

FALLS CREEK RANCH – BOARD MEETING MINUTES
for APRIL 25, 2024 - 7 PM via ZOOM.

Call to Order and Roll Call – Paulette Church, Mark Smith, James Trammell, Robin Lucie, Charlie Simons were all present

FCR Lot Owners present – Mary Ann and Barry Bryant, Bonnie Bassett, Barbara Belanger, Randal McKown, Scott Silveira, Phil Boroff, Gale Marinelli, Steve Dowler, Eb Redford

Approval/Changes to the Agenda – None

Board Member Survey for Conflicts of Interest with Agenda Items – None

Open Period Comments from Residents on Issues Not on the Agenda – Time limit 3 minutes per person - Question about the notification of the membership regarding the notes to finance the chip sealing of Main. Another question was regarding the schedule for moving the lot boundaries for the two lots that are being moved to keep utility access and our escape route on Common Property. Another question regarded notice for painting of the water storage tanks. There will be no sand blasting, just power washing. This is requested maintenance for our water system by the State of Colorado. More information will be provided by the Utilities Committee as the workday approaches, probably in August. People are using watercraft without permission and leaving them on the beach. Also, it seems non-residents are using our dumpsters. We hope our new Ranch Manager will help with security, which is part of his background. We will print new Security signs for the Ranch truck. Need to buy more No Trespassing signs and post them.

Approval of Previous Minutes – March 28, 2024, Board Meeting – Remove draft Minutes from website and post only the approved copies after corrections have been made. Approval of March minutes postponed and make corrections for final Board approval via email. Draft minutes go to Board members for corrections and only approved minutes posted to website.

Treasurer’s Report – Robin – Starting to work on budgets and will talk about in Budget section. Cash balance is \$305,322. Of this year’s HOA dues, \$40,000 still needs to be transferred from Operating to Capital. Looks like we will end up close to projections this year on expenses, but capital will exceed budget. We put \$102,000 into capital each year but could spend \$150,000 this year with new tractor, new well drilling, tank mixers, and major repairs. Ranch house maintenance expenses in preparation for the new ranch manager are less than \$2,000 with Charlie as best crew boss ever. Treasurer’s report accepted. Need tax returns, due May 15, 2024, and Frederick Zink is working on them.

Committee Reports:

Architectural – There are currently 9 open projects on the Ranch.

Beautification – New perennials, shrubs, and ornamentals will arrive May 17th.

Common Property –

Dam – Lake season is off to a good start at FCR. On 4-20-24 our lake was about 4 inches below capacity and rising steadily. Falls Creek at Main is running strong, we are irrigating

pastures and meadows, and releasing a large volume of water to downstream water rights holders. It really doesn't get much better than that.

We have started spring cleaning and Dam maintenance work including work on irrigation ditches, gopher remediation and operation of our water release systems. This work will continue throughout summer. Kern Rucker's crew plays an important role in that work, please extend an enthusiastic "Thank You", when you see these guys.

Firewise Ambassador – The new tractor purchased with a matching grant from Colorado State Forest Service is already in use around the Ranch. Need to take out junipers and white firs so we are working on removing these species. There are some junipers that need to be removed. We have internet at the equipment shed and can use this for new tractor operator training. Phil met with Colorado State Forest Service to map out the 60 acres to treat to the northeast of the Ranch boundary with matching grant funds. They will monitor our work by using drones to map the ground level and at tree height and then follow-up with monitors for several year. They want us to take out junipers and white fir due to their high risk of wildfire. Any logs and wood that is down and not marked with paint, residents can harvest it.

Front Entrance – Old logs became water-logged and new standing dead Douglas Fir trees are being harvested to replace them.

Horses –

Lake – Mark has resigned as lake co-chair after many years of service. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for our neighborhood, Mark! Jenny Whedon and I are happy to welcome new members to the committee: Scott Southworth, Robin Lucie, and Barbara Belanger. Spring cleanup is scheduled for May 11 at 9a with lunch to follow for the volunteers. We sent out an email reminding neighbors to have stickers on their watercraft, to email Bonnie Trammell (bonnie_bassett@bellsouth.net) with plans to have a gathering of eight or more at the lake, and reminding neighbors to borrow only the watercraft marked as "Shared". Barbara added that they are trying to add more shade for the Sunny Beach by making changes by excavation under the trees, more sand, and improvement to dry hydrant area.

Post-Wildfire Recovery Report – Clyde and Paulette attended the After the Flames Conference and Workshop with the support of a travel grant from Coalitions and Collaborations (Co-Co, a Colorado-based nonprofit). They shared our experiences after the 416 Fire and brought back many resources to add to our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) currently in revision.

Roads –

Utilities – The Utilities Committee met recently to discuss upcoming projects and transition to our new Water Operator. Our projected expenses for this year and proposed operating and capital budget request was submitted to the Board this week. We are continuing to test the viability of a new water metering and billing system and have included that as part of our budget request. Depending on the timing for purchase and implementation of this system, we may have to prepare for a modification to our water billing process. We will discuss possible options with the Board. We have extended a contract offer to our ORC (Water Operator) candidate and are waiting to get the signed contract back for Board signature. We currently have no one to download the meters readings for the month.

May billing may be held until Peter is back. He will be gone for a month or more and we have no one to read the meters in the meantime.

Vittles –

Welcome Committee –

Ranch Manager Liaison Report –

Old Business

- Short Term Rentals – We have had 72 votes with 68 in favor of Covenant 11 and 70 in favor of Covenant 9. So we have approved both of the Covenant revisions.
- Consideration of updated proposal to allow bees and chickens at the Community Orchard included below this agenda. Discussed setting a Town Hall with chairs giving a proposal that addresses concerns. Need statements regarding signs to warn people about the bees and note that no HOA resources would be required for the project. Need a vote of residents to change a Covenant regarding this topic. There is concern about the number of chickens, perhaps fewer than 30. This would be a change in character for the Ranch. Putting a collar on the rooster is a concern: Is that humane?
- Update on entrance structure – Bill can champion this structure. We have identified four trees and dropped one so far.

New Business

- Preliminary Budget Discussion – Robin – Preliminary budget goal is to not change our dues structure. We are beginning on the new budget and we have asked budget departments to budget 10% less. We should be good on insurance which has not gone up, legal retainer is not going up, and there are not a lot of new things to cause increases. Road budget will be revised around the chip seal impact in May by Mark and Ray. We will do some mag and gravel on smaller roads. Contractor will come in June to repair the potholes in Falls Creek because we need to prevent future damage each winter. Mark let Ted in High Meadows know repairs are scheduled on Falls Creek Main in June so he could work with their schedule and if they need repairs, too.

Announcements

- May 4, Annual Wildfire Preparedness Day meeting in Fire House, 8:30 to potluck, BBQ lunch.
 - Colorado State Forest Service – Hazardous Ignition Zone
 - Durango Fire Protection District – State of our Forests
 - Wildfire Adapted Partnership – Chipper rebates, Cost Share, CO Tax 50% credit
 - Hands on practice at 4 stations in the Sort Yard (Please wear gloves) – FCR volunteers
 - Fire extinguisher practice with FCR extinguishers -
 - Chipper safety and loading practice
 - Air curtain safety and loading practice – How to load paper pine needle bags
 - How to start a pump on a large water tank and at dry hydrant
 - How to trim up ladder fuels and tree branches
- Paper lawn bags are in the entryway of Church's home, 400 Oakcrest Dr. Please start with 10 to 15 as they are difficult to find at affordable rates this year. Received small grant to fund about 400 bags plus fire extinguisher refills for Rapid Response Fire Team.

- Thank You party is being planned for Ray and Nancy with more TBA.

Calendar of Required Board Actions:

- Income tax filing presentation to Board Treasurer
- Budget preparation by committee chairs and Board Treasurer
- Begin preparation for Annual Meeting in July Secretary

Adjournment –

- **Next meeting scheduled via Zoom for May 23, 2024, at 7 pm.**

Respectfully submitted:

Paulette Church, President

Proposal for bees and chickens at the Community Orchard from Bonnie Bassett and James Grizzard:

Jim and I respectfully present our proposal to raise organic chickens and honeybees on Falls Creek Ranch. We hope to provide a gratifying and educational experience for a number of the residents of Falls Creek Ranch. Keeping chickens and honeybees provides enjoyment, a connection with nature, and an opportunity to live more sustainably. Chickens produce some of the finest organic fertilizer, organically control harmful orchard insects, and provide fresh free-range eggs. Of course, honeybees are highly efficient pollinators that elevate the productivity of the orchard and promote wildflowers. No doubt, the local, organic honey will sweeten our quality of life. As we improve the health of our ranch ecosystem, we will be doing our part to address the decline of pollinators globally. Raising chickens and bees affords Falls Creek Ranch the opportunity to offer educational life lessons for our children. Caring for the animals teaches children where their food comes from, helps them to connect with nature, and instills lifelong lessons of diligence, dedication and responsibility.

Our primary objectives are to ensure the safety of our neighbors and the animals under our care. We will house our chickens and bees in the orchard. Secure fencing around the orchard (and an enclosed chicken coop within the orchard) will protect our chickens from coyotes and other predators. We plan to begin keeping chickens only from the spring through the fall, at which time we will find other homes for our chickens. We will establish a committee that will care for our chickens daily. Each family on the committee may have up to two hens or a maximum of 30 hens (if our committee consists of less than 15 families). To further protect the hens, we may also keep a quiet breed of rooster and use a rooster collar to minimize crowing if needed.

Should we become confident that our chickens will thrive under our care through the winter, we will make adaptations at that time. We will create chicken coops that keep the chickens comfortable throughout winter months. In addition, we will buy chickens that are a cold hardy breed. Our proposal is provisional in that if at any time the project becomes reasonably objectional to our neighbors, we will simply and safely remove the chickens and bees, as well as the housing, from the ranch and terminate the project.

Thank you kindly for reviewing our proposal.

NOTE: This will be a 2-part vote with a yes vote required for approval by at least 67 of our lot owners.