

Wilderness Park Home Owners Association
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2025

Meeting called to order by Jeff Zabinski at 9:31 a.m.

Board Present: Jeff Zabinski, Oscar Ehrnst, Chris Mann, Jessica Tate, Brice Grafstrom, Rob LaFleur, Tom Hanson. **Absent:** Kari Koren, Kris Jackson

Motion by Tom Hanson to approve the agenda. Brice Grafstrom seconded; All in favor. Approved.

Secretary's Report: Chris Mann provided minutes from the July 12, 2025 meeting to board members and attendees. A moment was provided to read through the minutes. Oscar Ehrnst made a motion to approve the meeting minutes; Brice Grafstrom seconded; all in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jessica Tate gave information to the Board. Financial information is always available for members at the Board meetings. Past due amounts collected are not available.

<u>Banking:</u>		<u>Dollars Collected:</u>	
US Bank Checking:	\$ 41,090.50	12/31/24	\$ 5,460.00
US Bank Savings:	\$ 89,865.73	1/31/25	\$ 7,334.00
US Bank CD	\$ 21,040.27	2/28/25	\$ 4,605.00
		3/31/25	\$ 7,621.64
		4/30/25	\$ 1,203.80
		5/31/25	\$ 8,168.20
		6/30/25	\$ 1,880.00
		7/31/25	\$95,075.40
		Total	\$131,348.04

Brice Grafstrom motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Tom Hanson seconded; All in favor. Approved.

Caretaker's Update: Glen Kastner reported that the drain cover will be purchased for the end of the season. Wayne Markowitz said that because of the gutter drain system work, the landscape rocks were against the building. We now have a lot of material to dispose of, landscaping to be done, and reshaping of the siding to pull the drainage away from the building. A load of river rock will be needed. Wayne will get the cost this week. Sod will also be placed so water will not go across the sidewalk. Brice Grafstrom made a motion to approve the caretakers report. Oscar Ehrnst seconded. All in favor. Approved.

Board Members Discussion: The drain cover at the bottom of the pool will be replaced. A pool cover will be dealt with later. The Board is looking into the cost of a new heater which will cost \$30,000 to \$40,000. The Board discussed putting money away for these types of bigger expenses in the next budget. Right now, the Board has not started anything. This project is on hold for future discussions. Brice Grafstrom stated he has a friend in the pool business and he might be able to get a deal on the heater.

Activities Committee:

Shannon Marklowitz reported there is a wooden sign painting party on August 23rd at 10:00 am. A second vendor event will happen on August 30th at the club house. There are two vendors already signed up. Sign up now by sending a message to Shannon Marklowitz at smarklow@gmail.com. This event will be posted on Facebook this weekend. Shannon stated the vending machines are working!

Road Committee:

Jeff Zabinski reported the committee is working on pricing of gravel for around the lake. The next project is starting from the end of Archer ending at Eastgate. A proposal has been received with \$17 per yard and a total cost of \$40,698 for 4" deep x 18" wide gravel. Other bids were \$18 and \$19 per yard. This bid does include shaping, compacting and water if needed and 10 loads of gravel to cover culverts that need to be covered. Additionally, trees on Meadow Lake Road to Robinhood need to be removed. Tom Hanson will get a quote from Paul's Tree Service from Staples. Oscar Ehrnst motioned to approve the road committee report. Rob LaFluer seconded. All in favor. Approved.

Collections Committee:

QuickBooks sent out a notice on 7/30, not 7/31, and a lot of people had paid that weren't entered prior to the mailing. The automatic email has been turned off until after the annual meeting. If you are concerned, please

email Jessica Tate. The system has been updated. Apologies were made. Julie Munson acknowledged Jessica Tate for volunteering while working a full-time job.

Jessica will be here at 8:00 for the annual meeting to collect payments.

Declarations Q&A – None

Member's Opportunity

Dan Paul asked that it is explained that the new covenants are based on county law. People are stating that they will vote no because they can't cut down a tree. This is a county ordinance, not a Park rule.

Shawnda Prigelmeier stated that the committee has been working on the documents for multiple years and people have not provided much input or asked questions and have had many opportunities to do so. There is a process in place to update the paperwork.

Jessica Tate said she has responded to people's questions as keeping it "wilderness" and if you have a dead tree you are going to cut it down. If you are putting up a building, permits are pulled and there shouldn't be a problem. The Board also doesn't have the ability to tell if 1 tree has been cut and isn't interested in monitoring it. A member reminded that County rules supersede our documents.

For clarification, Tom Hanson read the Section 7 Use of Property, 7.8 which states "No commercial or private clear cutting is allowed within or on lots in Wilderness Park. The living trees that naturally exist upon a lot shall remain, except to the extent necessary for construction purposes. Trimming or removal of dead trees from the property is permitted. The owner is responsible for following Cass County burning ordinances."

The objective and intent are for no clear cutting on any lot. Trimming or removal of dead trees is permitted.

The discussion moved to the dues structure.

Jeff Zabinski stated the Park has billed out approximately \$206,000 in dues, but the Board budgets for \$180,000 to cover for those who are not paying their dues. There has been a surplus in recent years.

Jessica Tate explained that total revenue based on the new dues structure in the proposed updates means the Park will lose approximately \$14,000. The new documents allow for the Board to increase dues by 5% per year. The \$14,000 would be recovered within 1.25 years if this happens. The new dues structure is based on fair votes for all members. The current structure is based on the number of lots; for example, 20 lots get 20 votes. The new structure is 1 vote per owner. Josh Ostrowski expressed his concern saying that if property is bought by a current owner, the result would be a \$400 loss in dues. Those who own multiple sites would also cause a loss of dues money through the proposed dues structure.

Kelly Daniels explained that state statute allows for the one dues structure or the other. Dues are allocated based on the number of votes no matter what the structure. The question was asked early on of the members what voting structure is preferred and therefore, the new documents state 1 vote per owner. Currently, if 1 person owns 100 lots, they would have more power over Park decisions. The only way to change this is to change the dues structure. Also, a budget is put together each year. According to law, and because we are a nonprofit, dues can only be 10% more than the budget. This would direct the raising of dues by the Board to determine if an increase is needed or not.

Brice Grafstrom reminded the group that almost \$100,000 has not been paid by members. Once this document passes, we can go after those who are not paying and this needs to be a focus. He expressed concern that nobody talks about the foosball table being broken each month, feces being smeared on bathroom walls, or water and mud downstairs that goes all the way to the fireplace. These items require a maintenance person and cost money.

Kelly Daniels explained that if we look at the declaration and how dues can be set, dues can only be 10% above the budget. Wilderness Park is a non-profit and therefore the Board cannot raise dues above actual expenses plus 10% per the covenants. The Board cannot arbitrarily raise dues.

Josh Ostrowski stated that he believes the dues should be higher and owners who have more than 1 area should pay dues based on each area. Josh wants 1 vote per tax statement. Oscar Ehrnst said he gets more than 1 tax

statement, but he cannot sell the parcels separately. Right now, Oscar Ehrnst has 4 lots and currently gets 4 votes. Right now, \$20 buys an extra vote and is that fair? Josh would like every parcel to pay full dues and he has raised dues issues multiple times and has not been heard. He was encouraged to bring it up to the Park members for a vote.

Jessica Tate stated that a committee is needed to reach a change in dues. We have 469 members and the overriding opinion was \$400 dues with 1 vote. We have also gained a lot of new owners through purchase of county land which means more revenue. Jessica stated that the Board is trying to be more professional and put processes in place. The overriding majority wanted this. If you want something done, form a committee and go through the formal process. Tom Hanson stated this issue has been surveyed multiple times. In 2019, the proposal for 1 dues and 1 vote was raised and voted on. People wanted each member to have a voice in the Park.

It was noted that we have a healthy budget. We have spent money fixing things up. We have more money to operate. There is no longer a deficit. Extra money is being used by the road committee.

Rob LaFluer provided an example of Rob owning 1 lot versus Tom Hanson's 5 lots. Using the new way makes them equal partners. Monitoring the combining and sale of lots is a lot of work for the Board to manage and be efficient.

Dan Paul is wondering how many people vote at the annual meeting. This number was not available.

Jeff Gordon stated that 3 years ago 198 members had 1 lot, 120 had 2 lots, and 3 had 73. Approximately 80% own 1 or 2 lots. The 10-15% who own more could wipe out the majority of owner's votes. There were 3 proposals at the time that were voted upon.

Donations are always welcome. Kelly Daniels reminded us that Wilderness Park Homeowner's Association is a non-profit. Whatever the budget is, the money needs to be spent each year. Josh Ostrowski said he would be willing to pay \$100 per month because he wants to see more done such as gravel on the road every year. He was reminded that the budget cannot make money and is for operations. Kelly Daniels and Shawnda Prigelmeier are putting together a proposal for a committee of members to bring ideas to the Board. If members wish to increase dues it requires a vote with a clear plan on how the money will be spent.

Chris Mann stated that there is an allowance for a special assessment if needed. Dues do not necessarily need to be raised. This special assessment would be voted on by the members.

Jeff Zabinski stated that every 30 years covenants need to be renewed and this has not happened. By law we need to do this now. We can bring up the covenants in future years to make changes if wanted/needed.

Julie Munger is wondering about park insurance and if each member needed to take out a lot for the Park. The answer is no; the Board has insurance in place for the common grounds. Individuals have their policy for their own property.

Oscar Ehrnst said we need to look at the big picture, that we need to get this done and not everyone is going to get their way on every issue.

Brice Grafstrom said the Board does not make the rules. It is done by the people.

Old Business: Tom Hanson reviewed the voting process and how votes are counted. We are currently under the old bylaws and therefore need to follow the old way of voting where each lot counts as a vote. Chris has a spreadsheet with each lot listed. The ballot does not show this, but it will be counted accordingly. The Board will also have a second count of how many people vote and the results.

New Business/Open Forum:

Shawnda Prigelmeier wants to move forward with a new committee to look at various ideas. She has a bucket for ideas, or people can email the Park with a subject line of "suggestions" to be forwarded. Please explain why you want it and how you will volunteer, etc. Kelly Daniels, Glen Kastner and Shawnda Prigelmeier are currently on this committee. A mission statement is going to be created. The purpose is to have the members drive decisions in a more formal manner. At Board meetings, there will be a report of the projects, progress, costs, etc. that will be presented to the Board for a vote. The committee will drive the proposals. Amounts need to be

figured in the budget. Fundraising, donations or grants can happen to help fund these projects. Large expenditures could be put in the following year's budget after a member vote. This is an informative group to take the pulse of what is wanted by Park members. Other committees can also be formed to come forward with an idea and how it will be funded. This will get more member participation. This needs to happen now in order to get certain grants.

Rob LaFluer raised that the treasurer has a full-time job. Additional help is needed.

Jeff Gordon suggests that the budget include money for projects like the pool heater. Jessica has not presented the new budget but it does contain a line for money for future projects. We need to maintain the non-profit status. Tom Hanson said this has been done in the past. We have to set aside 10% for the association by law. Jessica is checking on the nonprofit status laws.

Tom Hanson made a motion to adjourn at 10:46. Brice Grafstrom seconded; all in favor, meeting adjourned.

Annual Meeting is August 16, 9:30 a.m. at the clubhouse. Check-in at 8:00.