



View from the Top

A HARBOR RIDGE PUBLICATION

www.harborridge.com ~ info@harborridge.com ~ 207-244-7000

Volume 31

Number 3

December 2023

Inside:
Special Meeting
Minutes Pg 2

How to Get the
Best out of
Timeshare Pg 3

IMPORTANT NOTICES

As of December 4, 2023:

Owner Getaway Rates (tax included):

\$199 for two nights
\$50 for each additional
night (2-night minimum)
Can be booked 7-10 days
prior to check-in.

Bonus Weeks:
\$450 per week

**Great Room and Pool
Parties Usage:**
\$100 per party

Internal Exchanges
within season of
ownership: \$149
to amend a late deposit:
\$99

Deed Fees:
\$150 for spouse to spouse
and parent to child transfers

\$300 for all other transfers

\$100 extra for requests to
replace lost paperwork or
additional changes made

Manager's Update

There's nothing like a winter snow storm to get you into the spirit of the holidays! The first week of December brought two snowstorms back to back, and the views have been Hallmark Christmas movie worthy! The snow has hung on the trees for days, creating such beautiful landscapes for those vacation photos for the Christmas cards! There's hope for island cross country skiing and snowshoeing this winter!

Our "winter projects" have begun. We are refinishing kitchen cupboards and painting the middle levels in Building 2. The contractors will be finishing the last few master bathroom renovations in Building 3 in January. Roofing and skylight replacements for Building 1 are scheduled to happen in May. We are all excited that the old manual skylights will be gone, gone, gone! Due to these ongoing winter projects and heating conservation, owners may not be in their assigned deeded unit. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

So many owners have acknowledged the improvements that the staff has been making, and it has been such a boost to morale. Compliments direct from the owners and guests are so much more meaningful to the staff. We have received chocolates, Trader Joe goodies, gift baskets, and tips to share amongst staff. Thank you so much!

Harbor Ridge is a family of owners that take great pride in the resort, and we all want it to continue for generations!! One owner, David Ouellette, built two bench seats and donated them to us this summer! It's a time of giving, and he was very generous! He's a skilled car-

Holiday Hours

Christmas Eve
8:00 am—2:00 pm

Christmas Day
Closed

New Year's Eve
8:00 am—7:00 pm

New Year's Day
8:00 am—7:00 pm

Winter Hours
beginning December 4

Monday - Thursday
8:00 am - 7:00 pm

Friday - Sunday
8:00 am - 9:00 pm

*Depending on occupancy, we may
close some weekends at 8:00 pm.*

Call for hours on storm days.

penter, and we wish to extend our deepest gratitude to David for his gift!

Resales

Have you ever felt that seven nights is just not long enough for your vacation? At checkout, many owners express that exact sentiment. Owners regularly are extending their ownership by purchasing additional weeks on either side of their existing weeks of ownership, or they purchase a different week to return later in the season. There are great deals on our resale list. Feel free to inquire about availability.

***Condominium Association
Special Meeting Minutes
Saturday, December 2, 2023
At Harbor Ridge and via Zoom***

President Linda Connelly called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Officers Present at Harbor Ridge: Linda Connelly, President; Jan Franz, Treasurer; David Ezzio, Member; Margaret Austin, Manager and Annette Bartlett, Manager. Present Via Zoom: Dianne Lytle, Member; Absent: Jay Hewett, Secretary due to out-of-country travel.

There were two owners in attendance in person, and another five owners were in attendance via Zoom. All in attendance introduced themselves and their timeshare experiences. A quorum requires 408 votes. Votes by proxy from owners and in person: 343.5; votes available from HOA were 178; thus, a quorum was present. Proxy votes for Curtis Brooks: 123.5; Linda Connelly: 241; William Hayes: 85; Amy Lytle: 191.5; and Secretary for unspecified votes: 21. Thus, Linda Connelly and Amy Lytle were elected to five-year terms.

Resort Manager, Margaret, gave condolences to the family of Lee Brown, our accountant at Harbor Ridge, who unexpectedly passed away in August. Management recently met with the new accountant, and there may be some slight differences in how to account for certain expenses and income going forward. Margaret reviewed the proposed income budget for 2024 and the actual income figures through November 30, 2023. While some line items were above budget, others were below. Gift shop and owner getaway rentals were down; however, some winter long-term (more than 30 days) rentals have been secured. Legal fees, owner charges, and interest exceeded projections. The resort will be modifying rental rates in 2024 to be more comparable with Air BnB rentals on the island. Various transaction fees will increase, such as bonus weeks, legal fees, and internal exchanges.

Resort Manager, Annette, explained the expense line items. Harbor Ridge uses accrual base accounting, and bad debt expenses will be incurred in December. The credit card fee structure was negotiated. The contract line is down considerably as the current pest services provider just terminated its agreement. The insurance line item is down due to worker's comp and health insurance. Harbor Ridge has the lowest number of employees ev-

er; thus, payroll is down. Our core staff has really stepped up, and we are so grateful! Repairs and supplies are down, as Building 1 skylights have just been ordered. This spring will be our last unit roofing project. Property taxes increased \$11,181.23 over last year. Supplies increased due to linens, large appliances, and housewares. Bill Sweeney asked about the Reserve line. Annette directed him to our money market and certificate of deposit numbers on the balance sheet. Joe Guaraldo and Karlene Additon-Strout inquired about solar at Harbor Ridge. The board has looked at solar and wind, and the payback period is too long. The directional location of our buildings is also not conducive to solar on the roofs or on the ground. Our location high on the ridge is also troublesome with extreme high winds and rain. Our electrical supply contract is very competitively priced. The board has felt that there are other investments with better paybacks financially with greater owner and guest satisfaction.

Lori Wiswell asked about the homeowner association owned weeks. There are 178 deeded weeks, and they have been utilized for rental income, roofing loss of use weeks, and weeks lost during COVID.

David Ezzio moved to accept the budget; Jan Franz seconded the motion, and the budget was accepted.

Linda gave accolades to Dianne Lytle for her service on the board and wished her the very best!

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Bartlett, Secretary pro tem

~~~~~

**Club Interval Gold?**

Owners can still convert Interval memberships to Club Interval Gold points-based memberships for \$495. The inventory transparency is so helpful when booking. Feel free to call Annette to determine if Club Interval Gold is right for you. Owners of both a peak and off peak week, who exchange every year, should definitely consider Club Interval Gold.

Club Interval Gold members should deposit 120 days in advance to get full point value!!!

~~~~~

How to Get the Best out of Your Timeshare

Are you tired of hearing those radio or television ads about how to get out of your timeshare? It makes management's skin crawl! Many owners are maturing, and owners and their families may be feeling a bit less enthusiastic about timesharing. Believe us, you're not alone. In conversations with fellow owners, it seems that many are unaware of the ins and outs of all of the amazing advantages that come with timesharing. But fear not, there are ways to maximize your family's enjoyment as owners.

Since you're reading this newsletter as an owner, you're not new to timesharing. Timeshares offer regular vacations in fully-equipped condos, unlike hotel rooms, at a fraction of the cost. Take your unit/week at Harbor Ridge, for example. If you were to rent it as an individual off the street, it would cost up to a staggering \$350 per night..\$2600 per week. Now, try finding a reputable hotel room on Mount Desert Island for any less than that! You won't! But guess what? Your current maintenance fee is only about one-quarter of that weekly cost. So, in the long run, owning a timeshare will save you a lot of money on accommodations and food vacation budgets. Your family is fortunate that you made a decision to buy into a resort and area that you absolutely love to return to! The golden rule of timesharing is to own where you love and own at a resort that makes you feel like family; then it's a great cost-effective vacation choice. We look forward to you every year at the same time. We take care of your vacation home without you worrying about care and maintenance, and at a lower cost of renting at a hotel room. Recently, an owner mentioned the cost savings of not having to personally replace appliances, furniture, linens, utilities, and supplies for their vacation home! Then to boot, someone else does the cleaning!

But let's say you bought a timeshare primarily to exchange and explore other resorts. It can be a bit tricky, we won't deny it. However, it can also be incredibly rewarding. You can stay in amazing places for a fraction of the usual rental cost. Some owners even use their timeshares for their snowbird destination homes. You can't beat the bonus accommodation certificate and getaway rates too!

Now, let's be clear: the timeshare exchange system is not perfect. And if you were led to believe that you could exchange anywhere in the world, to any resort at any time, well, that's not entirely accurate. You need to have time, inclination, and flexibility to make the system work for you. Harbor Ridge owners have been very fortunate to exchange into some wonderful locations, such as Disney's Saratoga Springs, Marriott's Grande Ocean Resort in Hilton Head, the Grand Ca-

nary Islands in Spain, and the list goes on and on! All of these stays cost far less than what an owner would have paid for a hotel or Air BnB in the same areas. Plus, the accommodations were much more spacious than a typical hotel room (although the Hilton in Manhattan may be an exception, but hey, it's Manhattan!).

Now, here's the thing: if you travel as a couple, there is more flexibility in your vacation planning, as you can choose one or two bedroom units. But there are many options for the children and grandchildren too! Perhaps you need a kid-friendly resort during their school break. It's important to place a pending request as early as possible! It does require timely effort on your part, but what doesn't require effort when it comes to the most important things in our lives...especially our family members. Sometimes, it is advantageous of booking independently, as timeshare may not work for every vacation destination. But it works for quite a few even cruise vacations!!! Think of it this way, most of the time a car fulfills your driving needs, but sometimes, you just need to rent a truck!

With timeshare exchanges, you may need to be more flexible about where you go or when you go. Let's say you want to visit Vermont during the last week of August, but there's no availability when you search. Don't lose hope just yet. Definitely place a pending request as you never know when an owner might decide to bank their week, but keep searching manually too. Members can deposit weeks up to 15 days before their scheduled week. Alternatively, you could consider looking at other regions of New England. Having a second or third option for vacation destinations is always a good idea. For example, you could explore the beautiful Berkshires in Western Massachusetts or the mountains near Lincoln, New Hampshire. These are absolutely wonderful areas to explore.

Flexibility is key, whether it's regarding the location or the timeframe. Looking at National Park areas, consider the shoulder seasons to explore in greater solitude. Yes, you may not have every restaurant open, but you will not starve! The locals eat too!!! Once you find a place that suits your preferences, you'll be able to vacation there for far less than what you would have paid if you were renting, and you'll likely have better accommodations too.

Are you on Facebook? There are Facebook groups that share information on what resorts offer for amenities, what the area must dos are, when popular resort destinations become available, tips on how to get the most bang for your buck. Annette provides tutorials too!

(Continued on page 4)



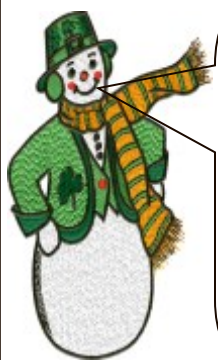
Season's Greetings from
HARBOR RIDGE
PO BOX 725
SOUTHWEST HARBOR ME 04679

Maintenance fees are due January 1 for all float owners and fixed week owners of Weeks 1-26. Should you need payment arrangements, call us toll free at 866-384-0231 or email us at info@harborridge.com prior to January 1 to avoid late fees and interest. We are very willing to work with our owners, so everyone can take their well deserved vacations.

(Continued from page 3)

Lastly, what do you do if you can no longer use your timeshare. You can pass your deed down to someone else, sell it, or rent it. If necessary, you can inquire with your resort about any deed back program that they may offer. It's true that there may be situations where the resort may not be as helpful as you'd like in the timeframe that you want. These situations do take time! However, please don't fall for the scare tactics employed by companies that claim to help you get out of your timeshare but charge exorbitant fees. There are other, more cost-effective ways to handle such situations. The basic rule is to call your home resort first.

Owning a timeshare can be a truly rewarding experience, if you take vacations with it!!! By following these basic tips, you should be able to maximize the value of your ownership and continue enjoying memorable vacations with family and friends without breaking the bank. Vacationing is a gift that you give to yourselves!! Do it now!



*Are owner
getaways
available
this
winter at
Harbor
Ridge?*



Yes, they are! We look forward to owners booking weekdays and weekends to enjoy the peacefulness of the island in the winter! Check noaa.gov for the best weather forecast for zip code 04679.



Good idea! Then we'll know whether to bring our winter boots, snowshoes, skates, or cross country skis. Grandma can bring her craft projects too! She can spread out in the Great Room and craft all day! Just remember, Grandma, we love your favorite sweet treats and comfort food!!