

THE BIRCH BARK



White Birch Lakes Recreational Association
4730 Lake Road, Farwell MI 48622
Office: (989)588-7169 Clubhouse: (989)588-2853
Fax: (989) 588-4924 Web: www.whitebirch.org



DECEMBER 2022

IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL OR FIRE EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL 911

2021-2022 Board of Directors

President	Tim Boos	timboos@yahoo.com
1 st VP	Steve Brandle	sbrandle84@gmail.com
2 nd VP	Jim Ostrowski	valmarco@charter.net
Director	Phil Blaisdell	philerin81@gmail.com
Director	Kevin Dombrowski	kd460@sbcglobal.net
Director	Steve Bryant	sfbryant@yahoo.com
Director	Jenny Baker	jen.e.baker@outlook.com

WBL Staff

Manager	Michelle Waters	admin@whitebirch.org
Secretary/Treasurer	Lisa Trojanowski	ecoffice@whitebirch.org
Clubhouse	Georgia Romine	Kathy Jerrod
Lead Maintenance	Jess Johnson	supervisor@whitebirch.org
Maintenance	Mark Mozek	

AFTER HOURS MAINTENANCE (989) 588-7066

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SNOW

With snow beginning to fall, please be aware that it is Members responsibility to keep their mailboxes cleared. The mail carrier will not deliver to a blocked box.



HOURS OF OPERATION

WINTER CLUBHOUSE HOURS Starting 10/01/22

8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
Closed Wednesday
8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Friday & Saturday
12:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Sunday

SECRETARY-TREASURER OFFICE HOURS
8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
Closed Wednesday
8:00 A.M. to 9:45 A.M. the 2nd Saturday of the month
Closed Sunday

MANAGER HOURS
8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
Closed Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday

SWIMMING POOL HOURS
9:00 AM TO 3:30 PM Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
Closed Wednesday
9:00 AM to 7:30PM Friday & Saturday
12:00 PM to 4PM Sunday



Every Friday!! In the Clubhouse! 9 am to 11:00 am



Donuts \$1.00



Calendar of Events

New Year's Eve Party	Dec 31	7pm-1AM Clubhouse
Board Meeting	January 14	10:00am Clubhouse
Bingo	January 21	1:00pm-3:00pm Clubhouse

Please use extreme Caution and follow the Danger rating system, Posted by Smokey at the Entrance/Exit

Campfire and Seasonal Wood
If you see any downed trees or limbs on the side of the roads they can be taken by Members for campfires or seasonal firewood. Please do NOT enter other Members lots for wood Unless you have permission from the Owner.



Per WBLRA policies, Members must be "In Good Standing" (current on assessments) before using any of the amenities. If a Member is NOT in "good standing," our employees with direction from the Board will turn them away. If a Clubhouse Attendant turns a Member away, it is based upon a list which is updated Every Friday afternoon before 4pm.



Trespassing

Please be aware that, by leaving WBLRA by any other means other than the Entrance/Exit, you are trespassing on private property. Please be aware that by opening trail, you are encouraging others who do not own property to come in on these unauthorized trails. The only lawful means of ingress & egress into our Association is the Entrance/Exit gates on White Birch Lane at the front of our Association. We encourage all Members to use the gates exclusively, as intended.



Recreation

A current copy of the DNR ORV handbook is available in the office. Let's all have a great time and enjoy ourselves, safely. Slow down at stop signs and watch for others.



"Slow down you move to fast, you gotta make the moment last."



"Leave sooner, drive slower, live longer."

"Jingle bells" is a very popular song that is heard during the Christmas season. Many people may think it was composed to celebrate Christmas but it was actually meant to be a Thanksgiving song.



Dec 24 is National Eggnog Day!!

- 1 1/2 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup egg substitute
- 1 cup vanilla ice cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon [McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract](#)
- 1/2 teaspoon [McCormick® Ground Nutmeg](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon [McCormick® Rum Extract With Other Natural Flavors](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Place all ingredients in blender container; cover. Blend 1 minute or until well mixed.
- 2 Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.



Information Station

"Your Destination for Information"

Constant Contact Signup link has been posted to the Facebook Page.

The Bathhouse is closed for the Winter Season. The Clubhouse is still open during winter hours for use and a port a Jon has been placed at the campground.

The Sand/Salt barrels are now out on the corners for members to use if you need a little extra traction.

Caution: Increase your following distance so that you have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you. Don't crowd a snowplow.

Winter has come rushing in please give yourself extra time to get to your destination. Slow and Steady wins the race!

We would like to wish EVERYONE a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



DID YOU KNOW?

The strangest and most intriguing festivals happen in December! Are you ready!

First, there's Krampus Nacht in Austria. This is where Santa's evil twin Krampus, a half-goat/half-man demon, chases naughty children through the streets.

How about the [Burning Clocks Festival](#) in Brighton, England? This is where paper lanterns are burned in an enormous bonfire on December 21st to mark the shortest day of the year.

Last, but not least, the Night of the Radishes. The radish-carving festival is celebrated every December 23rd in Mexico. This one is probably the weirdest of the lot!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

K F A M I L Y T R N K B J L H
Y M U T J C O R B S X G O J H
Y U P L R C A R O L S I Y I F
Y C M R R E Q N W E E V E N N
L H F E E P E H D N D I J G O
S R B T D S C S S Y W N G L R
Y I Q M T Y E R C M C G S E T
U S T O C K I N G S J A E I H
U T L I G H T S T G S D N W P
L M F L I O V S M S N J S E O
K A V F X B I Z G I I G D T L
B S R E B Z S L E I G H X C E
F K Y O L Q H R N S N O W R U
X N L R J F Z C D N D E X X V
H S T A R W S A N T A T L V M

BOW	FAMILY	NORTH POLE	SNOW
CANDY CANE	GIVING	PRESENTS	STAR
CAROLS	JINGLE	REINDEER	STOCKINGS
CHRISTMAS	JOY	SANTA	TREES
ELF	LIGHTS	SLEIGH	

White Birch Lakes
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2022
(Meeting conducted through GoToMeeting.com and at the Clubhouse)

I. Call to Order:

President Boos called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Board Members Present: President Boos; Directors Blaisdell, Ostrowski, Brandle, Dombrowski, Bryant and Baker also, Secretary/Treasurer Lisa Trojanowski, Manager Michelle Waters and Lead Maintenance Jess Johnson

Board Members Attending by Teleconference/GoToMeeting: None

Board Members/Others Absent: None

Note: There were approximately 5 Members listening to the meeting through GoToMeeting and approximately 15 Members in Attendance at the Clubhouse.

The Invocation was given by President Boos.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present and listening.

II. Additions to the Agenda:

New Business Assessment Fees – President Boos
 Realtor Listings -Director Baker

III. Approval of Minutes:

(1) Director Baker moves to approve the minutes from the November Board Meeting, 2nd by Director Ostrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report:

(2) Director Brandle moves to approve the financial reports for November as presented, subject to the Auditor's approval, 2nd by Director Dombrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

There were no Accounts Payables for November to present at this time.

V. President's Report: President Boos reported the following:

“The decorating in the club house creates a good Christmas atmosphere. Thanks to all involved. Remember the Christmas party is this afternoon. The Board continues to work on the new C& R proposal. We will keep the members updated as we proceed. The R2A zoning issue will be monitored at the Township for the next time it is on the planning committee’s agenda.”

VI. Manager’s Report: Michelle Waters reported the following:

“The campground bathhouse has been shut down for the winter, there is a portal jon in the campground for your convenience. We received our salt and sand deliveries for the winter. The sand/salt barrels have been placed at the stop signs. We purchased a plug and play back up camera for the sterling truck. This will insure our driver can safely back up and also watch the salter. The camera was \$119 and works as it should. Just a reminder that our maintenance crew plows the roads when we get 3” of snow. I would like to thank all the volunteers that decorated the clubhouse, it looks very festive. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.”

VI. Maintenance Report: Jess Johnson reported the following:

“Our new maintenance employee Mark is working out really good and Joe has left for Florida until Spring.”

VII. Committee Reports:

Activities Committee: Kim Mitchell reported for Marnie Frank:

“We had the Thanksgiving Dinner on November 19 with 43 people in attendance. Tom and Linda Boos delivered 4 dinners to members that were unable to attend due to health reasons. There were many delicious dishes that were brought by members. I would like to thank the members who stayed and helped clean up afterwards and those who helped set up tables etc. before the dinner as well as those on the activities committee. Their help was greatly appreciated. Bingo was November 26. I also want to thank everyone who helped take down the Thanksgiving decorations and put up the Christmas decorations. I really appreciate everything and love to see everyone pulling together to make things work. Bill and Willa Coombe donated the tree which is next to the fireplace. After Christmas we will need to purchase one to replace this one for next year. Tonight, December 10 will be the Christmas party from 4 pm to 5:30 pm with the Sing a Long from 6 pm to 7pm. For those who don't want to join the Sing a long, there will be lots of snacks. If you want to bring something to share, please feel free to. I hope everyone comes to the Christmas party tonight for some fun and fellowship. We will not be having Bingo in December. The next Bingo will be January 21 from 1pm to 3 pm. On January 28, we will have a Chili/Soup cookoff starting at 4 pm. There will be a \$25 gift card for the best Chili and one for the best soup.”

EPC & Conservation / Grounds Committee: Bob Mitchell reported the following,

“There are only two trailers left on lots. We have had applications for 4 tree removals ,1 septic ,2 culverts/driveways and one contingent property request this month. I have contacted the member about the non-working vehicle (Pine Run) and the chest freezer that has not been removed and a 2nd notice will be sent to them.”

Technology Committee: Director Blaisdell reported,

“Jessica connected with her contact that works in the cell phone tower industry and she gave Jessica 2 names of companies to contact about cell tower placement and construction. These 3 companies are American Tower, SBA and Crown Castle. At the last meeting, I was given the name of American Tower by a member. I contacted American Tower and was told that they do not actually build or install towers. They are a company that is the facilitator of contracts and leases between the cell companies and land owners making sure that the land owners do not sign bad deals with the cell companies. Jessica filled out the paperwork and submitted it to Crown Castle to see how they might be able to help us but has not heard back from them. Jessica's contact did say that every cell tower has a name plate of the tower company along with a phone number at the base of every tower. If you happen to stumble by one, please write the information down and send it to us and we will track it down.”

Director Baker also inquired about the use of a conference call system we could possibly use. She stated that we have had an ongoing problem with the GoToMeeting not working because of our internet and is concerned with winter approaching that she may not be able to attend meetings and would like to know if we could have a backup in place. It was decided that we could use our office phone to have conference calling and will try it a little before to make sure it is working.

VIII. Comments from the Floor:

1. Dawn Holzer, Lot 1101, “I would also like to comment on the Activities report, Willa Coombe took our existing nativity figurines, and over the summer she repainted them w/the help of Chloe and made them brand new. The look gorgeous. And we did not have to buy any. Those new are \$400 or \$500.”
2. Jeff Simons, Lot 299, “Jenny, your question about the phone system, we were always doing that in the winter using the phone. It does have a very poor sound quality and we were actually working towards getting a better phone for meeting type situations and then one of the Board members at that time really pushed us into the GoTo at that time. When all we were trying to do was get a better-quality phone. It works but you could not understand people when they were talking and the speaker is poor quality. So, if you want to go that route, my suggestion would be to just get a better-quality phone. It would be better than the GoTo and you could still run both if you choose.” Jeff also inquired on the status of Star link. We are on the list and are projected for the middle of next year. (The Technology committee will look into the cost of a better-quality system for conference calls)
3. Dawn Smith, Lot 415, “I appreciate that the board is going to continue the Planning Committee's progress on the R2A agenda. I am going to encourage our members who are on the Planning Committee Board to give the White Birch Board a heads up on the meeting agendas before the meetings so they are prepared. Thank you.”

IX. Unfinished Business:

In regards to the Agenda item of “Common Property Taxes Update,” There is nothing new at this time.

In regards to the Agenda item “2023-2024 Budget Review,” A proposed 23-24 Budget from the Finance Committee with a few changes including increasing camping fees by \$5.00 and adding a 3% convenience fee to anyone who uses credit/debit cards. Dawn turned the floor over to Lisa Trojanowski at this time, she presented a proposal/request to raise the late fee from \$21 to \$31. This increase is not to make a profit but to offset rising bank fees. This proposal would be added to the budget and does not reflect the numbers that are presented at this time.

(3) Director Baker moves to increase the Late Fee for annual assessments from \$21 to \$31 effective March 1, 2023. 2nd Director Dombrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

(4) Director Blaisdell moves to accept the 2023-24 budget as presented with projected total income at \$506,100.00 that includes a 3% convenience fee for credit/debit use and \$5 increase in camping fees and the projected total expenses to run the association at \$506,100.00. 2nd Director Ostrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

(5) Director Blaisdell moves to keep the current member assessment at \$425.00 for the budgeted year 2023-24. 2nd Dombrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

In regards to the Agenda item, “Communication-Website” Director Baker stated that she sent Constant Contact emails to 192 members and it had a 78 % open rate which is really good. The Board was presented with email links to access the new “not live” webpage to review. There was a discussion about some language in the page and adding of email addresses. Director Baker will take these suggestions and comments and continue to go forward with the website design. Director Baker is asking if anyone has some really good quality pictures of White Birch, please forward them to her.

In regards to the Agenda item, “C & R Discussion,” There will not be any discussion this month Marie Sherry had some family obligations and was not able to work it last month. President Boos suggested that she can send information by email or bring it up next meeting.

In regards to Agenda item, “Approval of Revised 2033 Application for Absentee Ballots and Policy,” Director Brandle stated that there were just a few changes. There were some questions about name verification and it was decided that we would revisit this in the Spring when Teresa is back from Florida and an Election Committee meeting can be held.

In regards to Agenda item, “EPC Violation/C&R Violation Letter Discussion,” Director Bryant stated that there were approximately 8 campers left on lots when the committee looked. There are several infractions beyond campers being left on lots. Letters were only sent to members with campers left on lots per the direction of the Board. A few letters were sent with the incorrect verbiage and they are in the Board packets for approval. There was a discussion. Bob was instructed to seek approval through President Boos before sending any letters out. Also, it was suggestions to add a contact phone number or email that is not the office but to the committee.

(6) Director Bryant moves to have EPC make a letter to address all violations (sighting specific policy) and have it approved by the Board before mailing. 2nd Director Baker. All Ayes, motion carried.

In regards to the Agenda item “R2A Discussion,” Director Blaisdell stated there will not be a public hearing on this upcoming Tuesday. There will be no discussion about this other than when the public hearing might take place. There is a procedure that happens before a public hearing can happen such as a public announcement in the local paper and it has to be posted 15 days prior to the meeting. As always, if Director Blaisdell is aware of an upcoming meeting, he will make the Board aware.

A short break started at 11:35 am
Returned 11:50 am

X. New Business:

In regards to the Agenda item, “Activities – New Year’s Eve Discussion.” President Boos turned the floor over to Jeff Simons who was requesting from the Board and Activities Committee approval to use the Clubhouse for a 1980’s New Year’s Eve Party Open to ALL members. He was also requesting \$400 to pay for snacks and party favors.

(7) Director Bryant moves to make a motion to allow a New Year’s Eve party without WBL funds at the Clubhouse. 2nd Director Brandle. President Boos, Director Bryant, Director Brandle, Director Baker Ayes. Director Dombrowski and Director Blaisdell Nay, motion carried.

In regards to the Agenda item, “Ratify email motion for Sand and Salt Mixture.”

(8) Director Brandle moves to approve the purchase of Winter sand/salt mixture for approx. \$1300.00. 2nd Director Ostrowski. All Ayes, motion carried.

In regards to new Agenda Item "Assessment Fees," President Boos stated that everyone had received a letter in their packets regarding how we assess fees to properties depending on when and how property was received. This is for review at this time, but the Board should take action. Please review for next meeting.

In regards to new Agenda item, "Realtor listings," Director Baker stated that she had seen a listing for WBL on Zillow and was concerned at how Realtors were listing our amenities. It was decided that when a listing is seen, that we would like to address, the office will reach out to the Realtor and explain how we would prefer our community to be perceived.

XI. Additional Comments from the Floor:

4. Deb Gerish, Lot 372, "I am surprised and extremely disappointed that \$68,000.00 is past due in Association dues for 2022, considering it is the middle of December. I also think it is great that we are going to increase the cost for the people who are paying monthly but I also think we should be hammering people who are past due even more than we do. I don't think that people who pay up front or regularly should take any of these costs in. We need to hit them hard and they will either sell their property to someone who hopefully does pay or they will pay on time."
5. Bob Cooley, Lot 419, "Phil, I don't know if you remember the Township meeting, Tami McCasslin said," If I had my way there would be no camping on lots in Lincoln Township. There is that one person. And she is also the one that said to get rid of the R2A."
6. Jeff Simons, Lot 299, "So, first on the budget I just want to say that there must be another policy change coming to increase the camping fees. The budget is one thing and the camping fee is another thing you are going to have to address to raise those fees. Because those fees are set in that camping policy. So, think about that, look at what we have left over. We are trying to encourage folks to use the campground and it is already being under-utilized. I don't think increasing fees is the easiest way to encourage people to use it. You are just encouraging them to put multiple campers on their lots. We actually seen a decline the last time we increased camping fees. Jenny, the communications website, we talked about that and that is a WBLRA Association website that is being built. That is our Association fees being used to build that website. If the old debunked developers that went bankrupt was to put money in it fine but this is our funds paying for that website. To clarify, Steve made a big deal about taking recreational out of the website but this is a White Birch Lake Recreational Association website with money coming from our Association fees. C&R discussion, I just want to make sure that the minutes reflect very clearly that Steve and Phil made the comments of wanting to include the Policy in those EPC letters going out. The judge very clearly said at the end of that lawsuit the White Birch Board cannot enforce a Policy upon private property. Both Steve and Phil made reference to enforcing that Policy with EPC when it is in violation of that court order which makes it an illegal motion."
7. Lisa Cooley, Lot 419, "So just a comment with Jeff, yes this may have started out as White Birch Lakes of Clare, it failed we had to invite campers in. We are now White Birch Lakes Recreational Association. Campers have every right to feel picked on. I sat through this meeting and all I have been hearing was send letters to them, oh send letters to them. I don't want to throw any member under the bus, because we are all members, we are all one. We do need some to step up. But I am going to tell you what, there are some homeowners that need to step up as well. I did hear some mention of homes, but there is such a heavy focus on what every camper is doing wrong. I come up here to socialize. I live on 20 acres at home, I don't know my neighbors. I have a lot of fun up here. I have never been sent a letter about having too much fun, never been talked to because of my driving. So, some of us can have too much fun and not be part of the chaos. So, if you don't like to have fun, I don't know stay on your own property. Because I am up here to have fun. It says this is recreational this is what I do I have fun and enjoy people."
8. Kevin Dombrowski, Lot 1209, "I am a little concerned about the precedence that has been set about a member wanting to have an activity. Being on the Board when there were times that nobody wanted to do activities, no one wanted to do any activities and even when we were throwing money at them to do those activities. I am a little disappointed and hoping to revisit for the future encouraging members to have activities such as what Jeff was trying to put together. I am disappointed that we were not able to provide some funding for the man."
9. Tim Vajcner, Lot 34, "Lincoln Twp is not overly camper friendly. That 2017 ordinance was horrible. Yes, in the ordinance change earlier this year there were some changes made to allow some basic camping. But as Bob said one of the Planning Commission members just a year ago said at a formal meeting, "I hate campers." Also, some Planning Commission members had characterized and termed this Glorified Camping. I viewed it in a derogatory manner as that some of us appear to them to have too much. Too much fun, too much stuff and that is not right in their view. So that is my opinion on Lincoln Twp as they view camping. Actions and words speak loudly."
10. Dawn Smith, Lot 415, "I would encourage the Board to encourage the EPC committee for the letters that are going out for violations that the exact C&R that is being violated is noted in the letter to the member."
11. Deb Gerish, Lot 372, "I talked to Phil when we had a break and I personally would like to see a cleaned-up campsite with a grill on it rather than the junk on residential and camping lots. So, if I was a residential or camping member and there was all this junk next door, I would not be happy getting that letter if they have all their stuff sitting around."
12. Bob Mitchell, Lot 477, "I am the chairperson for EPC, and I just want everyone to know that I do not differentiate between campers or houses. It does not matter to me. If they are in violation, they are in violation. I do not pick on campers. I just want everyone to know where I stand."
13. Jeff Simons, Lot 299, "Earlier on we were talking about the website and there was a comment about perception and folks looking at it and the whole WBLRA stuff. I think one that that should really be included on the website, is to make sure White Birch Realty has no association with us. It is not a WBLRA entity. There are a lot of folks that contact White Birch Realty and find out later it is

not the Association that made those decisions. Just make sure it is clear that it is not one of our entities. Make sure that Board members and everyone makes sure that their trailers and everyone are licensed and what not.”

(8) Director Ostrowski moves adjourn the meeting at 12:32 pm, 2nd Director Baker. All Ayes, motion carried.

Submitted by,

Lisa Trojanowski Secretary/Treasurer

