

MEADOWBROOKE HOA  
ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING AND ELECTIONS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

August 5, 2021

**Attendance: Board of Directors**

Walter Wilkinson, President  
Bob Alvarez, Vice President  
Diana Cameron, Secretary  
Wendy Blankenship, Treasurer  
Jerry Wiech, Representative

**Attendance: HOA Members**

Wendy Alvarez	Clyde Raborn
Scott Cameron	David & Leona Roberts
Spencer Hale	Anita & Stu Hillis
Vickie Wiech	Scott & Paige Bluhm
Sam & Laura Cox	Perry Birky
Dick Abel	Tyler Belston
Jim & Carol Duval	Bret & Kimberly Bullock
Brian Doherty	Shea Hicks
Mike Lyles	Virgil & Kathy Redman
Bob Blankenship	

Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm by Walter Wilkinson.

**NEW MEMBER RECOGNITION** – Walter identified new members Scott & Paige Bluhm and Virgil & Kathy Redman, welcoming them. He also said we have some members leaving, and wanted to thank Scott & Diana Cameron for all they've done over the years. They are moving to take care of grandbabies.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 13, 2020 BOARD MEETING** - Wendy made a motion to approve the July 13 meeting minutes, seconded by Bob. All BOD members approved. Diana has posted to the HOA website along with the applicable Treasurer's report as board members had also approved by email.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Treasurer Wendy Blankenship reported the following:

**a. Operating Checking Account**

Beginning balance as of August 2021: \$15,114.78  
Bills paid – \$ Flathead Electric (autopay)  
                  \$ 324.50 Walter Wilkinson (reimburse mower rental for HOA roadways)  
Deposit - \$ 120.00 (payment of noxious weed spraying invoices)  
Ending balance Operating Checking Account: \$14,910.28

**b. Road Maintenance Account**

Beginning balance as of August 2021: \$45,105.00  
Deposits – No activity  
Ending balance Road Maintenance Account: \$45,105.00

Wendy stated it was too early in the month for the report to reflect the Flathead Electric amount. She also pointed out that the ending balance for the Operating Checking Account on the Treasurer's Report is different

than what the bookkeeper shows because the bookkeeper uses the bank statement that does not reflect checks that have not cleared. Walter asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Diana made a motion to approve, seconded by Jerry.

### **FLATHEAD COUNTY WEED CONTROL PRESENTATION**

Noel Jinings, Flathead County Weed Control representative, shared that our subdivision is "not that bad" regarding houndstongue infestation. She said we're doing a good job and thanked us for our efforts. Noel went on to state "houndstongue is toxic to livestock and horses, but if you have a healthy pasture, it's not an issue; they're not going to choose to eat it – they're smarter than humans and they know what's not good for them." She brought handouts with information about houndstongue and what chemicals to use to manage it; she also brought Montana State noxious weeds booklets to help identify and manage noxious weeds. Noel explained that to be classified as a noxious weed it has to have such a severe impact to natural resources, the environment overall, agricultural processes, livestock, etc. that a state determines it is their job to regulate its management. In regards to Canada Thistle, Noel noted that because it is rhizomatous it should NOT be pulled, because this causes the weed to go into 'defense mode' and it will sprout up more plants; the best way to manage it is with chemicals. Noel answered members questions and let them know they can contact her with any questions in the future.

### **FIRE PREVENTION PRESENTATION**

Marion Fire District Fire Chief Katie Mast said she didn't prepare a fancy presentation, but planned to chat and then see if we have any questions. We are currently in Stage 2 Fire Restrictions which means absolutely NO fires at all.

Stage 2 Fire Restrictions Prohibit:

1. Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, or wood stove fire.
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.
3. Operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails.
4. The following acts are prohibited from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Outside of these hours a one-hour foot patrol in the work area is required following cessation of all activities as identified below. Non-Federal lands within Lincoln County require a two-hour foot patrol:
  - a. Operating an Internal Combustion Engine.
  - b. Welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame.
  - c. Using an explosive.

She said the website [mtfireinfo.org](http://mtfireinfo.org) is a great resource with links and information. Also [flathead.mt.gov/fireservice](http://flathead.mt.gov/fireservice) has a modified presentation of what Katie has done in the past, click on "Homeowners Guide" to view it. She also said they are hoping to offer educational classes and workshops in the Fall/Winter regarding Fuel Reduction/Clearing Property, as well as teaching people how to pile brush and do it safely in cleared areas. Katie said the 'Ready, Set, Go' pamphlet (they handed out) is a great resource to help with preparation for a wildland fire in our neck of the woods. She stated that Marion is probably the best spot to be in the whole western front right now, even though we are probably sitting on a "tinderbox", parts of our forests are still pretty green. We've been fortunate that there's been lightning around us, but nothing has taken off. Marion right now is looking pretty good, even though there are fires around us. Regarding evacuation, don't ever wait for someone to tell you to leave if there's a fire in your neighborhood – take what you need and get out. But in the case where we have a threat, the Fire Department is going to do a pre-evac, putting people on notice of a possible evacuation. In the event of an evacuation the Fire Department works with the sheriff's department going door to door. Katie said her priority is to get the residents out – we can rebuild homes, trees will regrow with time, but it's the people, making sure we're given notice to get out. It was asked if there is any way we can alert the fire department that

we have already evacuated. Katie said putting something at the end of the driveway; paper plates were mentioned, pillowcase over a mailbox, sock on a door knob. Bob asked Katie if she could touch on limbing up the trees and thinning out what we have in Meadowbrooke. Katie said there's some really good guidelines in the handout, and touched on some of them. Basically, against your house you want really short green grass or something noncombustible like gravel, rocks. Then the first 100 feet around your home we don't like to see trees touching each other, and limbed up 5 to 6 feet off the ground. She mentioned what a great job we did on the clearing and limbing of trees in the common area. Katie said if anyone ever feels hesitant or reluctant to light piles on fire, the Fire Department is available to help with controlled burns, or at least give input on when and how to burn. Bob wanted everyone to know the Marion Fire Department did a controlled burn in the meadow area this past Spring, and to thank the fire crew.

### **PINE BEETLE ISSUE PRESENTATION**

Member Dave Roberts gave an informative presentation on this subject, giving what is currently happening in California as an example of what can happen here if we don't get this issue under control. Dave said we need to do our part to protect the forest. Thinning – 20 feet between treetops, limbing 6 feet up on tall trees, 1/3 up on smaller trees. Don't take out just the little trees, you need to have diversity – some little trees, some medium trees, some large trees, some big mature trees. Diversity in species is important. Fir & larch are less susceptible to pine beetles; lodgepole pine and ponderosa pine are the number one targets. If you get a pine beetle infestation, they'll take out everything and that's kind of what's happening out in California. Dave said you may have seen white patches on trees on Hubbart Spur down by Gopher; they're Verbenone patches. They're a pheromone patch – when a beetle infests a tree it releases a pheromone telling other beetles “This tree is full, go find another tree”. The patch mimics that pheromone and keeps the beetle out in flight, they can only fly about 350 feet – the longer they are in flight the more susceptible to birds and other issues. They can't sustain themselves outside of the tree bark, they need to get under the bark as fast as possible. The flight usually takes place in July – August here in Montana. The benefits – if you do some of this and you do it right, you're going to see more wildlife, deer, moose, elk. Another benefit is it will make your property more fire sustainable. But we need to work together, it can't just be one property and then nothing. If a fire comes through its going to come in as a crown fire and then to the ground and burn through on the ground like it should, and once it gets out to where the timber is thick again it will run up to the trees. Bob asked Dave to talk about thinning out trees on property. Dave said we all like our privacy – we don't want to see our neighbors, so he said to start at your house thinning the trees and move out, building that defensible space. When you get out to where you want, leave an “eyebrow” between you and your neighbors. An eyebrow could be 20 feet, 30 feet, whatever you're comfortable with. Dave had some handouts with information on Pine Beetle infestation. That handout is available on our website.

### **LIGHTS FOR MAIL AREA**

Walter let everyone know that we are looking to buy a solar powered light for our mailbox area. Stu said we discussed this before, and we should get some solar powered street lights and put them on the entrance archway pointed towards the mailbox area that way they're “idiot” proof. It was discussed that the solar lights that were put up before were stolen and Walter explained we would put them up high over the mailboxes so they wouldn't get stolen this time. Bob said that solar lights are so inexpensive now it probably won't be an issue. Walter thanked Stu for his suggestion and that we would consider that option. Walter also said in the summertime it's not an issue, but in the winter it becomes an issue.

### **BEAR ACTIVITY**

Walter wanted to mention we've had bear activity again. We had a sow and a couple of cubs in the area; they were captured on a member's security camera. Another member had a young bear swimming in their pond. We just want everyone to be aware of the bears.

## GATES

Walter said we sent out a survey of interest on installation of gates, since we've had many members express an interest in having gates. Also, we've had a lot of non-resident activity, hypodermic needles found along the roadways. Walter asked Mike Lyles to share what he's found on his game camera, down at the end of a cul-de-sac, not even on the main street. He has several game cameras set up and recorded 28 different vehicles in less than 2 days driving in the cul-de-sac. Mike shared that he came home one day and found a vehicle parked at the entrance to his driveway and the occupant was smoking crack. Walter says he has seen a lot of pickup trucks that don't belong to any residents. Walter asked Stu to share his experience. Stu had someone knock on his door late at night and when he went to the door they ran off. Stu feels the traffic has dropped off, because more people have moved in here. Stu is against the gates, he wants to be part of the Marion community, not exclude the community. Sam Cox (Flathead County Sheriff) said we are up 6,000 calls more than last year. When he comes home late at night, he's seen people in the neighborhood that don't belong. He said the gates would be a deterrent to keep people out that don't belong, crime is going up around here, in 21 years of being a cop he's never seen it like this. Brian Doherty said in the last 60 days they have had 3 vehicles drive slowly around their house. Dave Roberts said he wanted to put his 2 cents in – he knows exactly why he left California, he knows exactly why he moved to Montana, he is tired of over-regulation, over-controlling, everyone trying to tell him to live his life like them. You want a gate, put one in your own driveway. Don't lock the whole place down. They're people in here who have gates on their driveways, I'm sure they don't have people coming up their driveway. It's a big giant middle finger to the rest of the town. A lot of lively discussion ensued. Virgil Redman said he lives on a corner and sees a lot of traffic going by his property every day. He said Country Bourne has one entrance gated so it eliminates people driving through. Brian said he bought in Meadowbrooke because he was told there was going to be a gate. Walter said let me tell you where we are on the gates; we've got to have 32 property owners say they want a gate. We didn't even have 32 owners vote. Wendy said we got 20 ballots, 5 or 6 that voted no out of the 20. Bob said obviously the community is divided on the gate, that's why we made the voting requirement of 2/3rds like we did the CC&R revisions. Laura Cox said that over the last several years the answer to a lot of issues has been "you knew what you were getting when you bought here", so her question is why does there need to be a vote on the gates because there were gates when she bought in Meadowbrooke. The bigger question is "why aren't there gates?" They were here when she moved in and they were taken down when they were going to put in electric gate at main entrance, and when that plan was scrapped they were never put up again. So, she wants to know why they weren't put up again, since they were there when she bought in Meadowbrooke. Bob asked Laura when you had the gates before how were they utilized? She said she and Sam would walk down and shut the gates. The one on Gopher was locked most of the time. Shea said when they were starting to install the electric gates Block 1 was upset because they weren't getting a gate first and the project was stopped and the board voted out. Sam reiterated the gate is a deterrent. Anita asked what are we hoping to accomplish? Sam said to keep the traffic out. Anita asked would it then make sense, like Country Bourne, to just gate Gopher? People said it helped last time, and others said they'd be willing to drive around. Walter said maybe we present it to the membership that we block the Gopher entrance and Stu said then every single member should have a key to that gate. Walter said that would make sense. Wendy said this represents the people who actually live here, so if the people in here agree let's give it a try and lock Gopher. Walter asked Sam in his perspective in law enforcement if that would help us? Sam said yes, because it was locked. Paige then brought up the issue of a fire – how would the locked gate affect that? Bob Blankenship said worst case scenario they would cut the lock and then replace it. Spencer said the Fire Department would appreciate a key, and he wanted to point out it is a longer distance for an ambulance to get there via the main entrance and if someone is in cardiac arrest that could be detrimental. Diana said so having an automatic gate would be better for that situation, and Spencer said it would. Walter said you will be hearing more from the board in regards to options. Wendy wanted to explain and clarify to Dick Able because of his comments on the gates, we are not jamming them down your throat, the board actually had totally put aside any talk of gates because our concentration has been on building up money for the roads. At every single quarterly open board meeting members bring up the gates, and they themselves, the members, have brought up alternatives for funding that will not come out of the general operating fund. So, I wanted you to know it's not from the board, it's from the members and we have a responsibility to put that information out there. Walter then reiterated that everyone will be hearing more from the board regarding the gate issue.

## **CRACK SEALING OF ROADS**

Walter got a second bid for crack sealing. The bids are nearly double from what we paid 2 years ago. The bids are over \$10,000. One is \$14,000 and the other they need to make some changes to it. He asked for a bid for hot mix, just for Marion Hubbart Spur. Someone asked if it was chip sealing, and Walter said no we've been told that's just wasting money, as is seal coating. Prices for everything is through the sky right now, but just for Marion Hubbart Spur is \$320,000. That just gives you some idea what we're looking at. They would do crack sealing before putting the hot mix down. Walter said we knew we couldn't do it now, but he wanted to see what we were looking at as far as cost. We need to get these cracks sealed this fall.

## **COMMUNITY WORK DAY**

Walter reported that we had 16 volunteers at the Work Day and he wanted to recognize those people. They are:

Dick & Linda Abel

Byron & Lisa Barr

Scott Bluhm

Shea Hicks

Anita Hillis

Walter Wilkinson

Bob & Wendy Alvarez

Bob & Wendy Blankenship

Jerry & Vickie Wiech

Scott & Diana Cameron

We didn't get finished, so we want to do a little bit more in the fall. We weren't able to do staining because the stain wasn't available. We need to move some burn piles, and the Fire Department said they will come and burn the meadow area when those are burned. We will be asking for volunteers in the fall and the weather should be nicer. Tyler said he just got a skid steer with a brush grabber so he offered to move the burn pile. Bob said when we do it again in the fall, we could use some chainsaw guys.

## **DRIVEWAY APRONS**

The Barr's have contracted with Glacier Paving for their driveway apron, others can get theirs done at the same time to save money.

## **CC&R AMENDMENTS**

We announced the results of the CC&R Amendment voting at our last open board meeting. For those of you that weren't in attendance, they all passed except the goats, sheep and parking; those are the 3 that didn't pass. With all that the board has been dealing with the past few months, we didn't get them recorded yet, but as far as we're concerned everyone is allowed to do what the new amendments allow. Walter stated the board may look at some other CC&Rs to amend this next year. Spencer asked if they will be posted on the website, and was told yes, they will be once they're recorded.

## **SNOW PLOWING**

In the next month or so we will be soliciting bids for snow plowing. Walter said that Tyler did a great job this past year and it was appreciated. Since Tyler is running unopposed for a board position he will be on the board; but Tyler can still submit a bid, he just won't take part in the selection process.

## UPDATE ON NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

### Boards handling of Complaint

There was a complaint filed back in March by a HOA member regarding noxious weeds. Walter stated he had a list of all the things we've done as a board to try and alleviate noxious weeds in our community. As Noel said, we are never going to be able to eradicate the noxious weeds, we can just control them. Many of you received a letter this past week from the complainant; none of the board members received one. Walter said I'm going to be nice and say a bunch of the statements were inaccuracies and not out and out lies.

1. The complainant stated they are a past board member; the complainant has never been elected to the board.
2. The complainant stated that the board had a Flathead County Weed abatement expert come out and "counsel" 17 property owners; the property owners were educated in the management of noxious weeds, not "counseled".
3. The complainant stated that no county report was written at the board's request; the board was told by Noel that she would not be writing a report.
4. The complainant states the development is not in as great of shape as the board indicates; Noel stated that the development is in great shape and she appreciates our efforts.
5. The complainant states he sent certified letters and the board has not followed up; the board has responded to ALL letters received from complainant
6. The complainant states the board did not send letters to owners with noxious weed issues; the board sent letters to several owners and we received responses from all those owners with their action plans.
7. The complainant states that the President of HOA stated the board has the option to not follow their own policies; Walter never made that statement – the statement he made was we have options on what direction to take.
8. The complainant states that he suggested to the board that we consider appointing a committee of 3 to 4 individuals to assess noxious weeds in our development; the board took it upon themselves to work individually with the property owners to help manage their noxious weeds.

Summary of what's been done by board members and their spouses:

- 26 work days – most were full days
- 55 yard size trash bags of noxious weeds
- 8 lots utilized the commercial sprayer
- 12 properties were sprayed by board members (really the Blankenships) for owners who couldn't afford commercial sprayer
- Noel & Commercial Sprayer were used as great resources anytime we have questions
- Covered a total of 148.967 acres that we have assisted property owners

It's an ongoing process, we sent out 3 letters today to owners that have issues. Wendy said being accused of not responding or not doing anything is really frustrating because we worked really hard this summer.

Anita said that this board has done more, used more of their time and more of their effort than I have ever seen in the past. Paige thanked the board for organizing a crew to help them move in, and to educate them about noxious weeds, because they had no idea. Scott said he appreciated the board bringing Noel out, that she spent 25 minutes with them answering all their questions.

Walter apologized if he sounded upset going through the list, but being accused of not doing anything when the board has worked their butts off is infuriating. We worked hard to try to follow the policy out there to the letter. Wendy stated that we wanted to do it in a positive way, not in a regulatory way; it's an education learning it all. We have chosen to work with the property owners in a positive way. Not everyone got a letter; we talked to some people directly, as a neighbor. Walter said we tried to be good neighbors, rather than beat people over the head with it. Walter has 2 pages of things that the board has done and is happy to share them with members.

Stu Hillis talked about the letter that was sent out and his rebuttal to it. He brought visual aids to show how much houndstongue would need to be ingested by equine to kill them. He went on to read off other noxious plants that could kill livestock if ingested. He went on to point out the complainant has over 600 yards of county road on his property – so everything can come in on that side of his property. He also talked about the neighbors directly next to the complainant. Stu's opinion is that the complainant should sell his property and move to a country club.

### **Availability of Commercial Spraying Service**

If anyone is interested in using the commercial sprayer let us know, we can get you his contact number. Spencer asked how much he charges. Wendy said its \$150-200 per acre, but that's only for where he sprays. Wendy said we really encourage those interested in using the commercial sprayer to use him on the same day the HOA uses him. The HOA gets charged the mobilization fee and not the property owners.

### **OPEN FORUM**

The only thing left is the election.

### **ELECTION OF BOARD FOR 2021/2022**

There was no need to count ballots as everyone was running unopposed.

Walter Wilkinson, President  
Tyler Belston, Secretary  
Jerry Wiech, Representative

Bob Alvarez, Vice President  
Wendy Blankenship, Treasurer

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Meadowbrooke HOA Board Meeting

July Treasurer's Report

July 13, 2021

**Operating Checking Account:**

**Beginning balance July 2021: \$15,248.78**

**July Paid:**

Flathead Electric	70.00	(auto pay)
US Postal Service	64.00	(1yr post box rental fee)

**Deposit July 2021**

**Ending balance: \$ 15,114.78**

**Road Maintenance Account:**

**Beginning Balance July 2021: \$45,105.00**

**Deposits: NO ACTIVITY**

**Ending Balance \$ 45,105.00**