

# Soapstone Cluster Association - Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Date:** October 15, 2025

**Location:** Virtual Meeting via Teams

**Meeting Called to Order:** 7:01 PM

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:06 PM

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**Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by the Board of Directors. A quorum was confirmed with all three board members present.

**Approval of Minutes** The minutes from the September board meeting were officially approved. The minutes had been previously distributed to members via the association's website and newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report** Jeff presented the treasurer's report, providing the following updates:

- **Operating Funds:** The cluster's operating funds are in good standing, with October assessments currently being collected.
- **Capital Funds:**
  - Liquid capital funds are currently low at \$3,495 following a major payment for a paving project.
  - To cover the paving expense, a Certificate of Deposit (CD) was broken prematurely, which incurred no penalties.
  - The total amount of capital funds held in CDs is approximately \$250,000.
  - Two CDs are set to mature in November, and the funds will be used to replenish the liquid capital account.
- **Tree Maintenance Budget:**
  - The association has spent approximately \$7,700 over budget on tree maintenance for the year to date.
  - Less than \$5,000 remains in the annual \$25,000 tree care budget.
  - The board has decided to pause all non-emergency tree maintenance to preserve funds for potential winter storm-related needs.
- **Trash Collection Contract:** The new contract with American Disposal is for \$2,000 per month, representing a monthly saving of nearly \$700.
- **Annuity:** The board is actively working to liquidate an annuity held by the association. While there is no penalty for withdrawal, the association will be liable for taxes on any capital gains earned.
- **Delinquent Assessments:** The board is exploring several options for collecting past-due assessments. These options include using a collection agency or pursuing legal avenues such as garnishing the bank account of the resident with the largest outstanding balance, who accounts for 62% of the total amount owed.

## Old Business

- **Maintenance Activities Update:**
  - Volunteers, led by Adam, successfully completed the garbage patio project over two Saturdays in September and October.
  - Brian rebuilt the stone walls at the entrance to Softwind Court.
- **Stair Safety Improvements:**

- Inexpensive solar-powered lights have been installed on common area stairs to improve visibility and safety at night. The lights feature separate solar panels for better charging performance. Adam reported the lights were still on at 6:54 AM.
- The board has purchased special non-slip traction paint to add white safety stripes to the stair edges. The painting has been delayed due to rain but will be completed on an upcoming dry weekend.
- **Invasive Species Grant:**
  - The board is preparing to apply for a matching grant to help fund the removal of invasive plants in the cluster's common areas.
  - The grant provides 50% of project costs up to \$3,000, with the cluster's portion being covered by funds or volunteer labor.
  - The grant application is due November 1st. The board is considering forming a dedicated landscaping committee to focus on such projects.
- **Fire Lane Parking Enforcement:**
  - An update was provided on a resident's concern about vehicles parking in yellow-curbed fire lanes.
  - The board has emailed the Fairfax County Fire Marshal but has not yet received a response.
  - Enforcement remains a challenge because vehicles are often parked only temporarily. The board discussed installing additional signs to clarify parking rules.

## New Business

- **Updating Cluster Design Standards:**
  - The board announced plans to review and update the cluster's official design standards. Residents are encouraged to submit ideas and feedback. Key areas for review include:
    - **Fences:** Adding approved stain colors, as the current standard only allows for naturally weathered wood.
    - **House Numbers:** The current standard of a small blue plaque is outdated, and most homes are not in compliance. A new standard based on Fairfax County guidelines (e.g., numbers at least 4 inches tall and clearly visible) will be proposed.
    - **Windows and Doors:** The standard requires brown trim for windows, necessitating a DRB application for replacement. The board will review this and also update the list of approved door paint colors, as the current list references discontinued Sears paint codes.
- **Property Maintenance and Compliance Procedure:**
  - The board is drafting a formal resolution to establish a clear procedure for property maintenance enforcement. This is intended to ensure all homes are maintained in accordance with cluster and county standards.
  - The draft procedure will be published in the next newsletter for resident review and comment. A formal vote to adopt the resolution is planned for the annual meeting in February.

## Open Forum & Other Items

- **Snow Removal Contract:** The board has renewed the snow removal contract with Perfect Landscapes for the upcoming winter season. Their pricing was found to be competitive after a review of other quotes.
- **Community Emergencies:** A resident inquired about other potential emergencies besides fallen trees. The board noted that failures of common area retaining walls have occurred in the past and could require emergency funds.

- **Annual Meeting Date:** The annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for a Saturday morning in mid-February, likely the 14th or 21st, and will be held virtually. The official date will be confirmed and announced later.
- **Halloween:** Residents confirmed that traditional trick-or-treating is expected to take place on Halloween night, despite a planned community movie event.
- **Trash Cans:** A reminder was issued to all residents to store their trash and recycling cans near their homes and not on common area sidewalks, except on collection day.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was officially adjourned at 8:06 PM.

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## Action Items

#	Action Item	Owner	Deadline
1	Follow up via phone with the Fairfax County Fire Marshal regarding fire lane enforcement.	Board of Directors	Next Meeting
2	Purchase and install solar lights for the one remaining set of common area stairs.	Board of Directors	Next Meeting
3	Paint white safety stripes on common area stairs once weather permits.	Board/Volunteers	As soon as possible
4	Obtain a quote from Brightview for invasive plant removal and submit the grant application.	Board/Carol	November 1, 2025
5	Publish the draft "Property Maintenance and Compliance Procedure" in the newsletter for resident comment.	Board of Directors	Next Newsletter
6	Research and draft proposed updates to the Cluster Design Standards, incorporating resident feedback.	Board of Directors	Ongoing
7	Contact Reston Association to inquire about the status of updated paint color palettes for the cluster website.	Board of Directors	Next Meeting
8	Finalize and announce the date for the February 2026 Annual Meeting.	Board of Directors	As soon as possible