



Great Oak Farm Homeowners Association, Inc.

PO Box 616, Monroe, CT 06468-0616

Email: info@greatoakfarm.com | Website: <https://greatoakfarm.com>

Regular Meeting Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Call to order at 7:02pm

Roll Call of Board Members - Present: Christopher Kovalchick, Georgia Nyquist, Lori Mangano, Michael Tobin, Sudham Nilaweera. - Patrick Egan expected later and arrived later. - Quorum established.

July meeting minutes approved without corrections.

Meeting summary

The meeting covered several operational updates including architectural review discussions about communication methods and landscaping plans, along with a review of a completed septic system project that exceeded its initial budget. The board discussed and approved various community events including the successful 30th anniversary celebration and upcoming holiday activities, while also addressing parking concerns and security camera proposals. Financial matters were reviewed, including bank balances, payment systems, and budget alignment, with the board approving various administrative requests and establishing meeting schedules through November.

ARB Newsletter Revival Discussion

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) discussed the effectiveness of their communication methods, particularly newsletters and email platforms. Michael Tobin proposed reviving a newsletter to reach more residents, citing concerns about the current reach of electronic communications. Christopher shared data from a previous community survey showing high engagement with electronic communications. They agreed to explore the possibility of a newsletter, with Anne Brakeman volunteering to create a mock-up for the November meeting. The group also discussed ongoing challenges with the HOA platform's email capabilities and the need for a backup solution.

Landscaping Plans and Budget Review

The team discussed landscaping plans, with Georgia reporting that she was waiting for Chad's response regarding a contract and tree removals, while noting that some contractors were too busy to respond. Christopher confirmed that the budget review was ongoing, with Sudham checking remaining funds to determine what could be done for Divina's tree removal request. Eddy raised concerns about tree removal behind his house, with Christopher explaining that Chad recommended taking down diseased pine trees but leaving maple trees, though the exact timing and follow-up planting remained undecided due to budget constraints. We also completed repairs that were unexpected with the retaining walls around the bridge in the pond area.



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Septic System Project Completion

The meeting focused on the completion of a septic system project that cost \$20,450, an increase from the initial \$16,500 estimate due to additional work and materials. Christopher explained that the project included replacing distribution boxes and a deteriorated baffle box in fields C, D, and G, and soil testing showed a potential location for a new field behind fields C and D. The group discussed the importance of educating residents about proper septic system use, particularly the dangers of flushing wipes and grease, with Eddy suggesting a comprehensive informational campaign. Christopher mentioned that he would reach out to vendors for upcoming engineering and pumping costs.

Social

The 30th anniversary event was successfully held and Chris and Lori expressed gratitude for the event, noting the positive feedback and community involvement. This event was under budget, with a total cost of \$2,086.49. The event was well-received, and Lori thanked the committee and attendees for their participation. Upcoming events include the Great Oak Farm Diwali event on October 19 at Sunny's home, the Kids Halloween Parade and video tentatively on October 26, and the annual tree lighting is tentatively on December 7. Adrienne is hiring Monroe PD for Halloween 6pm-10pm at the front entrance. Dana Weed and Frank Mangano will orchestrate collections in November for Thanksgiving meals for group homes in town.

Community Safety and Infrastructure Updates

The community discussed parking issues, with a focus on preventing vehicles from blocking roadways to accommodate emergency vehicles. They agreed to communicate parking guidelines to residents and consider installing no-parking signs. Christopher reported on IT infrastructure costs and the exploration of a comprehensive HOA system. Patrick updated on the theft and recovery of speed gates, and discussed potential solar lighting options with Eversource. The Monroe Police Department recommended installing three cameras in the neighborhood to address safety concerns.

The board reviewed two security camera proposals: Flock Security at \$9,450/year and Verkada at \$17,000 for 3 years, with annual renewals of \$3,500. Christopher explained that board approval would be sufficient for the camera installation, with footage accessible only to Monroe Police Department for criminal investigations, not for general access. The board discussed privacy concerns and agreed that access should be limited to elected officials, with a check and balance system in place. We are also considering possible solar lighting in the community as a result of cost effectiveness.



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Financial Operations and Payment Systems

Sudham requested budget information from board members for the upcoming budget review, noting they have about a month to compile the line items.

Sudham reported that current bank balances are being managed timely with late fees helping improve payment adherence, and administrative issues with Newtown Bank have been resolved. The team discussed implementing electronic payments, with Sudham exploring options through their bank's relationship manager, though they decided to conduct further research on secure and cost-effective payment methods that would integrate with their existing QuickBooks system. Michael Tobin inquired about payment methods, revealing that while some residents use electronic debits, most still pay by check, which requires manual processing by Sunny.

Financial Planning and Event Updates

The board discussed financial matters, with Sudham reviewing year-to-date spending and budget alignment. They agreed to move any year-end surplus into the General Reserve. All board members approved a request from Anne Brakeman to place a sign for the October 5th Think Pink Monroe Breast Cancer Fundraising Event near the road entrance. They decided to hold monthly board meetings through November, with the October 23rd meeting focused on budget review and the annual meeting scheduled for the week of November 17th will be in person.

Chris motioned to adjourn at 8:20pm and Lori 2nd.