

LAKE OF THE WOODS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

March 2026 Board Updates

New President Elected

On February 26, 2026, the Board of Trustees elected **Gary Himmel** to serve as President of the Association. (For those who may not be aware, the members of the Association elect the Board of Trustees and the Board of Trustees, in turn, elects the officers of the Association.) Gary takes over for Dale Freygang, who served as Acting President for the past two-plus months. If you know Gary, please thank him for accepting his nomination and election.

Board Meetings of February 3, 2026, and February 26, 2026

Copies of the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Board of Trustees accompany this newsletter. The minutes relay all that transpired at those meetings. Besides electing Mr. Himmel to be President, board members mostly finalized their refinements of counsel's drafts of the Declaration and Bylaws and the details associated with scheduling the virtual "Town Hall" video conference to present the approved versions of those instruments to the membership in an informal information-sharing and Q&A setting (see below).

Date and Time of "Town Hall" Meeting

The video conference to discuss the proposed upgrades to the Declaration and Bylaws will convene on **Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 7:15 p.m.** Details about how to log in will be sent under separate cover. You also will receive a summary of the amendments, a copy of the existing documents, and copies of the proposed new Declaration and amended Bylaws. Please check your e-mailbox for those details. The trustees hope to deliver this paperwork to you on or about March 8, 2026. *Please save the date!*

Just What is a "Declaration" Anyway?

For a homeowners association governed by Chapter 5312 of the Ohio Revised Code, a "Declaration" serves as the "constitution" of the organization that spells out the purposes and objectives of the Association and offers guidelines for development, maintenance, and preserving the general welfare and living accommodations that are part of planned community subdivisions in the State of Ohio. This is what sets associations like ours apart from neighborhoods that do not offer standards for architecture and conditions for the use and maintenance of individual lots that help to preserve property values and preserve a community's amenities.

For our purposes, the current deed restrictions and covenants are in a separate document, but they will be incorporated as part of a single "Declaration of the Restrictions and Covenants" if the members approve that approach in adopting the changes the board is proposing.

The “Bylaws,” by contrast, spell out the nuts and bolts of how the board and the Association’s officers get elected, what powers and duties each officer has, and how the Association goes about doing its business in carrying out the purposes of the Declaration.

What Purpose is Served by the Proposed Amendments?

When the Association was formed in the 1980s, the organizing documents were state-of-the-art. Since then, technological advancements and changes made to the law by the state legislature since 2010 have prompted the Association’s counsel to urge us, in strong terms, to update the organizing documents to remain in compliance with the latest statutes and to take advantage of the conveniences offered by electronic communication and video conferencing so as to make it easier for members to attend, participate in, and cast votes during membership meetings. The new legal standards for establishing and maintaining minimum contingency reserves also have required our attention. Board members are following blueprints provided by the Association’s counsel and tailoring the final documents to meet the specific needs of our subdivision and address issues that have arisen in the 40-plus years of Association operations.

What Happens if the Proposed Amendments Are Not Adopted?

The short answer is that some changes still would have to be made to comply with the law. But those technical compliance details hardly go far enough. What the board members have done this time around is to consider the organizing documents, as a whole, in terms of presenting opportunities for (1) improving upon Association standards and conditions, (2) modernizing the Association’s regulations and procedures, (3) making the process of administration of the Association less cumbersome or burdensome on the members, board members, and officers, and (4) learning from and seizing upon the experiences of the Association over more than 40 years to make the next 40 years pleasurable and rewarding for every owner. If we succeed in this, the Association itself will prove to be an asset that will contribute to keeping home values up as prospective purchasers flock to our subdivision to buy up the few properties that come to market each year in this well-organized and efficiently administered planned community.

Next Steps ...

The annual meeting will be scheduled in the near term. Board members believe the process of completing review of the Declaration and Bylaws and securing membership approval should be completed before the 2026 annual meeting, now tentatively being planned for between April 20 and May 8. It would seem to be counterproductive to saddle a new board elected after the annual meeting with the task of picking up a process that has taken two-plus years to complete.

Looking Ahead to Our Annual Meeting ...

Board members expect that the annual meeting of the Association will be scheduled sometime between April 20 and May 8, depending on the availability of the Association’s counsel (who typically conducts such meetings each year) and our ability to line up a location for the meeting once we settle on a date. Formal notice of this meeting will be sent to the membership in advance of that meeting.

In the meanwhile, it's time now to consider whether you would like to run for a seat on the Board of Trustees. Mr. Worhatch has indicated that he will accept a nomination to be elected to a full term. Mr. Himmel is debating whether he will complete his current term (ending in 2028). And Mr. Freygang has indicated that he expects to complete his current term (expiring in 2027) without seeking re-election thereafter. So, there will be opportunities soon for other owners to step up to wield the laboring oar.

With the influx of more and more *young* families, the current board members (each of retirement age) hope that one of more of those households will produce board candidates in the near term. What we do not want, of course, is to have to scramble to fill board vacancies.

So, please ask yourself: *If not me, who, and if not now, when?*

And if you cannot see yourself taking on a board position, perhaps you can encourage one of your neighbors to do so?

How to Call Issues to the Board's Attention or Get Answers to Your Questions

The Association's e-mailbox is accessed at least two or three times a week. Mr. Freygang reads every e-mail message and routinely copies other board members when he may not be able to address the issue or concern directly himself. So, if you wish to call an issue to our attention or if you have a question, please contact us at HOALakeoftheWoods@gmail.com.

News You Can Use

For quick reference, here are some local government contacts that might come in handy:

Bruce Bolden, Member of Council
Ward 8, Akron City Council
www.akroncitycouncil.org/members/bruce-bolden
330-375-2256, ext. 8308, or 330-671-6580
Ward8@akronohio.gov

City of Akron Trash and Recycling
www.akronohio.gov/departments/service/public_works_bureau/trash_recycling.php
Pre-schedule bulk pick-ups (three allowed per household per year):
330-375-2311

City of Akron "One Call to City Hall Directory"
Dial 3-1-1 or 330-375-2311 from a cell phone.
Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (except holidays)

Next on Your List for the Association

- Look for details about the proposed amendments to the Declaration and Bylaws to be sent to you shortly;
- Plan on attending the virtual “Town Hall” meeting on those proposed amendments by video conference on **March 26, 2026, at 7:15 p.m.** (a notice of that meeting with instructions for logging in to this video conference will be sent to you shortly);
- Look for a notice about the 2026 annual meeting (to be slated for a date in April or early-May, to be determined soon);
- Consider pitching in to help us with one of the tasks on the trustees’ plates or to organize neighborhood events, such as a Fourth of July block party or Halloween-related activities; and
- Pay your 2026 Homeowners Association fees (\$200.00) (or \$300.00 for each of the two households located on one-and-one-half lots) if you are one of the few owners who have not already done so. An invoice reminding you of this has been sent by Mr. Freygang to those who have not yet paid. **If you can pay by Venmo, please do so, as the accounting process is much more streamlined for our Treasurer in that fashion.** Members are reminded that these fees are due and payable in full by *January 31* each year.

Thank you!

For the Board of Trustees:

Gary Himmel President
Dale Freygang, Vice President and Treasurer
David Worhatch, Secretary