



Lakefield Farms

South Sandwich MA 02563

Newsletter, August 2024

Lake of Dreams

I poured my dreams into a lake
And watched them slowly dissipate
Those tender drops dissolved in waves
Rolling through the thoughts I've saved

Drenched in sunlight, dancing there
Those dreams evolved into a mist
Lifting up, it kissed the sky
Spinning rainbows in my eyes

Butterflies in brilliant light
What a sight as dreams take flight
Whatever comes, whatever goes
The ripples in the lake still flow

By: Richard Milton Grahn



The Big Story:

The Clubhouse was built around 1972 shortly after Lakefield Farms became a development. It did have a deck, but that only lasted about 15 years. So, 35 years ago, the original deck was replaced by the one we have now. We are lucky that it has lasted 35 years and it is still giving us good service. But, it's time is coming and it will become unsafe in the next few years. Now is the time to replace it.

We have spoken with several contractors and we now have a better idea of this project. The big thing is related to our proximity to Lawrence Pond. Any structure work this close to the pond comes into immediate attention of the Town; the Board of Health, Wetlands engineering, Conservation department and more. All want to make sure that our project meets all the requirements and doesn't adversely affect the sanctity on the pond and the fauna close by. All these inspections, and considerations are done by town professional engineers and their time is costly, but necessary. Until they are done with their analyses, we won't be able to get a definitive quote for the project. We most likely will spend \$5,000 or more on engineering work before starting on the demolition and re-construction. But the best estimate we have is \$35,000 - \$40,000.

I thought that I would use the Newsletter to answer some of the questions that we have had regarding this project:

Can the Trustees levy a special assessment?

This is an excerpt from the Lakefield Farms Trust Deeds book 1620, page 008, subsection V, that clearly states that a special assessment for item of operation of the Trust property may be levied by the Trustees.

V. To the extent that there are insufficient funds in the hands of the Trustees for the payment of real estate taxes, Municipal assessments and water rates, insurance and other operating costs in connection with the ownership, operation and controlling of the Trust property, the Trustees shall be empowered to assess beneficiaries in equal amounts for the purpose of making such payments. By becoming beneficiaries of this Trust, the owners of land described as set forth in Section II above agree to pay such assessments upon demand.

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Why not just Strengthen or replace the support columns and footings?

The law states that if we repair or replace any part of an old structure, the whole structure must be brought up to today's code. The footings, the supports, the joists and the manner in which it connects to the building are not at today's code.

Why do we need the special assessment of \$200?

For 15 years, the annual assessment remained at \$175. If it had been raised by the cost of living index each year, today's annual fee would be about \$450. Currently, it is at \$250. This means that as the cost of operating the clubhouse has increased by over double in the last 15 years, the trustees were unable to maintain an emergency fund sufficient to handle a new deck.

Why not just remove the deck and not have one at all?

The demolishing of the deck and its removal would cost about \$10,000. The rebuild of the rear wall of the clubhouse by removing the sliding doors and replacing them with windows and bringing the clubhouse up to code would likely cost more than rebuilding the deck.

Why does the special assessment fee carry interest?

The special assessment is just that, an assessment. As such it is subject to interest finance charges as stated in the trust's bylaws. (Please see the bylaws on our web site)

What happens if I don't pay the special assessment?

Late and no payment of any assessment will be treated in the same manner in accordance with the bylaws of the trust. The amount will stay on your account and gather finance charges in the form of interest just as for any bank loan. Also, it will affect your ability to use the facilities or rent the clubhouse. And if you wish to sell your home, you will be unable to get a 6D Certificate of No Assessment. This is a notarized certificate that states that you do not owe any money on you LFT Assessment account. Without this certificate you will not be able to close on the sale of your house

Why don't we have enough money set aside from our annual fee?

Our annual fee remained at \$175 for 15 years. Starting in 2007 until 2022. In 2007, \$175 could buy a lot more than it could in 2022. The combined cost of living during that period was over 200%. This mean that if the fee had increased each year by only the cost of living, in 2022 you would have been paying nearly \$400 per year. And this year it fee would have been closer to \$450. Well, we didn't charge you that much and it depleted the fund set aside for big projects. In cases like this, other organizations do the same, they don't carry huge amounts of 'dead' funds, rather they rely on special assessments.

Operation "Late-Payers" Program Marches On, Slowly:

Since the last annual assessment invoices went out, and, at the time of writing this article, we have 48 homeowners that remain unpaid for this year. This means that those who have paid the 2024 fee are paying more than their fair share. The Trustees will be working on this diligently.

We also have 139 homeowners who are yet to pay the \$200 special assessment fee, without which we cannot go forward with the deck project. So what are the ramifications of this?

This will likely have a negative impact on the sale/value of homes in Lakefield Farms. Therefore, we thank all those who have paid the onetime assessment that will be used to further secure your investment in Lakefield Farms Trust

Minimally potential buyers may draw the wrong the impression. That is that we, the current owners of property in Lakefield Farms are not willing to maintain and take care of our property.

They're likely to wonder what's going on. How serious is this situation, etc. thereby introducing the element of doubt around the home they're looking to purchase property.

This would not be good, for anyone.

So, how are we doing on the perpetual non-payers? The 5 folks who are on a payment plan are making progress. But there are still some who show no interest in paying their dues according to the contract they signed during the purchase of their Lakefield Farms home. We are taking steps to address this.

Water Craft:

Thank you to all those who own and store their watercraft at the clubhouse that are registered and stickered. It really does help. If you are storing your boat at the clubhouse and you have not registered it this year, please contact me at lakefieldfarms@comcast.net.

Seasonal Renters:

In an attempt to curb out of town renters from over running the beach area, we instigated a “Seasonal renters” program starting this season. The homeowner who rents to seasonal renters has to register with LFT. Then the vacationer will get a weekly beach pass just for the number of guests allowed at the LF home. The renter will pay \$25 per week for the beach pass. The program seems to be working as planned.

Since we are opening our facilities to nonresidents as seasonal renters, we feel that we could be more vulnerable to undesirable behavior. Therefore, in the interests of security, we have installed security cameras at the rear of the clubhouse building. They will be useful should any bad behavior takes place.

Every Silver Lining has a Dark Cloud:

The rental of the clubhouse is basically intended for Lakefield farm homeowners and long term residents to hold private and family events. Certainly, you can hold an event that celebrates a nonresident family member and even for a friend. But it gets a bit fuzzy if that friend is just an acquaintance. This occurred a month or so ago; A resident rented the clubhouse for an acquaintance and then left town. The acquaintance broke pretty well all the rules and accepted protocols including playing loud music outside until 6:00am, leaving spirit alcohol outside where children had access and using glass bottles on the beach.

The net result is we got a serious complaint from a neighbor. In our estimation, this wouldn't have happened if the resident had been present at the event. This has forced the Trustees to review the Rental Agreement and amend the rules that will, unfortunately, affect everyone. We are putting the finishing touches to the new document and it should be distributed to you in the coming weeks.

Happy Holidays!:

Well, yes. Happy Holidays. But, no; we are not wishing you Happy Holidays, not yet anyway! But we are thinking about making the 2024 Holiday season a happy time. Yes, we hope to plan a Holiday party. It will be a time to gather during the Winter months and meet some of your neighbors and the Trustees and staff of Lakefield Farms Trust. When we know more we will let you know.

We Are Dog Lovers Too:

But, unfortunately, we do have neighbors who are allergic to dogs, so we would like to remind everyone that dogs must not be brought onto Lakefield Farms property. We have put up more signs to that effect. So please, if you are a responsible dog owner, please respect this requirement and the comfort and health of others.

Standard and Common Sense Practice:

Just a few reminders that make things better for everyone.

Please be respectful of the gate attendants and life guards. They are there to protect you, your family members and your investment in Lakefield Farms.

If you are the last car out, please lock the gates.

Please do not park in the driveway. We are required to keep the driveway clear for emergency vehicles.

Keep the doors closed when the heating or A/C is on.

Take your trash, recycling and unused items home for disposal.

Thank You.

Clubhouse Rental Agreement Updates:

Due to an unfortunate incident last month, we are obliged to update our Clubhouse Rental Agreement. Please watch out for a separate email with more details. But suffice to say here; please be cautious if renting the Clubhouse for an acquaintance's event.

*We hope you all had a great
Summer season. Stay safe
and stay well*

From The Trustees and Staff of Lakefield Farms Trust