

Briarpark Village
Townhall Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2022

Sign in for the meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Jan Paul

Lynn Ryan

Shawna Neill

Angela Pritschow

Management:

Linda Neel

Quorum was established by presence of owners, proxy, and vested proxy.

Jan Paul called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Jan- Thank you all for coming. We appreciate your time. This meeting was called in order to make an important decision. It concerns the water submetering only. Nothing else will be discussed at this time. There will be a presentation explaining the submetering project, then the owners will be allowed to ask questions before voting. All questions will be answered.

Linda- As Jan said, this meeting concerns only the water submeters. If your votes are to have them installed, then that process will begin in the fall. The separate billing will be implemented in January.

At the moment the HOA has \$75,000 in the reserve account. Texas says that a minimum of 3 times the monthly dues is what should be in the account. That would mean a total of \$106,500. As you can see the reserve is dwindling and is far below that minimum.

The dwindling is due to the rapid increase of costs due to inflation. In 2017 the cost of insurance for Briarpark was \$52,088. In 2022 it is over \$80,000. Water has increased by 37% over the last five years, but dues have only increased by 22.5% in that same time period.

Approximately 30% of your HOA dues goes to the water bill. Everyone is paying for any water waste whether they are responsible for it or not. Units that have only one occupant are paying the same percentage as those with four or more. With submeters you would only be paying for what your unit uses.

The cost to each homeowner for a submeter is \$525. It would be due on September 1, 2022. Or you have an option to pay it in four installments with a \$5.00 charge for each installment.

If you choose to have the submeters the current dues would go down by 17% beginning in January instead of the usual increase. The reserves could be rebuilt by about \$6,000 a month. Without the meters you would need a 20% increase in dues to catch up with inflation.

Since Lynn was running the microphones and slide show she asked Linda to also read her presentation.

Linda- In 2021 Briarpark spent \$180,000 on water. The cost in 2022 is between \$13,500 and \$17,500 a month.

With submeters each unit will be responsible to pay for only their usage. The pool and sprinklers are to be separated from the units' bills and will continued to be paid out of the dues. The money saved will be redistributed for capital improvements that the property needs but isn't able to afford at the moment. That savings can amount to \$72,000-\$84,000 each year.

Each unit is currently paying between \$65 and \$87 a month out of their dues for water even if there is only one person occupying the unit. Residents will be less wasteful and more careful if they have to pay their own water bill.

The board has tried to keep the dues as low as possible over the years. Briarpark's dues are very low in comparison to other properties.

At the low end, some buildings are currently paying \$46.59 per unit per month for water. However, there are buildings where there is so much waste that the residents are paying up to \$208 per unit per month.

An individual water meter would be a one-time cost of \$525 or if done in 4 installments it would be $\$131.25 + \$5.00 = \$136.25$ a month.

Opened for Owner's Questions:

K-3- I have tenants, but I still believe this is the right thing to do. My concern is how a tenant will pay for it. Will the tenant be the one to receive the monthly bill? I don't want to have to be involved. I want the bill to go to the tenant rather than me.

Linda- This is part of the reason we're discussing this so early. We want the owners to be able to write the water bill charge into their leases.

K-3- I understand that, but I don't want to have to deal with passing the bill or costs on to the tenant. It's my preference that the bill go directly to the tenant. Can the HOA do that?

Linda- I imagine it can be done, but we will definitely look into it and let everyone know.

D-8- Is there a minimum charge? In Richardson it is \$98 a month.

Linda- No, because the HOA will continue to be billed by the city the same as it is now. There will be only a small fee of under \$2.00 a month for the separate billing for each unit.

Jan- If the water bill is sent along with the dues statement, then what happens to those who use autopay? How will they see the bill?

Linda- Even those who pay using autopay from their bank receive statements. I understand that not everyone looks at them, so we will have to check out some options. Even though the water bill will come with the dues statement, it will be a separate paper.

K-3- Will the company in charge of the billing allow autopay? Can they send the bill by e-mail?

Linda- That's a good question. It's one we will have to look into. I don't have the answer at the moment.

H-4- What about penalties for nonpayment? Will getting behind on the dues be a cause for water shut-off? What company will you be using?

Linda- The company we're currently considering is Think Utilities. Your water won't be cut off unless you don't pay the water bill.

B-1- Instead of a 4-month split to pay for the meter can't it be 6 or 7 months for those on a budget? I want you to consider it.

Linda- The board can take it under consideration. However, the 4-month time period was chosen so that everything would be paid for by the end of the year and the billing could begin in January.

N-3- Can you please clarify what we'll be paying for. Is it just the water or the sewer and drainage as well?

Linda- Water and sewer are always combined as one price. Drainage is part of the sprinkler system.

L-3- Who pays for the water usage from the outside faucets and those at the ends of the buildings? Other people use the one by my house, including the lawn company.

Linda- The faucets inside your patio belong to you. I have never been able to tell who owns the ones at the end of the buildings. We will have to find out. And if the mowers are using one that belongs to you I can have a talk with them. We can also put a lock on it.

K-1- Will the city recognize this water bill so we can use the dump?

Linda- I don't see why not.

K-1- If the meters aren't paid for by the end of the year will the board have to take out a loan?

Linda- There is no current plan for that.

K-1- Do the installers have to get in the house?

Linda- Only on the end units where a cut off has to be installed in the downstairs laundry room.

M-2- Is there a minimum charge?

Linda- No, only a small fee of under \$2.00 for processing the separate bills.

P-6- Have you contracted with a plumber?

Linda- Not yet. We needed to discuss this with you all first.

P-11- How many need to vote yes? Can half of the units get them even if the others don't?

Linda- There has to be a majority of owners that vote yes, and it's an all or nothing thing. Either all units get separated or no one does.

G-7- Since you need access to the up and down units you'll have to cut into the sheetrock. Who pays for the repair?

Linda- The HOA pays for that part. The cut off will be in the bottom unit's laundry room. The sheetrock will be cut so that a plastic cover will fit over it to provide access to the cut off.

P-11- What happens if a unit starts to flood, and no one is home where the cut off is located?

Linda- The water can still be cut off for both units at the main cut off outside.

Lynn- So do they only have to enter the downstairs unit at the end of the buildings?

Linda- I think so.

D-8- I've heard a lot of different percentage numbers like 20%, 17%, 12 and a ½ %, and 2 and ½ %. I'm confused. What are the real numbers?

Linda- We plan to reduce the dues by 17% but currently the water is 30% of the dues. We aren't going to have a dues increase for 2023 if this passes.

Angela- All the numbers are confusing. You only have to remember that the dues will go down by 17% and you'll be paying for your own water bill.

G-7- How do they get the water bill charges? Will they come to the property to check?

Linda- It's done by satellite.

A-9- I have an upstairs end unit. If the neighbor downstairs doesn't pay their bill and the water gets cut off will it affect my unit?

Linda- That's an excellent question and we'll have to find out for you. There are several things we've got to get clear on.

P-11- If the meter breaks who's responsible for the repair?

Lynn- I can check with Hocutt, but I believe it's the HOA's responsibility.

Linda- If that's the case then it needs to be on the maintenance chart in the rules and regulations.

P-11- Do the meters get calibrated or checked every year?

Linda- Not that I know of, but that can be checked out.

We're going to pass out the ballots for voting now. We have a few proxies that were sent or brought to us as well. Several years ago, we had to implement a vested proxy system in order to have a quorum at the yearly meetings. It is still in effect. It declares that if an owner doesn't

show up for a meeting or send in a proxy with their vote then the board is allowed to vote for them. The board doesn't want to abuse that privilege. They want to always act in the owner's best interest. The votes tonight will guide the board members and give them a good idea of what the owners want to happen.

Ballots were passed out and the votes counted. There were 2 no votes and 24 yes votes. There were also 5 proxies sent to the board.

Linda- The board will have another meeting concerning the meters. However, the assessment of \$525 for the meters will most likely be sent out to be paid in September. Work should begin in October in order to be done before January.

Jan- The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

List of Unanswered Questions:

- 1. Can the bill be sent directly to the tenants?**
- 2. Will the company overseeing the bills allow autopay, and can the bills be sent by e-mail?**
- 3. Can the payment schedule be longer, possibly 6 or 7 months for those on a tight budget?**
- 4. Who owns and pays for the water usage of the faucets at the end of the buildings or in front of them?**
- 5. If one of the upstairs, downstairs end units gets their water cut off for nonpayment will it affect the other unit?**
- 6. Who is responsible for paying for the meter if it breaks or needs repair?**
- 7. Will the meters be checked and calibrated every year?**