steve Arata and Kim Workman led an informative discussion about the need to not dispose of lot clearance debris outside of the fence line in the National Forest. Steve explained the fire risk such piles of mixed debris create. It was suggested that each lot commit to small controlled burns over time to remove this hazard.

Richard St.Marie pleaded with the crowd to always ensure your campfire or burn pit is completely OUT before you leave the area!

Interested Owners were also given a 16 x 20 inch photocopy of the original 1970 Lot Dimensions and Easements Map of the High Sierra Meadows Development. A total of 48 of 50 printed copies were distributed. Kim Workman suggested that each lot Owner use these maps to identify their boundaries and post their lot number for future inspections and also flag their water main locations.

14. **Drawing of the Prizes** – Richard St.Marie and Miss Kitty Fitch conducted the prize lottery drawing from the entries collected during the check in process.
15. **Adjournment** – HSMPOA President Richard St.Marie declared the 2017 Annual Meeting closed at 1:52 pm local time.