

Hunting Ridge Farms Association Meeting Minutes

September 27, 2025

Meeting Called to Order:

Following approval of the Meeting Minutes of the HRFA Meeting that was held on March 19, 2025, this meeting, 9/27/2025, was called to order at 12:12 pm at the HRFA Community Green,

Attendance (30 Community Members; 2 HRFA Executive Board Members):

Roberta Guarascio #3; Harry #4; Ellen Michaels #5; Kim Krause #6; Joe and Paula Hynds #7; Carol Rosenthal #9, George Olt #10; Joann and George Caruso #10; Fred Tarca #15; Andrea Boncek and Christine Ciociola #16; Randy McNamara #17; Tammie Wilkinson #19; Meg Church #20; Melinda and Jeff Theis #21; Cheryl Hill and Ed O'Connell #22; Paula and Michael Ball #23; Vicky and Steve Greenberg #27; Theresa Fachini #28; Kathryn Nichols and Mark Brombaugh #30; Patti Toller #32; Jo-Anne Basile #33; Insurance Agent of Anderson Krause, Michael Krause, and HRFA Executive Board Member Rob Toller #32, and HRFA President Dom Gatto #24.

Review 2024-2025 Beautification Projects:

A. Gardens

Rob thanked Jo-Anne, Patti, and Michael Ball for their time in designing, planting and maintaining our community plantings at the front entrance and green. It looks fantastic, thank you!

B. Pond Cleanup and Pond Decks Status

Rob invited the community to walk through the much-improved pond area. Dead trees and limbs were removed. Dead branches were chipped and spread as mulch along the side of the pond. The pond planning was over one year in the making to be sure that plans were in line with local Wetlands requirements (chain saw oil that must be used is safe bio-oil, for example).

A discussion was also held about replacing the pond deck that had been recently damaged by a fallen tree and the observation deck overlooking the whole pond. Dom said that replacing the damaged deck will be approximately \$3-4k. Ed asked if the replacement is a capital expense item, and, if so, we only have \$5k in the Association budget. After further discussion, it was decided that we will remove the remaining pylons (estimated \$200) and not replace the damaged deck. We will start to obtain quotes on updating the floor and rails of the observation deck and resurfacing the two observation benches. Randy asked if permits must be pulled for deck updates since it is a wetlands area. The Board will confirm. A brief discussion of memories of a pond fountain was made. Jo-Anne asked about replacing No Trespassing signs in which Dom said signs will be replaced soon.

C. Trees

Rob walked through the community with an arborist to determine the health of large aging trees in the community. Trees are a beautiful advantage in our community, yet they also represent a major health, financial, and liability risk. An arborist has recommended a tree with a hole in the base of a tree on the green to be removed as well as trees on the property of two residents. We will have tree service estimates from the Association tree contractor we use to discuss with those whose resident trees were identified shortly. We can get a good price for removal if we can contract at the same time since large equipment will be on site. Ellen asked how arborists made decisions. Rob explained that it was made on the size and health of the tree as well as a way to reduce the liability on community and resident property.

D. Signs

The Board has been consulting with local graphic and sign owner, John of Autographix on the update and design of signs for the community. We will share designs and costs with the community in the coming weeks. Christine noted that she feels that one of our community endearing benefits is that we are an Association that is hidden. Dom added, "We are the best kept secret in Branford." The sign cost would be a capital improvement.

Budget 2025-2026 Review:

Dom discussed line-by-line the proposed 2025-2026 budget. There will be no proposed HOA rate increase at this time. There will be a budget deficit of \$12k once we reserve for the roads. (Road's reserve each year must be \$12k, based upon roads total estimate of \$72k, to be completed every 6 years). Dom noted that our snow budget is reasonable, however we have been very lucky with little in snow removal the past few years.

Board Openings and Vote:

Vote Rob Toller New Three-Year Term

Rob noted to the community that his role over the past 3 1/2 years has been very fulfilling, and that he will only continue to complete the open 3-year term if the Association uses the service of a Property Manager. Because our community is aging (roads, sewers, lights, pond, gazebo, gatehouse, trees and landscaping), the day-to-day operations take a lot of time. Rob noted that for many of us our homes are our biggest investment and it's time to protect our investment with the use of a professional. Randy proposed that our community could form a group of volunteer subcommittees that would report to the HRFA Executive Board. Vicky agreed and noted that we still need the Executive Board to make plans and decisions. Rob was asked to be on the Executive Board for the three-year term which the community fully supported. Rob said that he would remain on the Board and will give the idea of community volunteer subcommittees a chance, but we still will be without a President in coming year (January) once Dom transitions out. Volunteers came forward to be added to a

subcommittee list (see below). Dom will compile a task list of duties currently being done by the Executive Board to help form these subcommittees.

Open Positions (2)

Fred volunteered to finish Jo-Anne's opening on the Executive Board (to June 30, 2026). Fred's offer was accepted by appointment by Executive Board, Dom and Rob. Expressions of thank you were given to Fred for coming forward to serve. As of January 2026, we will have one opening for the Executive Board. If anyone is interested, please let Dom, Rob or Fred know of your interest.

President Transition

Dom explained that he will transition out as president of the Executive Board by January 2026.

Property Management Discussion

Executive Board will look into Property Manager benefits and cost as a backup to Community Volunteer Subcommittees.

Formation of subcommittees:

Dom will work with Executive Board and Community members that raised their hand to develop a list of critical functions that the Board does.

Community Members who have expressed interest in working on Volunteer Subcommittees includes:

Harry
Joann Caruso
Andrea Boncek
Patti Toller
Randy McNamara
Roberta Guarascio
Tammie Wilkinson
Jo-Anne Basile
Vicky and Steve Greenberg
George Olt
Cheryl Hill
Michael Ball

(If we missed anyone, or if anyone would like to withdraw, or be added to the volunteer subcommittee list, please reach out to us!)

Question & Answer:

Randy inquired about Board approval of architectural changes. Jo-Anne reminded the community that updated styles to consider for garage and front doors were created and distributed to the community over a year ago. They are posted on the website. Dom encouraged the community to bring ideas of changes to the Board. The Board likes to look

at possible changes that update our style in the community. Dom reminded residents that the Board has given approval for Azek material to be used when it comes time to replace cedar clapboard and trim.

Address To the Community Jo-Anne:

Jo-Anne introduced Susan Daigle who is running with her, as Branford's Representative Town Meeting (RTM Representative). Jo-Anne and Susan represent district Zone 7 which is our community that votes at Francis Walsh Intermediate School. Jo-Anne is working on an idea presented by Patti Toller to have kayak storage in Branford.

Insurance Review-Michael Krause of Anderson Krause Insurance:

Michael Krause reviewed key items from a document he created and shared with the Community about minimum and maximum requirements for insurance coverage.

Adjournment:

A motion for adjournment was made and meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm followed by HRFA Annual Friends and Neighbors Picnic.