

# Westhaven Trails Association Informational Session

March 21, 2022

6:30pm – 7:30pm

Meeting got started at 6:35pm.

**Welcome and presentation of agenda:** Enzo Ciarletta

**Treasurer's Update:** Julie Haas

Reviewed budget and updates. Budget is based off of prior years' actual expenses. Adjustments this year - City of Madison storm water tax was eliminated, which added about \$3400 back to the bottom line. We are also getting a credit from last year's storm water tax fees. Not a lot of changes otherwise. Additional questions can be forwarded to the Board, Treasurer.

Questions –

*Why do we keep the budget the same year after year but keep missing the budget?* There is a set amount of expenses to run the organization, there is not a lot more to cut. The expenses and dues are known, but the dues are not covering the expenses. The board did get more aggressive with the city to get the fee reduced with the increasing storm water expenses. Dues were raised this past year, but probably are not going to get raised again in the near future.

*Who do we use for lawn mowing?* New bids are done almost every year, the current provider (Loren Shaaf Lawn Care) has never increased the rate and continues to be lowest bid.

*We have lost over \$45,000 in the last 7 years. How does that get addressed?* We did not lose \$45,000. There have been expenses that created additional draw on the budget (private courts were seal coated, for example, which was over \$16,000). Ryan will e-mail a more detailed response to requestor. Currently there is approximately \$60,000 in reserves.

*What goes into the \$1000 for computers and website?* That is not spent on any computers, primarily annual security certificate, general maintenance and support. The \$1000 is a budget number but is not necessarily spent each year.

**Architecture Review Board:**

The ARB is the only standing committee there is.

Policy updates – The Fencing policy will be reviewed, primarily to update types of materials and the request form. A shed policy is being created, and use restriction fines are being updated.

Private Court Resurfacing Plan – This has been being discussed for a long time, goal is to have something ready by annual fall meeting. 5-6 years ago estimates were \$18,000 - \$20,000 per court.

ARB Requests – Please review covenants and use restrictions prior to submitting ARB requests, also City of Madison ordinances (ARB approval does not supersede city ordinances), ask questions prior to starting the project. ARB requests go to [arb@westhaventrails.org](mailto:arb@westhaventrails.org).

Questions:

*I understand why we need an HOA, but we're the only neighborhood in Southwest Madison with an ARB. Is this still needed?* Yes, it is part of the bylaws. There are other HOA's in Dane County that have Architectural Review Boards.

*What trees were cut and how much does it cost to cut a tree? Is that done by Loren Schaaf as well?* The lawn service only mows. Affordable Tree Service provides estimates for trees. Have had other companies in the past as well. Josh is 50-60% cheaper than other companies. Have had some trees go down in people's yards and had to take care of them right away.

*How much does it cost to mow green space off of Muir Field?* It is being mowed for free, even though it is not Association property. In the past when it was not mowed it became weeds, and members have asked us to mow this area.

*How are our reserves invested? With inflation the way it is, I'm concerned about the loss of purchasing power in the next 1-2 years.* They are invested in a CD.

**President's Update:** Enzo Ciarletta for Kevin Gerber

Interim Board Secretary – LeAnn Krieg volunteered and was approved by the board as interim.

Online Payments Update – Currently working on setting this up.

Parks Committee – Sebastian Grobe now leads the Parks Committee, there are 9-10 people on committee. Working on some projects and getting volunteers to help. If we save money on volunteering it will lower some costs and we can make adjustments for next year's budget.

Annual meeting – Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> in Westhaven Trails Park.

Questions:

*Why wasn't there a board election and budget passed?* The Board decided to delay the annual meeting until fall, and elections will be at that time. The budget is always adopted by the board.

*Questions about Honorariums* – Honorariums were reduced this year. Hiring a management company would cost much more than what is being paid now. Currently 4-5% goes to honorariums. When the honorariums were implemented, there was no one who wanted to run, which was one of the reasons they were started. If a board member does not want the honorarium they do not need to take it. One thing that has come up in the past is that people have quit because the honorarium was cut. It does help to keep people interested, but if a board in the future wants to eliminate them they can make that decision.

*Can we recollect for the honorariums for updating the website that didn't happen from 2019 until February?* Enzo has been working on the website and maintenance and support during this time was done. There were some issues that prevented the 2020 and 2021 budgets from being updated.

*Has Enzo used chainsaws for tree removal?* Yes, Enzo has a property management business and carries liability insurance to cover his work. If there is something small that he can get done he has done it as a way to help save the association money.

*Questions about Park Equipment* – Several years ago had a small park where the equipment got so bad they could no longer upkeep it. Estimates were in the \$25,000 range (park equipment has to meet certain codes and is very expensive). Did not have the money at that time, so was decided to remove equipment rather than replace. In 2017 decided that any park equipment that could not be repaired would be removed.

*Question about Parking Enforcement* - Signs say parking not permitted on court, but doesn't believe has seen it enforced. What is the process for doing that? Signs were updated a few years ago. There are use restrictions on parking, usually start with a warning. Tends to be visitors who are parked there once, and by the time the association gets the information they are no longer there. Going forward contact the Madison Police Department to enforce the parking. Do the rules apply to residents or only guests? Yes residents are allowed to park in areas where there is parking. Some courts have signs that say "Temporary Parking for Guests". Use restrictions address people parking their car on the lawn, etc. and the association can take action on those issues.

Don Newton volunteered to help with the policies, Enzo will be contacting.

*How does the money savings that we have now get budgeted in the future?* Board looks at previous year's budget for planning the upcoming year. Over the past 3-4 years tried to plan one small maintenance project each year based on feedback from residents. Any money that is saved is targeted for the reserve fund. This past year had 3 tree removal projects but only completed two due to the budget. The third project will be completed this year.

Discussed projects the Board has actively worked on over the last two years. The Board is responsible for running the association and ensuring bylaws are followed. The past two years included completion all of the ARB requests by working with residents to help get their projects done and finding affordable tree service to get downed trees from multiple storms taken care of quickly. The Board also continues to review the budget and areas to save. For example, the newsletter is very expensive to send out, but not everyone has e-mail. The newsletter was cut out for a couple of years but have started it again. Have tried using Facebook to collect e-mails and currently has e-mail for 60-70% of residents.

We have added a spot on the bill for email/phone number updates.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.