

Pineview HOA Board Of Directors  
C/O Omega Property Management  
6901 E. Fish Lake Road, Suite 140  
Maple Grove, MN 55369

June 27, 2024

Dear Pineview HOA Board,

It seemed like a bittersweet moment watching the special assessment vote on Monday. On the one hand, I was not surprised. Literally, 80% of the people I was able to visit and talk to had no interest in the board's action. Like the board, whose president indicated they had taken their time to walk the area, I did that too. I knocked on all 88 townhomes. I was able to talk with about half of the homeowners, and the other half, I left my flyer.

Contrary to Bob's discourse on the night of the meeting, that I was trying to talk him out of the new siding. I was primarily interested in whether he and all homeowners knew about the board's special assessment vote. Bob was trying to convince me that the entire HOA had crumbling siding. To use his words, the life of the siding was only 30 years. So, given that Bob was the past president for nine years and was adamant about the siding, I can understand the board's sense of urgency.

Bob needs to be corrected on many fronts. I have personally built homes. The cedar on our buildings is typically good for 50-75 years as long as it is painted regularly every 5-10 years. The big rub is the composite boards on many quad buildings that can quickly deteriorate if not properly maintained.

While I was happy with the resounding no vote, I was highly disappointed in the board's lack of understanding and what seemed to be arrogance, illustrated by the board president's view about what our financial responsibilities should be without understanding our economic capabilities and obligations. The special assessment meeting could have been a teachable moment. There was a lot of information that could have been extracted and collected. At this point, I have virtually no confidence that the board of directors of Pineview's HOA has the best interests of the community members.

As a result, I have begun construction of a website that, when complete, will allow all community members to reach out to one another and discuss their concerns. You can find the site at <http://www.pineview-hoa.org>. It's already online with an index page.

Please be advised that I will take this website down and cease building a communications portal if Omega Property Management installs a bulletin board or another way for members to communicate on its HOA portal. My interest is in finding a way for the community members to talk to one another and stay informed. I am NOT interested in or trying to create any opposition to the existing board.

However, by choosing to use Zoom for its meetings, the HOA Board automatically eliminates at least 50% of the community from any participation. This is either an intentional move, evidence of expediency from younger board members, or from the total disconnect of not knowing whom they are supposed to serve.

Rather than intentionally, this oversight is likely due to a need for more understanding of the community being served. Many of our HOA members are in their 80s and need more help, instruction, or skill to communicate with people electronically. Generally, seniors want to talk in person or by phone. For many, Zoom meetings represent an out-of-touch younger generation's effort at practicality. However, the need to view one's body language is a good part of communication with other humans. Although I have the skill set and technology to use Zoom, this communication form is ineffective for many seniors.

Why exactly does an HOA community member need to go to board meetings? Isn't that why we have member meetings? The only reasonable answer is to talk to a board member regarding a maintenance issue or to discuss Omega Property Management. Using Omega as a go between the board and members has effectively eliminated any helpful feedback, especially about Omega.

I have experience getting into Omega's phone queue, getting the message I'm next in line, and then having the connection dropped. I've talked to others who have experienced this same issue. My phone calls were not returned, and I could only communicate by email.

I have over 50 years of corporate skills, including managing non-profit communities, including MN 317A non-profit corporations. I've never witnessed such isolation by a board of directors from the people it is supposed to serve. Pineview's HOA board should be willing to seriously review how it communicates with the people it is supposed to serve. So, what went wrong, and what could have been learned?

#### The Meeting Minutes

The board violated the by-laws requirement for descriptive meeting minutes that disclosed what was happening. Had the vote gone the board's way, there could have

been a lawsuit against the HOA for not fully revealing the intent of the conversations at the meetings. Any lawyer worth his weight would have had a field day with a summary statement that lacks any narrative concerning the subject. There is virtually no way of viewing the board's February or May meeting minutes and discerning either the content of the special assessment or even that a vote was to take place.

#### The Special Assessment Notice

- The notice appeared out of the blue.
- The notice lacked any specificity.
- What siding was being planned?
- Why does it cost \$74k per quad building?
- Who is the contractor the board chose?
- Are there any board relationships with the contractor?
- Why wasn't there any HOA community input?
- How did the board expect people to pay?
- How did the board expect people to finance?

The board never counted on anyone going door-to-door alerting people. I can assure the board that I will walk door-to-door again should the board consider any other special assessment votes.

#### Knocking On Doors - The Siding

After Bob's assertion that the siding was only supposed to last 30 years and desperately needed to be replaced, I started asking people how satisfied they were with their siding. Everyone I asked was satisfied with their siding except for three buildings. Two buildings had back walls by their decks with composite siding boards that needed replacing. One had mushrooms growing and water leaking through the wall. The third one had paint peeling off and needed painting.

Being unable to replace composite boards because of no exact match is not an excuse to forgo repairs. Building #1 has new composite boards that approximate the older original boards. After painting, from an appearance perspective, there is little noticeable difference. Both deteriorated back walls involved should immediately have the entire back wall replaced. The third building should have its cedar repainted.

It is a testament to the HOA's painting and other maintenance efforts that the buildings in our community are in great shape regarding the siding. I did not see evidence of a great extent of wood rot as was claimed at the meeting. However, the woodpecker holes are natural and must be dealt with whenever they appear.

The board should know that many homeowners are patching their woodpecker holes and doing other minor maintenance issues. My north-facing wall is a favorite nesting spot, and I have patched no less than six woodpecker holes. I recently had Omega's Nick patch three more from last fall, which were too high to reach. We should explore hiring a maintenance person if we pay \$200 to patch a hole. It might be cheaper in the long run.

It makes little sense to require building #14, which was completely rebuilt with new siding, to replace their siding as a part of a special siding assessment. Likewise, for those buildings recently painted where the homeowners are satisfied.

Therefore, a top-down dictate is not workable at Pineview HOA. Most members prefer dealing with the buildings individually and based solely on present-day needs.

#### Siding Costs

Two HOA homeowners were either in the construction business or had family in the industry. Both asserted that it should only cost around \$52k to reside in a quad building.

I had MEI come out and analyze our buildings. They gave me a printed estimate of \$13.5k per unit or \$54k for a quad building. This was not the top thicker layer vinyl but the standard siding with the same type of guarantee. Specifically, the vinyl siding has overcome the issue of paint fading. They would work with the HOA as needed and are only 3 miles away. They can also patch woodpecker holes and replace siding on buildings as required.

It is better for the HOA to slowly replace the siding on 1-3 buildings per year as needed and affordable without resorting to a special assessment or hiking the monthly dues higher than the annual 5%. Staggering the installation of new siding on the buildings would eliminate massive projects and the need for special assessments. It makes sense to individualize significant projects. Isn't that what the paint strategy effectively did? It's similar in concept to staggering the election of directors and U.S. Senators. No one in the HOA community gets upset because their neighbor's building was painted, and theirs wasn't. That's because they know that eventually, theirs will get painted.

Staggering new siding is a cheap and inexpensive solution and would work for our HOA just like staggering painting did. Over the decades, it would work its financial magic and eventually all buildings would have new siding. Over many years, the life

of all buildings would be extended without the burden of the HOA trying to do everything at once.

After hearing several homeowners complain that our HOA dues are already higher than most, I researched. Typical HOA dues in our area range from \$100-300 monthly. I found a site listing the area's HOA dues and checked out ten. The highest I found for an HOA with no amenities was \$244.

Following an entrepreneurial career, I am an author who writes about health, spirituality, and entrepreneurial issues. According to a Stanford University health study, the board should be aware that STRESS was determined to cause 95% of all diseases. The board's unwise special assessment unnecessarily stressed many older homeowners.

One son, desiring to protect his elderly mother in our HOA, called me angrily, threatening to involve his attorney. I talked him down and explained that I expected an 80% no-vote. Still, our younger HOA board should realize that the HOA is still very populated with senior citizens, and many are in their 80s. It would be wise and more respectful to be considerate of ALL community members in future actions by getting to know the people you are supposed to represent. Pineview's residents do not represent a wealthy community regarding individual financial capacities, even if a few of our homeowners do.

#### Knocking On Doors - Maintenance Issues

There were many complaints and upset homeowners. Virtually all of these involved unaddressed maintenance issues. The Pineview HOA Board needs to refocus on addressing unmet maintenance issues. With over \$480k cash, dealing with existing maintenance issues should be easy.

The Walker family on 82nd Avenue had their front rock and bushes destroyed by roofers or painters several years ago. They still need help addressing this maintenance issue. They need new stones and bushes, which are the HOA's responsibility.

I'm sensing that the HOA Board has established some unwritten rules that must now be documented and explained to homeowners. As another homeowner discussed, this could be a list of things like repairing lawns, which 8301 recently had to do, or picking up fallen sticks. However, some in their 80s have expressed difficulty picking up sticks in the yard.

Everything I discuss concerns the HOA board's ability to know and properly communicate with its community. A popular question was why management companies have changed so much over the last few years. This letter is already too long, so I'll end it here. Get the picture?

Sincerely yours,

/Edward G. Palmer/

Edward G. Palmer  
8303 Oakview Court N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
(763) 370-8227  
edwardgpalmer@gmail.com

Cc: HOA members with a directory address.  
[www.pineview-hoa.org](http://www.pineview-hoa.org)