



HICKORY RIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Village Board Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Meeting recording:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/atIP4vbppXz3s1NEDQJkwcWFKtoGGWn2KXsttmLa9U9KUcqzjIWufao4lvmXOfW.gSUz9PU71jjyZ56>

Members Present: Kristine Amari, Michael Campbell, Steve Hannan, Samantha Link and Skye Anderson. Jared Ball had an excused absence.

Staff Present: Laura Mayton

Guests: Approximately four

Call to Order: 7:30 pm

1. **Board Introductions—Kristine Amari, Jared Ball, Michael Campbell, Steve Hannan and Samantha Link:** Board members introduced themselves. Ms. Anderson introduced herself.
2. **Election of New Board Officers:**
 - a. **Election of Village Board Chair:** Ms. Anderson nominated Mr. Hannan for Village Board Chair. Mr. Hannan was elected Chair with a vote of 3-0-1.
 - b. **Election of Village Board Vice Chair:** Ms. Link nominated Ms. Amari for Village Board Vice Chair. Ms. Amari was elected Vice Chair with a vote 3-0-1.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the agenda and Ms. Amari seconded. Ms. Anderson requested to add Meeting Operations to New Business C. Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the amendment and Ms. Amari seconded. The agenda, as amended, was approved unanimously.
4. **Approval of April 29, 2024, Meeting Minutes.** Ms. Amari made a motion to approve the April 29, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Campbell seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
5. **Board Update:** Ms. Amari reminded residents and Board members to vote in the Maryland State Primary Election tomorrow. She also shared that The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, in partnership with the Howard County Health Department's Opioid Overdose Response Program, offers a free training on Naloxone (Narcan) for Howard County residents, employees, and visitors on how to save a person's life from a possible overdose caused by an opioid.
6. **Resident Speak-Out:** Ms. Lancos expressed her frustration with a resident who removed several trees on their property without RAC approval. She urged the Hickory Ridge staff to take immediate action. Ms. Lancos asked for her testimony to be attached to the minutes. Ms. Mayton explained the Village's violation process. Ms. Link recommended that information about tree removal be included in a future edition of The Log.
7. **CA Board of Directors Report—Skye Anderson:** Ms. Anderson announced that there are 3 newly elected CA Board Members from Harper's Choice, Owen Brown and Town Center. She also shared that there is a FY25 budget booklet available for review if anyone is interested.
8. **Board Organizational Tasks:**

- a. **Appointment of the Village Manager (Laura Mayton):** Ms. Amari made a motion to reappoint Ms. Mayton as the Village Manager. Ms. Link seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Appointment of Board Designees (Laura Mayton & Tania Tavares):** Ms. Amari made a motion to reappoint Ms. Mayton and Ms. Tavares as Board Designees. Ms. Link seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. **Designation of Check Signers:** Mr. Campbell, Mr. Hannan and Ms. Link volunteered for this role. Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the new check signers. Ms. Link seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. **Acknowledgment of Fiduciary Responsibilities:** Ms. Mayton reminded the Board members to sign and submit their documents. Those who had not yet done so, signed and submitted the acknowledgement.
- a. **Acknowledgment of Conflict of Interest:** Ms. Mayton reminded the Board members to sign and submit their documents. Those who had not yet done so, signed and submitted the acknowledgement.

9. New Business:

- a. **Appointment to the CA Watershed Advisory Committee (Deborah Wessner):** Mr. Campbell made a motion to reappoint Ms. Wessner to the CA Watershed Advisory Committee. Ms. Amari seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Appointment to the Aging Well in Columbia Advisory Committee (Celindah Grier):** Mr. Hannan made a motion to reappoint Ms. Grier to the Aging Well in Columbia Advisory Committee. Ms. Link seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. **Meeting Operations:** Ms. Anderson suggested reversing the order of Board meetings: virtual first, hybrid second to accommodate schedules. The Board discussed and weighed the options. Ms. Link made a motion to reverse the order of Board meetings: virtual first, hybrid second. Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Mayton reviewed the Board meeting calendar. Mr. Campbell made a motion to remove the November 25th Board meeting from the 2024-2025 calendar. Mr. Hannan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Old Business: None

11. **Manager Report-Laura Mayton:** Ms. Mayton reminded the Board and residents that The Hawthorn Center will be closed for building renovations. The entire staff will be working remotely and expect to be closed through June 2nd. The owner of Ranazul expects to open no later than the end of June at The Hickory Ridge Village Center.

12. Action Items:

- a. Ms. Mayton will put in a notice in a future edition of the Log regarding tree removal.
- b. Ms. Mayton will update the Board calendar and send the revised calendar to the Board.

13. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.

TO: Hickory Ridge Village Board

FROM: Joan Lancos

RE: Covenant Violations at 6314 Kiteline Court

On May 1 and 2, 2024, the property owner at 6314 Kiteline Court in Clemens Crossing removed a significant number of trees from his property without getting village approval to do so. The property is a very large, irregularly shaped lot of over 31,000 square feet. Easily 10,000 square feet in the rear of the property which abuts Martin Road was clear cut of mature trees.

It is evident by a reading of the Village of Hickory Ridge Covenants and the Architectural Guidelines that the failure to apply prior to removal of the trees is a violation of the contract that every property owner in the village accepts when they purchase in the village.

Covenants

Sec 7.02 “no existing structure upon any lot be altered in any way which materially changes the exterior appearance thereof”

Structure is defined as “any thing or device the placement of which upon any lot may affect the appearance of such lot, including ...trees, shrubbery...”

Section 7.06 gives specific rules as to what to do if any structure is altered or any new use is commenced on any lot without architectural approval.

Section 8.02 specifically addresses the need for authorization of the Architectural Committee prior to removal of trees with a diameter greater than six inches.

The Architectural Guidelines specifically indicate that tree removal requires an application.

Some have suggested that since the trees have been removed, there is little that can be done. Mature trees cannot be replaced. I believe that it is imperative that Hickory Ridge Village follow its normal procedures for a violation complaint. Letters must be sent, 15-day notices must be approved, and a request should be made to the Columbia Association Architectural Resource Committee to take this matter to court. A judge may then decide whether fines should be levied, or the property owner should be required to replant. Failure to follow all covenant enforcement procedures in this egregious case could set a precedent where, in another case, someone could claim that the village and CA are arbitrary and capricious in their enforcement of the covenants and therefore the covenants need not be enforced anymore.

Ironically, if the property had been subdivided and a new home was being built on the property, Howard County would have required that some of the mature trees be retained. Any grading of the property to the extent of the clearing would require a Howard County grading permit that would include proper installation of environmental protections.

The property owner has stated that he plans, again with no application, to develop a very large vegetable garden to feed not only his family but the greater community. The Architectural Guidelines also address vegetable gardens and indicate that an application must be received for

any garden over 200 square feet. Based on the clearing of the lot, the proposed garden is likely over 5000 square feet. The owner also indicated that a deer fence would be constructed. This requires an application. Establishment of a garden of the size indicated could be a violation of the Final Development Plan (FDP 136 1-A-1) for this property which allows only single-family low density uses on this lot.

I request that the village board instruct staff to follow standard procedures regarding covenant violations in this case. I urge the village board to fully pursue this violation of the covenants. Your attention to this matter will assure all Columbia residents that the contract we signed when we purchased our homes will continue to protect our property values.

Brian England, 5/13/2024

Last year I met with Eric Walker and Skye, Eric told us that over the last few years we have lost 2% of tree cover. The most recent dramatic impact has been the death of the ash trees from the ash borer infestation.

Over the last decade we have lost trees in various other ways. Here I have documented projects related to stormwater run off, owners ignoring village tree removal guidelines and development in our village.

1. New Country Lane, Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, 1 acre of trees removed , erosion made worse.
2. Great Oaks Way, 1/2 acre trees removed no biological uplift, step pool conveyance system failed.
3. Resident on Gold Needle Way removed all the trees in rear of their property, another removed two perfectly good trees that were over 15 foot from their home, two other residents removed street trees. Interestingly when these houses were built in the mid 1980's there was an extra \$12,000 fee if you had a forest lot.
4. Patuxent Commons, although a very worthwhile project it is being built on a very difficult lot to develop and it will lead to an acre or more of trees being removed.
5. Bright Passage, a perfectly healthy 100 year old tree was removed next to the bike path while they were removing a dead tree nearby. This was for no other reason than "the owner wanted it removed" to quote the county spokesperson.
6. Bright Passage, 1/2 acre of trees and related undergrowth will be removed while fixing a bridge over a outfall erosion gully.
7. Now we come to the most recent tree removal outrage on Martin road evidently for the development of a farm? At least an 1/2 acre of trees removed! I was told that the resident ignored village covenants and has not followed county regulations.

In the rest of Columbia during past year two Stormwater related projects have removed acres of trees.

1. Minstrel Way 3 acres of trees removed in a "dam" project that now turned a treed lot into lake.

2. Lightning View Road to Rt29, 4 acres of trees removed for a stream project.

Example of CA not understanding their role.

Earlier in the year the owners of the EXXON gas station on Brokenland Parkway across from the end of Stevens Forest Road removed all the trees along side Brokenland Parkway. I contacted Eric Walker and he was not clear what to do so I contacted Dennis Matthey and I then received from his staff the contact information of the owners of the gas station! I'm not sure what I was supposed to do with this information? Fast forward to the last meeting of the Hickory Ridge Community Engagement Committee and a discussion about responding to residents concerns. I shared my story about the gas station and Laura suggested contacting Howard Hughes, I remembered that Nancy Tucker was always helpful so I wrote to her and she is going to look into it.

The point being is that there needs to be a clearly defined process so I have 2 requests.....

1. I request that the village board ask staff to send a notification to all residents explaining the "tree removal" regulations. Making it clear that if in violation they might find it difficult to receive a "Letter of Compliance" when they sell their house.

2. I also request that the board ask our CA Representative Skye Anderson clarify what the CA's role is in the enforcement process.

Brian England
11915 Gold Needle Way



Manager's Report

May 13, 2024

1. Event Reminders:

- **May 15, 7:30pm**, RAC meeting (virtual)
- **May 16**, The Log e-issue
- **May 27**, Board meeting cancelled due to Memorial Day holiday.
- **June 3 & 4, 9:30am**, Story Time
- **June 3, 7:00pm**, Community Engagement Committee meeting
- **June 10, 7:30pm**, Board meeting at The Hawthorn Center

2. Village Office Closed: The Hawthorn Center will be closed for repairs to the banquet room floor and replacement of most of the flooring in the building. The last day the Village office will be open is Friday, May 17th. The building will reopen when the flooring replacement is completed. We are planning to be closed through June 2nd, but if the work is completed earlier, we will reopen. Village staff will be working from home.

3. Ranazul Opening at the Hickory Ridge Village Center: We reached out to the owner to find out the status of the restaurant. He said that he expects to open no later than the end of June. If there is an update, I will share it.

4. Lego Night: For Lego Night, we had 60 participants! We will be holding this popular event again.

5. Flowers Story Time: We had about 40 families attend the Flower story times last week!

6. Interested in Joining the Community Engagement Committee: Attend a meeting on the first Monday of the month at The Hawthorn Center! The Committee meets regularly and is always looking for new, excited members! You must be a Hickory Ridge resident to join.

7. Follow Hickory Ridge Social Media: Keep up with Hickory Ridge news and events with [our newsletter](#) [The Log](#), on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

8. Committee Reports:

- **Resident Architectural Committee:** The RAC continues to review applications as usual.
- **Ageing Well in Columbia Advisory Committee (AWCAC):** The AWCAC continues to meet, and Ms. Grier will report when needed.
- **Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC):** The WAC continues to meet but the committee has no report at this time.
- **Community Engagement Committee:** The Committee meets on the first Monday of each month at 7:00pm in the conference room at The Hawthorn Center.