

**Sunset Shores Property Owners Association**  
**Fall 2025 Meeting, October 3, 2025**  
**New Buffalo Yacht Club**

**Board members present:** Ron Watson, Missy Goldberg, Sharon Kelly Kenny, Cheryl Istvan, Rich Bogusz, Kathy Rohan, Arlene Pokuta

**Board members absent:** Conrad Rickoff

**Members present:** Cy Rohan, Rita Watson, Ed & Nancy Oldis, Jeff Coyner, Barbara Ambrose, Simo Dbila, Steven & Loretta Friend, Gerald Gajos, Shar Lemonnier, Julie & Fred Mattioli, Michael Oster, Andrew & Jane Pliszka, Randy Shoemaker, Bill and Ann Zeiler.

**Called to order by Ron Watson at 10:07 am ET.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **President:**

Ron welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained the reason the meeting was moved from the library to the Yacht club was due to a policy change at the library whereby they only allow 501(c)(3) organizations to use rooms rent-free. In essence, the qualifying factor for a room reservation is the organizations tax exemption status rather than if members of the organization were New Buffalo property tax payers. There was general agreement that as tax-payers supporting the library, that we should be allowed to utilize the rooms. Ron shared that he intended to send communication to the library.

Kathy distributed copies of the Spring meeting minutes to those in attendance and Missy confirmed minutes are available on the website. Ron asked for approval of the May 2025 meeting minutes.

**Decision:** Fred made a motion and Rich seconded. All in attendance approved so the motion passed.

## **OFFICER REPORTS**

### **Treasurer:**

Cheryl provided the printed and oral Treasurers report which showed a current bank balance of \$13,816.60. Out of 170 homeowners, 90 members paid to date. An estimated budget based on the current \$75 dues structure was presented for review.

Cheryl also shared that 23 members donated funds toward the purchase of the west beach stairs for safe egress on our West Beach easement providing \$32,000 in funds for the project. The SSPOA board voted to fund the \$300 shortfall, however donations are still be accepting for ongoing maintenance costs including seasonal removal/reinstallation, locking devices, insurance and signage.

**DECISION:** Kathy made a motion to accept the financial report as presented, Sharon provided a second and the report was unanimously voted to accept the report as presented.

Ed Oldis expressed concerns concerning some planned activities not being included in the budget – such as new sign(s) and social activities. Discussion ensued about fundraising options and the fluid nature of the expenses and the board's needs to adjust plans based on paid members and association needs (e.g. removal of tree debris after a storm, unknown costs of sign replacement).

The board discussed the need to raise the dues to \$100/year per property to keep up with rising costs for park maintenance, insurance and improvements. The dues haven't been raised in many years (estimated to be over 10 years). Sharon clarified that raising the dues would not necessitate a revision to the bylaws. The board asked for input from the group. The proposal to raise dues from \$75 to \$100 per year was unanimously supported by all in attendance. Discussion took place that dues should be increased on a more regular basis to keep up with expenses.

Kathy shared that people donating toward the stair fund frequently requested to Zelle the donations. Cheryl explained that the bank where SSPOA currently has their account does not allow Zelle payments on business accounts. Cheryl explained that opening a second account with Chase in Michigan City to accept incoming dues via Zelle would solve the problem and would offer a convenient means for property owners to pay their dues and make donations. There was a short discussion and the decision was made to proceed with this plan. For the 2026 Dues year, checks, PayPal and Zelle will all be available to homeowners.

#### **New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance and Great Lakes Coalition (GLC) Update:**

Ron provided an overview to the activities of these non-profit organizations work to address the shoreline issues. Ron, as president of the Great Lakes Coalition (GLC) and Ed as Treasurer of GLC participated in the Great Lakes Coalition meeting that took place in Holland, Michigan on August 9, 2025, in addition to many other stakeholders including EGLE, U of M Professors and Legislators. Ron explained the Sand Bag Bill and the Dredging Bill. Ron further explained that the lawsuit filed by New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance is in its 3rd year and the goal is to be done in 5 years. Ron provided detail about the Section One-Eleven study, drift effects and the lower lake levels effects on the beach. Additionally, Ron explained that the New Buffalo harbor was dug out in 1964.

#### **Beach & Creek:**

Ron explained the layout of the East Beach easement and dedicated walkway. He shared the history regarding the proposed stone revetment on Lot 25 and the change in management from the New Drain Commissioner and City Manager. Ron added that he installed new signage in the middle of the property owners dedicated walkway to discourage motorized vehicles from going down to the beach. The signage is also a reminder that property owners should display their flags to discourage non-property owners from using the beach.

Rich proposed the purchase of a roll out ramp walkway for the East Beach to make egress safer down the slope where the previous stone steps were placed/displaced by storm water. Rich shared information about width options and costs. The board supports this plan and expenditure. The board agreed that the storage may be worth the savings to purchase now before prices go up even though it would not be put in place until the Spring.

**Decision:** Rich will proceed with purchasing a portable rollout matt for safer egress to the East

beach which will be put in place next Spring at an estimated cost of \$1,400. The west beach stairway was installed and there was positive feedback about gaining back our accessibility. The beach is large right now and people have enjoyed it. Kathy shared Pusinelli's concern about people parking on the street to access this beach. This prompted a conversation about the city's lack of signage regarding parking on side-streets. All agreed that if anyone is violating the city parking ordinance (which is unclear due to the lack of signage) that they should call the NB police to handle the situation.

Kathy shared that SSPOA signage to mirror the East Beach was purchased and will be installed when Tanner Build comes to take up the bottom section(s) of the stairs for winter storage at the top platform. Kathy also showed all in attendance the commemorative sign for the stairs in memory of Helen Shannon whose vision resulted in the stairway installation. Ron suggested a chain and "closed for the season" sign at the stair's entry point. Kathy offered to order the sign and install.

All agreed that a communication blitz will be needed in the Spring to communicate the requirement to display the property owner flags. Rich is producing additional flags and all requests for a flag should go through Rich. There was also conversation about charging property owners for flags who have not paid their yearly dues.

#### **Schultz Memorial Park:**

Arlene provided a report that we will continue contracting the grass cutting with the same vendor as they agreed to continue the terms of our agreement - \$97 per cut, weekly when the grass is growing rapidly, and bi-weekly later in the summer. The dog waste bags have been replenished.

Sharon & Arlene shared that the grass cutting vendor has done a nice job and is reasonably priced. The soft spots in the grass that were a tripping hazard was leveled and SSPOA funded grub treatment to take away the Moles food source as they created the shallow tunnels.

Arlene expressed concern about the sandbox and related sanitary issues related to neighborhood cats. After discussion, it was decided that it is up to the parents of the children to determine use of the sand box. If there is a point when the sandbox needs to be taken out of commission it can be repurposed to be a planter. The group discussed the resident Beaver as well.

The group discussed two options for the park:

Putting Green: The first proposal was for a small putting green that could be enjoyed by adults and children alike. Cost is based on size, boarder material and the number of holes desired. A quote from Foegley Landscape (proposal #7991) is \$19,255.57 for an installed 2-cup, 720 sq. foot putting green which includes the layout, excavation, concrete, turf, tape, adhesive. Turf repair on the surround is an additional \$1,202 if desired. GroTurf provided a preliminary estimated cost of \$8,350 for a 200 sq. foot putting green and explained that the final cost depends on overall size, shape, grade, materials, amenities and labor.

Walking Path: The second proposal was for a circular cinder walking path around the perimeter of the park since many blocks lack sidewalks. This may be useful to parents who have children playing.

Given the association's small reserves and property owners who haven't paid dues, any projects would need to be funded through donations. Kathy suggested conducting a survey to have the property owners vote on which should be pursued first and people's donations will drive the decision-making process.

**Bylaws:**

Sharon reported that there are no proposed changes and noted that the bylaws went through a major revision/update a couple of years ago. She asked for input/suggestions; none were brought forth.

**Communication/Membership:**

Missy continues to update our Facebook page, website and emails. Kathy shared that the New Buffalo sign vendor (Art & Design) engaged to provide updated signage with an announcement board has failed to provide a quote/design despite multiple follow-ups. Kathy has now engaged a new vendor (Legacy Sign Group) to bid on the work. Legacy has not provided a design or quote yet, but was contacted less than 2 weeks ago.

**Public Relations:**

Missy Goldberg encouraged everyone to update their emails. Ron shared Rita Watson was willing to coordinate collections for *Blessings in a Backpack*. Rita provided detail on the good work that this organization does to address food insecurity the New Buffalo children are experiencing. Ron added that while assisting Rita with deliveries he now has an heightened awareness of the urgent need. Rita acknowledged the Pokegan Club, Feeding America, Local Farmers, Drier's Meat Market and other generous supporters working diligently to try to meet the nutritional needs of our local children. Rita has set-up an Amazon account whereby members can purchase needed items on-line for delivery directly to the Watson household. Food donations will also be accepted at the Park on November 1, 2025 for distribution.

**Nominations:**

Sharon Kelly nominated Ron Watson as President and Kathy Rohan as Secretary. Nominations were requested from the floor. None were presented.

**DECISION:** Sharon made a motion to re-elect Ron Watson as President, Rich provided a second and all voted in favor of retaining Ron Watson as President for the 2-year term.

Sharon made a motion to re-elect Kathy Rohan as Secretary, Ron provided a second and all voted in favor of retaining Kathy Rohan as Secretary.

Standing Chair Appointments:

Ron Watson nominated chair people:

- Sharon Kelly to continue on as Bylaws Chairperson. Sharon accepted.
- Rich Bogusz to continue on as Beach Chairperson. Rich accepted.
- Scott Tumsuden to replace Arleen Pokuta who stepped down as Park Chairperson. Scott is a SSPOA member in good standing who has two children who regularly utilize the park. Additionally, Scott is an experienced board member holding a position in his Homeowners Association in Chicago. Scott was unable to attend the meeting, but

agreed to accept the nomination in conversation with Ron.

Fred seconded the motion and there were no other nominations from the floor. Ron's slate of chairpersons was accepted as presented.

**New Business:**

The group reported that the end-of-summer social held at the NBYC was successful with 32 members in attendance. Neighbors met each other and old friends were able to get caught up on SSPOA news. Two members who attended paid dues at the door and one new board member was identified for nomination. The total cost for the event was \$500 and replaced the annual picnic in the park that had not been enthusiastically supported in recent years. The food was delicious and the club was accommodating. Kathy mentioned that the social event could change each year and we can adjust based on time of year and people's preferences.

Shari inquired about the possibility of having a viewing bench near East Beach on Creek Drive. Ron explained that our easements are specifically for egress only with no stopping. Potential alternative locations were discussed without a resolution.

**NOTE:** After the meeting, Cheryl Istvan spoke with Soglins, our neighbors near the Creek Entrance to East beach, who generously offered to share their viewing bench with SSPOA members. Also, after the meeting, Ron was tasked with asking the city about putting a sign up at the Creek Drive access point.

**There being no further business, Arlene made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Sharon. All present were in favor therefore the meeting was adjourned at 11:48 pm.**