

# THE LARK

May-June 2024 LARK

Meadowhill.net



## Meet Board Member Walter Brownsword

Just completing the first of his three-year term as an Executive Board member, Walter Brownsword is completely in the groove of the Executive Board. He is proud to be part of a Board bringing condo management to new levels, focusing on planning for infrastructure investments and the importance of risk management. Walter also chairs the MH Maintenance Committee, currently focused on walkways, stone walls, decks and high-risk components which impact safety and insurance costs.

Walter and Kelly moved to Meadow Hill almost five years ago. Walter points out though, that he has been a Glastonbury resident for over fifty years. He was born in NYC and raised in West Hartford. After college, he was drafted and served with the Army in Vietnam. Returning to the US, Walter began a long career in oil/gas product sales, living in Boston, Minneapolis and Glastonbury. Now "retired", Walter works part time doing flower deliveries for Keser's Flowers on New London Tpk.



So, here is a love story you probably haven't heard before. Kelly and Walter met at a church singles night and their first date was to a worship service at The Worship Center in Hebron, Walter's church. They have been together for 32 years, adapting as necessary to Kelly's challenges with MS. Between them, they have three children and four grandchildren. Walter enjoys golf, skiing, weight training, neighborhood walking and UCONN Men's basketball.

Walter is a prime example of a resident who didn't think his background and skills would be a significant value to our Executive Board. But he has been a resident who speaks up when something important is on his mind. He now sees that the diversity of backgrounds on the Board is key to weaving many perspectives into well-rounded Board decisions. Thank you for your service to your country and to Meadow Hill, Walter. We are grateful for your investment of time and energy to making MH a great place to live.

## Reminder to all Residents – New Start Time

The monthly Executive Board meetings have moved to 10:00 am instead of 1:30pm on the third Wednesday of each month, to see if an earlier start time results in increased community attendance. The Board will test this new time through the summer months.

## Key Dates

May	June
1 – Board Planning Meeting	4 – Book Club
5 - Cinco de Mayo	13 – Annual Meeting
6 – Book Club	14 – Flag Day
12 - Mother's Day	16 – Father's Day
15 – Board Meeting	20 – Summer Solstice
18 – Armed Forces & Green Day@MH	

## President's Message

Spring has arrived, and summer is just around the corner! The weather has been warm and sunny a comfortable 75 degrees outside. Neighbors are walking around and catching up with each other after spending the winter indoors. Our staff is working hard to tend the grounds with spring clean-up, edging the beds, applying fertilizer, and placing mulch. The month of May will involve more sprucing up, painting the pool, and getting it ready for opening in the first week of June.

The Meadow Hill Board and Committees actively work to maintain and improve the grounds, buildings, and infrastructure. Our complex is now 50 years old. Our current team is continuing the practice of previous Boards by proactively assessing the condition of our walls, roofs, walkways, decks, trees, and grounds to identify and prioritize areas for improvement using allocated funds wisely.

The Board considers planning projects, estimating potential costs, and their timing a top priority. To achieve this, the Board will hire a specialist to develop a Reserve Study. This study will identify the needs, costs, and potential timeframes for the community to use as a tool for planning and addressing required maintenance and improvements. We aim to complete the study by early Fall and present it to the community. We will also incorporate the report's findings into our 2025 Budget process.

We have established a Risk Management Committee to develop a proactive approach to positioning Meadow Hill as an attractive community to the insurance industry. Deb Wellington and Tom Bailey have been developing a program to educate the community on insurance and risk management, document procedures, and review our current policy coverages by demonstrating that we are a proactive community that reduces risks and maintains our buildings and grounds. You will receive more information early this month before the presentation by the Risk Management Committee and Bouvier Insurance at our May Board meeting.

The community will soon be presented with a proposal for the sale of the Hollister House. This proposal suggests converting the Hollister House from an amenity to a residential unit, which would require 80% approval from the Meadow Hill unit owners. Hollister House is currently a very underutilized amenity requiring a great deal of investment. By converting Hollister House to a unit, we will raise funds for long-term reserves and reduce the high cost of maintaining this building.

Our attorneys are currently working on the necessary documents, which we will share with the community as soon as possible. The Board and the Long-Term Committee are excited about this proposal and believe that approving it will be an important step toward shaping Meadow Hill's future.

This is just a small sample of the activities happening at Meadow Hill. Please make sure to read the other articles in this edition of the Lark, as well as the emails and updates sent to you to stay informed and involved with the community.

Finally, I thank our volunteers, of whom there are many, for the unselfish hours all have provided to make Meadow Hill the community it is. Thank you all!

Have a great summer. Jim Fuda, President

## MEADOW HILL POOL OPENING



The Meadow Hill Pool is scheduled to open on Memorial Day weekend, weather permitting.  
Better stock up on sunscreen!!

## Meadow Hill Annual Meeting – June 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Clubhouse



Mark your calendars now to attend our Meadow Hill Annual Meeting on 6/13 at 7pm. One of the main purposes of the meeting is to vote for and select unit owners to serve on the Executive Board of Directors. You should have already

received a notice from Imagineers asking for candidates to run for the Board. Be sure to get your completed Board nomination form to Imagineers by May 10<sup>th</sup>. Imagineers will send a formal Annual Meeting notice to MH owners on or about May 23<sup>rd</sup>, with candidate bios and a proxy form included. See you at the Annual Meeting!

### Hold the Date: Meadow Hill Green Day

Join us for a Green Day event hosted by the Grounds Committee; focus will be on planting and sustainability topics (not the rock band Green Day!).



- Saturday, May 18, 10 am to Noon at the Clubhouse.
- Activities include presentations, information tables, a plant/cutting/seed swap and more.
- Have a cuppa and chat with a neighbor!
- Look for a flyer with more information coming soon.

### Engage and Empower: Join Your Condo Board or Committee Today



Condo living is more than just owning a unit; it's about being part of a thriving community. Serving on the condo board or committee provides you with a unique opportunity to actively contribute to the betterment of your community. Your input can influence decisions on crucial matters such as property maintenance, financial planning and community events. By getting involved, you can ensure that the voice of every resident is heard and represented.

#### Benefits of Serving

1. **Influence and Impact:** As a Board member or committee member, you have the power to shape policies and initiatives that directly impact the quality of life for all residents. Your ideas and insights can drive positive change and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.
2. **Building Community:** One of the most rewarding aspects of serving on the board or committee is the opportunity to build strong relationships with your fellow residents. By working together towards common goals, you'll forge bonds that strengthen the sense of community and belonging within Meadow Hill.
3. **Protecting Your Investment:** As a condo owner, your property is a significant investment. By actively participating in the governance of your community, you can help ensure that it remains well-managed, financially stable, and attractive to current and future residents. This, in turn, helps protect the value of your investment.

#### How to Get Involved

1. **Nominate Yourself:** If you're passionate about making a difference, don't hesitate to nominate yourself for a position on the Condo Board or committee. Express your interest to the current Board members or management team, and be prepared to share your qualifications, ideas, and vision for the community. Meadow Hill will have four open Board positions for the coming term, being elected at the Annual Meeting. Contact Ron King (860 983-1685) if you have any questions. Be sure to complete the nomination form being sent out by Imagineers this month.
2. **Attend Meetings:** Even if you're not ready to commit to a leadership role, attending Board meetings and committee meetings is a great way to stay informed and engaged. It also provides an opportunity to learn more about the responsibilities and challenges of serving on the Board or committee.
3. **Volunteer:** If serving on the Board or committee feels like a big commitment, consider volunteering for specific projects or initiatives instead. All committees at MH welcome volunteers to help with a wide variety of tasks. Get your name to Jim Fuda today!
4. **Support Candidates:** Even if you're not able to serve on the Board or committee yourself, you can still support candidates who share your values and vision for the community. Encourage qualified individuals to step forward and consider endorsing or advocating for them during elections.
5. As an owner at Meadow Hill, you have a stake in the future of your community. By getting involved in the governance process, whether by serving on the Board or committee or supporting those who do, you can play a vital role in shaping a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving condominium community. Take the first step towards making a difference today – your community needs you! By Deb Wellington

## One Resident's Perspective and Thanks



I will be the first to admit that I have not been attending Meadow Hill meetings held at the clubhouse. Let's face it, there's always something I'd rather be doing. Well today (3/6) I attended the Planning Committee meeting. Why this sudden change of heart you may ask? Well, Pickleball was being discussed at the meeting, so I showed up. I listened carefully to all that was being discussed and couldn't help but be amazed and grateful for the effort, intelligence and diligence put forth by Board members. The complex issues discussed were

all to benefit us, our community. I was in awe of the responsibility the Board has in governing Meadow Hill.

Not many of us ever attend MH meetings, a fact mentioned by Board Members. In doing their "job", they not only find solutions to the myriad of projects ongoing at Meadow Hill but they must also reach out to find ways of sharing the information with all of us. All of this seems daunting to me, but they take it all in stride and carry-on! This is my note of personal thanks to them and to encourage all of us to participate in any way we can. We have ample opportunity to influence. If you are like me, I think you'll find it an eye-opener. By Robyn Castano

## Condominium Community Leaders Rights and Responsibilities

In the last Lark issue, we drew from a recent Community Association Institute (CAI) publication about the rights and responsibilities of condominium owners and residents. Today, we present the rights and responsibilities of our community leaders. These CAI principles can help us create and sustain a strong sense of community here.

### Here are the rights of our community leaders:

- Expect owners and residents to meet their financial obligations, and to abide by the bylaws and rules of the Association and all notices from the Board.
- Respectful and honest treatment from residents.
- Positive and constructive atmosphere in all MH meetings.
- Supportive and constructive input from residents.
- Personal privacy at home and during leisure time in the community.
- Ability to take association-authorized educational opportunities related to their responsibilities.

### Community leaders have the responsibility to:

- Fulfill their fiduciary duties to the community and exercise discretion in a manner that they believe are in the best interests of the community.
- Exercise sound business judgment and follow established management practices.
- Balance the needs and obligations of the community, with those of individual homeowners and residents.
- Understand the governing documents, become educated with respect to applicable state and local laws and manage the association accordingly.
- Establish committees and other methods to obtain input from owners and residents.
- Conduct open, fair and well publicized elections.
- Welcome and educate new residents and encourage input from all residents.
- Encourage events that foster neighborliness and sense of community.
- Conduct business in a transparent manner, when feasible and appropriate.
- Allow access to appropriate community records when requested.
- Collect all monies due from owners and residents. Devise reasonable arrangements when needed and feasible to facilitate the ability of an individual owner to meet their financial obligations to the community. Use foreclosure as a last resort.
- Provide a process that residents can use to appeal decisions affecting their non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights, where permitted by law and association governing documents.
- Make bylaws and rules as understandable as possible, adding clarifying lay language or supplementary materials when drafting or revising the documents.
- Provide complete and timely disclosure of personal and financial conflicts of interest related to the actions of community leaders.

## Planting Approvals for Shrubs and Trees



The rules reminder letter that was issued in March covered what you need to know about planting flowers and herbs in your 4-foot area. However, it did not cover rules for removing or planting shrubs or trees. So here is what you need to know. Removing or planting a shrub or tree requires approval by the Maintenance Supervisor and Grounds Committee chair, but not by the Board. If you want to remove a shrub or tree from your 4 foot space, go to Pitera and submit a Work Order (in Pitera, click on Community, then Common Area Work Orders) to create a WO. State if you plan to do

the removal yourself or if you are requesting Maintenance to do the removal. If you intend to plant something in place of the removed shrub or tree, specify that in the WO. If you just want to plant a new shrub or tree without removing anything, you still need to submit a WO for approval. The WO will get forwarded to Maintenance and the Grounds chair, who will review and – usually – approve it for implementation.

Occasionally, a resident asks to remove or plant shrubs or trees in a common area outside their 4-foot space. In this situation, submit a Variance Request to Imagineers, and check the box for Planting Request. Explain what and where you want to remove/plant. Maintenance and Grounds will review and make a recommendation to the Board, which has approval authority for common areas.

If you have difficulty accessing or using the Pitera system, send your request in an email to Imagineers.

The approval process ensures that we don't have invasive, toxic or inappropriately sized plantings, and provides documentation to avoid disputes in the future. Thanks for your cooperation. By Mike Proulx

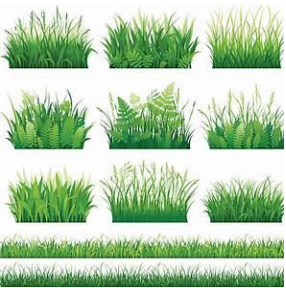
## Landscaping/Contractor Update

Our landscaping services will again be provided by Highlight; fertilization and pest control will be provided by TruGreen. Details about this year's landscaping program and schedule of services will be included in a flyer to be distributed in early May. A few reminders about navigating the planting/landscaping season:

- To request a landscaping/planting action, submit a work order to Imagineers. Allow adequate time for Grounds Committee volunteers and Maintenance staff to review the request and make approval decisions.
- Please do not make individual requests or give instructions to landscaping company staff. Their direction comes from their supervisors and/or MH Maintenance staff.
- Yard waste should be deposited in the dump area in the northwest corner of the complex, or behind the end of the stockade fence along Hollister Way South; please do not put it in the regular household trash bins.
- Grass seeding of selected common areas will again be done in late summer/early fall. Individual seeding requests from owners will be evaluated and prioritized based on material and staff availability and may be contingent on owner's agreement to provide watering throughout the growing season.



## Evaluating Grass Alternatives



As described in the March/April Lark, part of Meadow Hill's long-term vision is to create a more environmentally sustainable greenspace by reducing the amount of traditional turf grass throughout the campus. The first step will involve testing 4 potential grass alternatives in a small area. We plan to create 4 small test plots (each about 4 ft x 4 ft) of alternative ground cover that are suitable for our climate, rainfall, and soil conditions. The first 4 test subjects will be clover, thyme, a native/meadow grass mix, and zoysia grass. Once established, the test plots will be allowed to go through at least one full annual cycle so we can observe them at every stage of their growth. The test plots will be located along Dogwood Lane between units 227 and 292. The plots will be labeled and easily accessible to residents who wish to

observe their progress. Residents will be encouraged to provide comments throughout the testing period. For full details, you can find the test plan included in the April Board Packet, available on Pitera. Progress updates will be included in future issues of the Lark. By Mike Proulx

## Having Those Difficult Conversations – IMHO (In My Humble Opinion)



This is the second in a series of articles on planning for your own end-of-life. Thanks today to Luther Weeks for sharing his story. Stay tuned for next issue's installment!

Luther: Perhaps you have seen my recent stories online: <https://tinyurl.com/LindaAndLuther> or video of me online: <https://tinyurl.com/MAIDLuther> but it started long ago, in 2016.

In 2016, my wife Denise got the book *The Other Talk* from AARP. The first talk being “The Birds and the Bees” with our children. This second talk is about our final wishes etc. We read the book and did what it said. Determining what we each wanted, what we collectively wanted, financial planning, revised wills, end of life directives, beneficiaries defined for all our accounts and assets; writing healthcare directives to our children, planning our funerals and burials; and finally explaining everything to our children. We were pleasantly surprised at how reasonable the price of a lawyer was to help with all the documents. I doubt anyone would know the music and quotations I would want at my memorial, nobody would dare write an engaging, honest, and humorous obituary, as I wanted; select a quote for our gravestone, “Whatever comes, this too shall pass”. They would not know who I would want to officiate at my funeral.

We told our children: “Do not stop working and saving”. Here is how much you will inherit, at most. We explained what treatment or non-treatment we wanted as the end neared and how they would need to be our health proxies. We explained that for their convenience and our benefit we would need to move near one of them at some point. They were surprised. A few days later, our son called and wondered if we would be moving soon. We assured him it was years off.

That was all a great idea. Now when we talk about issues, as time is getting shorter, they are used to it and prepared. During my recent treatment for prostate cancer my son confided to his aunt how happy he was that we had had the early conversation. The conversation that such a health crisis would usually trigger had already occurred, and he and his sister could focus on support through the crisis.

As hinted at in the videos, and after the consultant's talk at the Clubhouse, we have been investigating options in Connecticut, Philadelphia, and Cherry Hill, NJ. We will likely be at Meadow Hill for a while, perhaps downsize to an apartment at some point, and be ready (financially and lifestyle-wise) for assisted living as we face the last year or two of life for one of us.

Another excellent resource is Compassion And Choices, <https://www.compassionandchoices.org/> an organization for which I volunteer. They offer Tools for “Finishing Strong”, similar to the AARP's book *The Other Talk*, and End-of-Life Consultation Services. Their “End-of-Life Consultation Program (EOLC) which provides confidential, nonjudgmental, professional support around end-of-life planning, anywhere in the country.” I have talked to people, even medical professionals, who saw a loved-one ill served by a hospice recommended by a hospital. I have learned that all hospice programs are not equal. You can call Compassion and Choices and they will put you in contact with medical practitioners and hospice programs that will serve your needs. Also be careful when choosing a hospital associated with a religious organization, as they can decide not to follow your end-of-life directives and are not required to disclose that fact.

I have found that being prepared for end of-life situations can provide peace of mind for you and your loved ones. By Luther Weeks

## Gifts to Charities – Are you Maximizing your IRA/401k Tax Benefits?

Are you age 73 or older, taking a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA/401K? For those still planning donations to qualified charities this year, did you realize that you can make these gifts tax free? Known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), you must instruct your IRA/401K administrator to make your donations directly to the charity(ies). The administrator would then calculate your remaining RMD total for the year for distribution to you if the charitable gifts don't exhaust your required IRA/401K distribution. Most administrators would agree to do this mid-year so don't worry if you've already been taking your RMD payments in 2024. Bottom line, the value of your charity donations is not added to your Adjusted Gross Income on your 2024 federal/state tax returns, thereby reducing your taxes. Take advantage of these IRA/401K rules if you aren't already. By Gene Flynn

# Meadow Hill Eclipse Viewers



## COMMUNITY EVENTS



The [Sharing Tree](#) is a quarterly publication that is packed with important information about Glastonbury Senior Center events, educational courses, travel and much more.



Check it out!!

For **Library Events** click [here](#).

## MEADOW HILL RESIDENT NOTES

**Crafts and Needlework** – If you enjoy knitting or crocheting and enjoy giving items to those in need, please contact Linda Fillion at 860-559-5504 for details. Items such as baby hats, booties, lap robes and prayer shawls are really appreciated by Middlesex Hospital.

**Hollister House** –closed until further notice.

**MH Book Club** – meets the first Tuesday of every month at 1:30 at the clubhouse.

- May 7: May: “[Pachinko](#)” by Min Jin Lee
- June – [The Four Winds](#) by June Kristen Hannah
- July – [The Berry Pickers](#) by Amanda Peters

## MEADOW HILL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS



Advisory committees play an important role in Meadow Hill. They provide information and work that improves Meadow Hill beyond what the Board and Property Manager can do without assistance. Below are the committee chairs, liaisons from the Board and Committee members. Let's all thank these community members for their work to make Meadow Hill a great place to call home. Board president is Ex Officio on all committees.

**Budget:** Brenda Berk, Treasurer and Chair, Larry Abbott, Toni Dolan, Connie Liscomb, Deb Wellington.

**Communications/Welcoming:** Gene Flynn, Chair, Mike Proulx, Denise Weeks, Robyn Castano, Suz Fields, Diane Sikorsky, Luther Weeks, Board Liaison, Jim Fuda.

**Grounds:** Mike Proulx, Chair, Harris Berloe, Dick Brimley, Dave Fillion, Patti McNamara, Kathy McCarthy-Proulx, Peter Rothfarb, Susan Wallace; Board liaison – Ron King.

**Long Term Planning Committee:** Jim Fuda, President and Chair, Frank Cisz, Tony Dolan, David Faxon, David Hogan, Dana Kubachka, Ed Litke, Tim Reid, Reg Wellington. **Amenities subcommittee:** Tim Reid, Ed Litke, Frank Cisz

**Clubhouse Rental:** Michele Wilson, Imagineers

**Maintenance:** Walter Brownsword, Director and Chair, Bob Kolwicz, Roger Bouchard, Ray Dolan, Vin Liscomb, Eileen Swenson.

**Nominating Committee:** Ron King, Director and Chair, Brenda Berk, Ed Litke,

**Stables, Greenhouse, Garden as subcommittee:** Darien Covert.

**Social:** Donna Whalen, Secretary and Chair, Hazel Brimley, Jane Marcin.

**Trees:** Gene Flynn, (Chair), Bob Kolwicz, Roger Bouchard, Board Liaison, Ron King

**Risk Management:** Deb Wellington, Director and Chair, Tom Bailey

**Legislative Liaison:** Luther Weeks

**Future Committees - Finance**

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**DIRECTOR**  
Paul Jenkins  
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To Email Management staff or Board Member click on <https://tinyurl.com/MHillContacts>

### BOARD MEETINGS

**Monthly Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM**

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**May 15 and June 19**  
**at 10:00 AM**  
**AT THE CLUBHOUSE**

**Current and previous meeting minutes can be found at [www.meadowhill.net](http://www.meadowhill.net)**  
**Hard copy minutes are no longer provided.**

**Lark Editor: Gene Flynn; Lark Designer: Denise Weeks**