

Complaints lead to new organization

by Krista Lewin

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Fed up with alleged slow or no response from Parrish Properties regarding the new rules contained in its property leases, residents living in Sullivan's North and South mobile home parks formed a homeowners' association Monday in hopes of developing a line of communication with the new landlord.

About 50 residents met at Wyman Park during a two hour meeting Monday and discussed some of the issues they have with new landlord Parrish Properties of Pleasant Prairie, Wis., who purchased both mobile home parks in May. The residents pay rental fees for the land.

Some of the residents' concerns with Parrish include increases in the monthly land rental cost; issuing fees for owning pets, and pets are only allowed through the landlord's approval; improvements or additions to the properties must be approved by the landlord; owners must obtain approval if visitors plan to stay on the property for more than 14 days. Residents will be charged \$10 per day every day exceeding the 14 days.

These are just a few of the many questions residents have connected with the list of new rules they are required to follow. Vicki Pierce, resident, was elected president of the new homeowners association. Pierce, like many other residents, is upset about the list of new requirements and the increase in rent but is more frustrated that Parrish Properties officials allegedly are refusing to respond to residents' questions or concerns. She hopes the new homeowners association will prompt Parrish to respond.

"We are tired of having big company owners coming into Sullivan and pushing the little people around," said Pierce.

Parrish Property officials didn't return a telephone message to the News-Progress Tuesday.

Pierce said since Parrish purchased the parks in May, company officials have never met with residents to try and explain some of the many rumors about the lease and the new rules.

"Everything has basically been done through word of mouth," Pierce said.

Other elected homeowners association board members include Rick Brownlee, vice president; Robyne Matheson, secretary; and Mary Ann DeBorde, treasurer. A host of delegates were also elected, and residents were vigilant about electing representation from both the North and South parks as a way to spur cooperation and communication amongst the residents.

Not only did the residents form a homeowners association, they also met with Terry Nelson, president, Mobile Home Owners Assn. of Illinois. Nelson of Des Plaines, who herself lives in a mobile home park, said she lobbies Illinois lawmakers as a voice for mobile home park residents. She also visits mobile home parks throughout the state when called upon and explains to residents some of their rights as mandated through state law.

She cautions residents she is not a lawyer but would work with residents to investigate the situation.

Nelson said Parrish owns properties across the United States, and the lease that was dispersed to Sullivan's North and South park residents was probably a standard document they issue to all of their properties. Some of the rules might not apply in Illinois because the state laws take precedence over the rules a landlord sets, Nelson explains.

That is why she encouraged residents to create a homeowners association so they could work together in researching their rights. Uniting also gives residents a more powerful voice, Nelson added.

Pierce said the newly formed association would schedule additional meetings in the upcoming weeks.

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