



Board meeting minutes 15 January 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:05AM by President Pat Sledge.

In Attendance: Pat Sledge, President & Board members Lew Felton and Pat Champion. A large number of community members were present.

Minutes of the Oct 2022. The minutes were approved at this meeting, because there was no quorum at the Dec 11, 2022 meeting. Lew noted that all financial reports and Board meeting minutes were available at www.VecinosDeLaCholla.org

Financial Statements The financial statements were emailed to members, although not approved by the Board. The bottom line is December ended with \$211,827.92 in cash on hand.

Membership Interim membership manager, Lew Felton reported that more and more delinquent Vecinos are settling their past dues and getting back “on board”. Lew reported we have collected over \$20,000 in dues from years prior to 2022-23. Currently, we have 410 members in good standing, which is 60 more than last year. Pat noted that the key to financial success is membership. The Oomislim deal resulted in many Vecinos joining/rejoining. Pat noted that he has had many difficult conversations with delinquent members. Pat notes that he gets why there is animosity directed at the old asociación. He said many former members were discouraged by the lack of communication and treatment by former Board members and officers. Pat understands the resentment against the past regime, but wants to move forward, but also honor the members who paid their dues no matter what their personal feelings were. We can do something different going forward, but the members who have always paid need to be honored. Pat has negotiated with members who have not paid in over a decade and got them back on board. Are the negotiations “apples-to-apples”, no, but Pat feels it’s important to keep moving forward. The entire purpose of our asociación is to provide services to our community, period. To make us successful, we need members.

Community center/Clubhouse Pres. Pat reported that the clubhouse roof has been coated with materials previously purchased. The interior drywall has not been repaired, yet. The roof looks good, but we haven’t had a rain capable of giving it a good test. The bollards at both openings to the parking area have had loops installed so that we can install barriers to prevent ATV from damaging the surface. We have received the insurance settlement from the company to cover the damage to our welcome sign. Pat is waiting for a quote from Gaby on making the repairs. The stop sign at the police station will be replaced.

Parks Report: The park is in good shape and was recently cleaned up.

Security. Lew & Vecinos member, Jerry Caballero had a very productive meeting with the Peñasco comandante. The comandante said that Juan Pedro Ruiz (Cholla police) would start regular patrolling in Cholla very soon and it has happened. The Old Boys Social Club hosted a police appreciation breakfast on January 6 that was attended by roughly 80 police/support officers from Peñasco. It was a very successful event with OBSC officers and Peñasco officials serving breakfast to the “rank & file”. The DIF director (Martha Carillo, the Presidente’s mother) served breakfast as well. Pat noted that since the breakfast, we haven’t seen Juan Pedro. We found out that JP was on vacation and would return shortly. The comandante said if we need anything, please ask. He expressed a desire that we provide a “Cholla only” police vehicle. Although we have done this before, the vehicles have “disappeared”. The comandante said this would not happen again. We will investigate funding the purchase from cash reserves soon. A budget for gas and repairs needs to be established as well. Pat feels we need to give the new comandante a chance to follow through on his promise. The police department would take care of licensing a vehicle brought from the states.

Roads. Pat noted that Juan Mesa from SRB has been a pleasure to deal with. Any problem with the roads has been taken care of promptly. Pat noted that the narrow secondary roads could not be graded. Juan Mesa has been asked to use the tire drag on these roads occasionally to smooth them out. Juan Mesa told Pat that SRB is looking to buy a tractor to drag the roads with the tires.

Garbage. Through our asociación and Aron Brown’s office we have sold 236 Oomsilim stickers for 2023. We need to double that number to go forward with the program into future years. Mr. Brown reported that 400 stickers were sold in 2022, but it took until October get this number. The asociación was not involved in garbage collection last year. This year, Vecinos must be members in good standing to get the \$150 price. Non-members will pay \$306 for the Oomislilm sticker. Pat noted that there are many properties that have new owners. In many cases, we don’t know who the new owners are. Many of these new owners are not aware of the asociación existence. Pat noted that if we can get our membership up to 75%, (525) we can do a lot more for our community. Members are encouraged to recruit their neighbors who are not yet members. Every property owner in Cholla should have at least one membership. The improving numbers will provide financial opportunities to enhance our community.

Power, water & sewer Nothing new reported

Old Business. Pat updated the membership on the Dahlstrom agreement. There has been some interest in the house, but no firm contract has been offered. The agreement expires on April 30, 2023. Pat doesn’t feel we want the house, just the money. The price was reduced. Some members expressed a concern that the house is not listed on the local mls. It would be very difficult to cancel the listing contract with Keller-Williams. Mr. Brown noted that local realtors could include the Dahlstrom house in their listings. Helen will be sentenced on Friday, Jan 20 in Tucson. She is facing 3-12 years.

New Business Pat reported that our Wells Fargo bank account had an attempted fraud. It was a check-washing scheme that was discovered by the bank before we lost any money. The bank closed the account and transferred our money to a new account. Pat is still working with Wells Fargo to open an account for the new asociación. We received an EIN (American Tax Number) to open the bank account. The hold up in Mexico is getting an RFC and electronic signature. Pat has an appointment to get the requirements on Thursday (1/19/23) in Nogales.

Pat reported that the property tax increase is real. He doesn't think it's going away, but he is waiting until Jan 31 to pay and get the 25% discount. There are 3 situations involved in the tax increase. If you have been paying on a vacant lot, but now have a house, your taxes should go up 1000%. If you recently purchased a house, it was reevaluated at the time of a sale. The taxes should go up, but not 1000%. Federal Zone taxes have not substantially increased. Many Vecinos paying Federal Zone taxes, have very little construction on the private property. Their property taxes should not have gone up dramatically on the small piece of property owned to get the Federal Zone concession. If your taxes seem excessively high, there is an appeal process. The city has pointed out that property taxes have not increased in 15 years. An average tax bill for a lot and house should be around \$400. The appeal process, due to limited staff will take some time. The Vecinos with recently purchased home (last 5 years), should have the most success in the appeal process, since their taxes were adjusted at the time of the sale. It is important that you have specific details on why you think are too high. The tax office will not listen to complaining about taxes being too high without details. Many of the local real estate agent and bill paying services can represent you in the appeal process. It was suggested that we present a formal protest/protest over the tax increase as an asociación. It was suggested that we "Zoom" our meetings in the future. Pat doesn't have a problem with the Zoom meetings but doesn't have the skill to set it up. There was a question on paying dues on the 1st of January. The new asociación will use a calendar year. The bylaws will determine when dues are payable. A Vecinos asked how we get current with the asociación. Pat responded that all negotiations were one-on-one with him and the Vecino. The details of the negotiation are private. There was appreciation expressed about the positive feeling during the meeting. There were questions about remodeling the police station. The information painted on the building is outdated. If the comandante follow through providing officers, we will do the necessary repairs. A member asked about getting a key to the library. Lew responded that he can provide keys to members.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:20AM – next meeting was scheduled on Sunday, February, 19, 2023, at 9:00AM

March 19, 2023 9:00AM

April 22, 2023 9:00AM