

Clearview Heights Condo Association

Meeting Minutes

Special Information Meeting September 24, 2026

Present: Brian Gauthier, Brian Dominick, Carolyn Sowa, Jennifer Vincelette, and 55 unit owners representing 48 units.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was held to update unit owners on two issues: the washout/erosion problem behind Buildings 2–3 and the future of self-management at Clearview Heights. Owners were told this was an informational meeting, not a formal unit-owner meeting, and no owner motions or votes would be taken.

Washout / Erosion Issue

On August 24, the landscaper reported an unusually soggy area behind Building 3. Further investigation revealed another significant washout beyond the fence. The damage was traced to a broken irrigation line located outside the fence, which may have been releasing water down the embankment whenever the irrigation system operated.

The irrigation company investigated on August 26, and Sage Engineering inspected the area on August 28. The Board received Sage's proposal on September 8 and unanimously approved it by electronic vote on September 14. The signed proposal was returned on September 17, with work expected to begin as early as September 29. The damaged area was described as approximately 5 feet × 6 feet × 50 feet. Sage's repair will generally involve filling the washout with imported soil and topsoil, applying a specialized seed mixture and erosion-control matting, and restoring areas disturbed by construction. Sage will also handle necessary fencing and access work.

By way of email, a Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to have the project completed at a cost of \$62,212. The Association will initially pay the contractor from reserves. However, the Board had not yet made a final decision about how the Association will ultimately fund the expense.

The approach being considered is a combination of reserve funds and a supplemental assessment. The preliminary concept discussed was an assessment approximately equal to one month's regular condominium fee for each owner, potentially payable as a lump sum or over two or three months. Based on approximately \$27,185 in monthly Association fee revenue, that would leave roughly \$35,027 of the repair funded from reserves. The Board planned to discuss and decide the funding arrangement at its next regular open meeting. The Board explained that it does not want to fund the entire unexpected repair from reserves because those funds need to remain available for anticipated capital expenses such as roofs, siding, sidewalks, stairs, and other major common-element repairs and replacements.

Owners asked what could be done to prevent another washout. The Board said it intends to obtain better information about the location of the irrigation system and investigate whether irrigation lines outside the fence should be relocated. Possible leak-detection or automatic shutoff systems were also discussed.

Sage has communicated with the Conservation Commission. Because the work is being treated as maintenance associated with the previous washout area, the Board reported that additional Conservation Commission permitting would not be necessary.

An owner asked whether multiple bids were obtained. The Board said there were not. The reasons given were the urgency of completing the repair before winter, the Association's previous satisfactory experience with Sage, and the difficulty the Association previously experienced finding other engineering firms willing to perform this type of work. Owners were also encouraged to report unusual water, wet areas, irrigation problems, or changes along the embankment promptly.

Self-Management vs. Property Management

The Board reiterated that it would prefer to remain self-managed because trustees live at Clearview Heights, have a personal interest in the property, owners have relatively direct access to the Board, and volunteer management avoids the cost of a professional management company. However, the Board currently has only four trustees instead of five, and the workload has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Board members were said to spend approximately 20–40 hours per month handling Association business. The Board also discussed the personal burden associated with serving, including criticism, confrontations, negative emails, and individual trustees being targeted over Board enforcement decisions.

Previous communications to owners in January and March asked residents to become involved. Although owners expressed support for continued self-management, the Board said that support has not resulted in enough residents volunteering to perform the work necessary to maintain it.

Management Companies

To obtain actual information rather than relying on assumptions, the Board recently interviewed three management companies and contacted several others. The companies varied in condominium-management experience, but the proposals discussed were approximately \$25 per unit per month. For owners, that would likely mean approximately \$25 per month added to condominium fees, in addition to whatever normal increase might otherwise be required for the 2027 budget. The Board emphasized that no management company has been selected and no final decision has been made.

If professional management is ultimately hired, owners would generally communicate with the management company rather than directly with trustees. Management companies would handle such functions as vendor coordination, obtaining proposals, routine maintenance, collections, owner communications, portals for payments and requests, and potentially routine rule-enforcement notices. The Board would still exist and retain decision-making authority. Massachusetts law and the governing documents were described as requiring a Board of Trustees even if professional management is hired. The management company would perform much of the administrative work necessary to carry out Board decisions.

The Board also expressed concern about maintaining appropriate control and oversight of Association finances if a management company is hired, particularly because Clearview Heights reportedly had financial problems with a management company many years ago. The companies interviewed offered different service levels, and the Board has not decided whether financial management would be delegated.

Management-company costs would also likely increase over time as contracts are renewed.

Request for Volunteers

The Board made a strong appeal for owners to become actively involved if the community wants Clearview Heights to remain self-managed.

There is currently one vacant Trustee position, described as an at-large Trustee seat, with the current term apparently running until next July.

There are also two vacant assistant positions:

- Assistant Treasurer
- Assistant Clerk

The assistant positions are non-voting positions but would allow residents to help with Board work, participate in discussions, learn Association operations, and provide input into decisions.

The Board emphasized that volunteering does not necessarily mean making a long-term commitment. Residents could serve for a period of time, assist in a supporting position, or potentially transition into Trustee service. The central message was that continued self-management will require additional owners to participate in doing the work. If sufficient help does not materialize, the Board indicated that hiring a professional management company becomes increasingly likely.

Key items still unresolved

The meeting did not result in a decision to hire a management company. It also did not finalize a supplemental assessment.

The Board's next regular open meeting is expected to address the washout funding plan, including the possible supplemental assessment. The Board will also continue evaluating management companies, checking references, determining appropriate service levels, and assessing whether additional residents volunteer to help maintain self-management.

The meeting was then adjourned at 7:33 PM, with interested residents invited to remain afterward to speak with Board members about the open Trustee and assistant positions.

The next open Board meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

Jennifer Vincelette

Clerk