

**Willow Brook Estates**  
**Beautification Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2025**

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**Attendees:**

Armand Minutillo, Chair. (143 WB-F), Mike Baruffi (145 WB-F), Robin Gaskin (138 WB-F), Amy Glaysz (200 WB-F), Marsha Kennedy (47 WB-F), Lorna Zammett (206 WB-F).

**In-Scope:** Defined & Agreed Upon

- Main Entrance - Pillars
- 5 Rain Gardens
- 5 Common Parking Area Cul-de-sacs (Postal to Gazebo)
- 2 Gravel Walking Paths
- Retention Pond/Woods Mulch Walking Path

**Out-of Scope:**

- Curbing
- Common Area Dead Trees
- Conservation Zones
- Exit Road to Plainville Neighborhood

**Current Funding:**

- \$2,500 budgeted/available; (as per 5/1/25 HOA Mtg.; Mary C. to confirm)

**Future Funding:** Defined & Agreed Upon

- Contactor Bids (3 minimum including Ali's)
- Material Cost if WB Resident Volunteers to Perform Work
- Any funding must be submitted to HOA Board for review & ultimate HOA vote

**Rain Gardens Discussion:**

- Armand reviewed feedback from CT DEEP, Towns of Farmington and Plainville
- No regulations governing “beautification” aka “clean-up”
- Municipalities govern “enforcement” – only need to see our clean-up design plan
- Different conversation if constructing rain gardens from scratch
- DEEP, Towns appreciated us reaching out in the spirit of transparency
- Need to understand original design plans (Lorna)
- Need to understand Ali’s maintenance agreement and cost (Lorna)
- Need to understand Ali’s methods (pre-emerge weed control, fabric (Lorna)
- Need to understand purported Fall only maintenance; no evidence of same. (Lorna)

**Rain Garden Design Options:**

- Remove existing weeds
- Top existing stones with decorative stone (example: large CT River Rock)
- Assess need to incorporate additional perennial flowers, small plants, hostas
- Plantings to include some that retain color year-round
- Incorporate band of mulch, including some among plantings for weed control and moisture enhancement

**Design Resources – Include, but not limited to:**

- University of Connecticut Home & Garden Extension/Education Center
- Farmington River Watershed Association
- State of CT Conservation District – North Central Division
- Google search – Commercial Rain Garden Photos – hundreds of designs

**Entities to Potentially Perform Clean-Up Work:**

- Contractor bids – including but not limited to Ali’s
- WB Resident Volunteers
- Boy/Girl Scouts of America
- UCONN Agricultural Student Co-op project

### **Prioritization: “We can do anything, but not everything”**

- 1. Main Entrance Rain Garden - Fall 2025**
- 2. 1B: plantings/mulch at two main entrance pillars – Fall 2025**
- 3. WP Upper Rain Garden – Fall 2025 or Spring 2026**
- 4. 2 Small Rain Gardens at WP SS – Fall 2025 or Spring 2026**
- 5. Lower WB Rain Garden – Fall 2025 or Spring 2026**
- 6. All common parking areas (i.e., cul-de-sacs) - TBD**

\*Note: Committee understands that smaller spaces to the right/left of the parking areas are in scope to remove existing grass and replace with landscape stone or mulch. Committee overwhelmingly agrees that grass vs. stone/mulch is more desirable/preferable/more aesthetically attractive. Need to understand the impetus of the decision and whether it can be reversed or bring to HOA Residents for a vote. Another possible alternative to grass is ground cover (i.e, pachysandra) along with perennial flower color bulbs, and/or pre-potted annual color flowers in Spring and Fall, and hosta plants. Interspersing mulch would help moisture retention and weed control. Whether this option or maintain existing grass vs. stone makes these areas less “industrial” looking and better supports our objective to make the community more aesthetically appealing.

- 7. Retention Pond/Woods mulched walking path – We can move this up if deemed a higher priority and solicit resident volunteers to weed whack/rake the path or see if local Scouts are interested in a community clean-up project. TBD**
- 8. 2 Gravel walking paths – Committee supports consideration to eliminate the gravel and replace with grass (seed or sod). Premise- one path is steep and other frequently washes out; both posing hazards to residents. TBD**
- 9. Gazebo – electrical connectivity. Additionally, explore options for greater usability of this area; example; park benches. Possible Eagle Scout project. TBD**

### **10. Next Steps:**

- 1. Obtain answers to rain garden questions (Lorna)**
- 2. Arrange for in-person rain garden clean-up ideas (Ex; UCONN); ASAP - Armand**
- 3. Present minutes to WB HOA Board President Donna O. (by 6/30); Armand**
- 4. Present clean-up design plan to Twns. F&P (by 8/1); Armand**

**Next Meeting: July 1 or July 2 at 7:00 pm – Please let me know if either date works for you. Reply just to me so I can coordinate the date that works best for most.**