The 2016 Annual HOA meeting took place Monday December 5th at the Newcastle Library. The meeting was called to order by President Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann at 6:15 PM.

Those in attendance were:

Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann, Betty Chalfant, Courtney Voorhees, Jim Quigg, Vikas Luthra, Dee and Bob Mulford, Carsten Stehr, Priscilla Chan, Ashley and Paul Ignacio, Terence Lee, John Gordon, Guy Granger, Lisa Edwards, and town council woman Carol Simpson

Other residents who were unable to attend but who sent in their proxy votes brought the total number of voting homeowners to 20, which was 9 homeowners short of the 29 voters necessary for a quorum needed for passage of any proposals. Over the next ensuing weeks, homeowners will be contacted to submit their votes.

President’s Report: Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann introduced the current 2016 board of directors, and presented a general overview of the Vineyard community with a projected aerial map. He also discussed the accomplishments of the HOA during 2016 which include:

1) The painting of the Vineyard entrance sign

2) Working with the city of Newcastle on improvements such as water run off issues and recently the grant program to enhance neighborhoods. The HOA applied for and received a grant from the city of Newcastle to install signs at each point of entry into the Vineyards stating that this is a Block Watch Community and that many homes have video surveillance. Other ideas for future grant applications include installing a bench and landscape lighting along the hedge row or along the staircase area. Also the possibility of bus stop shelters for the school children would be another idea. Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann mentioned that the board is always happy to receive suggestions for other grant requests.

3) Establishing a website so we can communicate easier with homeowners www.thevhoa.org

4) The three socials/ neighborhood parties, Cinco D’Mayo, The Octoberfest, and the National Night out. These were a lot of fun and brought our neighborhood together.

5) The enormous amount of work that needed to be done in the greenspace in order to address the overcrowding of our signature Thundercloud Plum trees by the Leylands and other shrubs as well as the general maintenance to remove alders that posed a risk to the south-end homeowner. This prompted a major discussion among those in attendance regarding the costs vs necessity of the landscape work. Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann explained that some of this landscaping had been deferred maintenance from past years and would not be expected every year.

6) And lastly, Philipp mentioned that our dues have been kept as low as they are due to the hard work of the members of the board who have stepped up to do extra work.

Philipp would like to see the Vineyard HOA goals for next year to include: Working more closely with the Olympus HOA regarding the maintenance of the staircase area, assisting their efforts with the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Garage Sale, and looking into the possibility of added security measures for our neighborhood.
Secretary’s Report:

The minutes of the Annual meeting from 2015 were read by Dee Mulford board secretary.

Treasurer’s Report:

Treasurer Vikas Luthra presented via power point a pie chart comparison review of the 2016 Budget Performance and Balance Sheets as of November 30th 2016 including the proposed budget for 2017. Discussion followed regarding costs of landscaping the greenbelt area and also having the names of the board members as cosigners to the HOA checking account at Bank of America.

Budget approved pending the outcome of the vote for the 2017 board members later in the month. The proposed 2017 budget is attached.

Architectural Committee Report:  Courtney Voorhees gave an explanation of what this committee does: The committee monitors the condition and the appearance of the homes in general in order to maintain compliance with the CC and R’s. It makes decisions along with the HOA board regarding types of roofs allowed, colors of paint, placement of sheds, as well as decisions on landscaping issues. Protocol Property Management then sends letters to any homeowner out of compliance. Philipp Schmidt Pathmann also pointed out other issues that come under the heading of the Architectural Committee. These issues include the maintenance of the Vineyards’ signature trees, the Thundercloud Plum trees, which need to be cared for by the homeowners if they have them on their property; also, the issues of homeowners installing drainage pipes which then drain water onto sidewalks come under the Architectural Committee as well. A problem such as this faulty drainage pipe installation also comes under the jurisdiction of the city of Newcastle.

Welcome Committee Report:  Jim Quigg, the driving force behind our neighborhood socials, delivered “welcome to the neighborhood bouquets” along with their copies of the “CC&R’s” to five new homeowners this year. He finds this job no work at all and enjoys making new homeowners feel welcomed.

New Business:

Web Site:  Vikas Luthra presented the design and goals of the HOA’s website. On our web site the homeowners can now find and review the bylaws of our HOA, the Covenants, Restrictions, and Reservations, and also obtain the Home Improvement application. You can contact the HOA directly from the website if you have a comment or a concern. There will also be notices of events in our area as well. A goal from earlier in 2016 has been realized with the fact that now homeowners can pay their HOA dues directly through the HOA site via pay pal. A future goal for the web site comes under the heading of artificial intelligence by enabling our website to work with the city of Newcastle in contacting homeowners with emergency bulletins as well as for emergency response.

Block Watch:  Lisa Edwards, our Vineyard Block Watch Coordinator reported that there are 10 sections of Block Watch in our community; each one now has its own captain who communicates with their nearby neighbors. If a homeowner does not know who their block watch captain is, they can contact Lisa via our website and she will put the assigned captain in touch with them. Jim Quigg also offered to hand out Block Watch information fliers to the new neighbors when he is greeting them. Lisa will get these to Jim in the near future.

Discussion followed on the advisability of having security cameras at the entrances to the Vineyard…..or possibly at the Olympus entrance. In the recent past, it was felt by many
homeowners that it would be an invasion of their own privacy, but with the recent uptick in crime in the area, possibly this sentiment has disappeared. There are other communities in our area that have security cameras. Lisa reminded people to lock their cars at all times everywhere. Cars have been broken into at public parking lots, and then the thieves check the address on the registration, steal the garage door opener, and then go right to the house.

There has been a bear in our area who has figured out how to knock over the trash cans to look for food. The reason is that their natural environment is disappearing. By leaving our trash cans outdoors we are becoming enablers. So, this is another reason for storing our trash cans inside our garages or a fenced off area. By the way, our trash cans are not supposed to be seen anyway according to our CC&R’s. A bob cat has also been sited frequently in the Vineyard. Although they present no danger to humans, they will hunt small animals....including our pets!

Guest Speaker: Don Marsh form CENSE (Coalition of Eastside Neighborhoods for Sensible Energy) spoke with a power point presentation regarding the threat to the infrastructure of the eastside neighborhoods should Puget Sound Energy succeed in placing miles of 130 foot tall power poles on the East Side including right through the middle of Newcastle. He discussed the flaws in the 230,000 watt line recommended in this PSE proposal, as well as the safety issues with running it along the underground jet fuel pipeline that reaches to SeaTac Airport. Close to 29 neighborhood schools and parks are on top of the pipe line. Also Mr. Marsh pointed out the significant decrease in the value of our homes plus the destruction of the beauty of our neighborhood as well as the destruction of the beautiful views we have out of our windows should this project go through. Close to 8,000 trees will be destroyed to make way for these towers. CENSE has hired transmission experts to check the facts, to review outages, and reliability and to review the huge safety issues around the pipeline. Alternatives were discussed as well as the true cost of the project.....billions of dollars which will be absorbed by the residents of all the neighborhoods and will naturally be profits to PSE who will see a 9.8% return on their investment. Even still with this 400% “upgrade” PSE states that the Energize Eastside program will not reduce the frequency of power outages. The time line for legal work includes an administrative hearing in February 2017, the city council vote in March 2017, and a litigation referendum in 2018 with the possibility of taking it to court. Mr. Marsh reviewed CENSE’s finances and asked for donations to support their work that will benefit the residents of the Vineyards as well as the entire town of Newcastle.

The election results of this evening: A quorum of voting homeowners is necessary in order to pass any proposals such as the CENSE donation; or to finalize the filling of the board positions. In the case of the Vineyard HOA which 87 registered homeowners, the quorum is 29 returned ballots needed. Twenty ballots have been received so far. Over the next ensuing weeks, homeowners will be contacted to submit their votes. As soon as a quorum has been reached, the results will be posted onto our web site as well as in our newsletter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dolores (Dee) Mulford board secretary 2016