



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

The Willow Brook Estates HOA meeting was held **April 29, 2026**, starting at 6:30pm at the Plainville Municipal Center, One Central Sq., Plainville, CT 06062

- 1. Call to Order** – meeting was called to order at 6:31 by Donna Ortelle, President of Willow Brook HOA
- 2. Establish a Quorum** – there were 56 residents in attendance representing 42 units (numbers derived from sign in sheets)
- 3. Proof of Notice for meeting** – notice of meeting was originally emailed out on 2/22/2026, second email sent out on 4/20/26 which included the agenda and the notice/agenda was added to the bulletin board by the mailboxes as well
- 4. Meeting asks** – please sign in on the sheets provided by Fran Sledge, put cell phones on silent, raise your hand to ask a question and state your name and house number/street address when speaking for accurate meeting minutes
- 5. Adoption of previous meeting minutes** – please note once meeting minutes are published, they are not changed. Any changes/additions to the minutes are done in the next meeting with adoption of the previous meeting minutes with corrections. Also, the minutes are an overview of the meeting and are not quoted word of word. There were no corrections asked for to the September 4, 2025, meeting minutes and those meeting minutes were adopted.
- 6. Old Business**
 - **Comcast/Xfinity cable/internet vs GONETSPEED fiber vs Frontier fiber** – Both Dave Wilson (61 WBD-P) and John Gladysz (200 WBD-F) have reached out to their telecommunications contractors. It was determined that Xfinity has exclusivity on the existing cable conduit. The estimated cost to dig up and install a new conduit for GONETSPEED or Frontier would be over 100k. The board felt this ask is cost prohibitive. Therefore, we will not be pursuing this. Jim Kearney (119 WBD-P) asked if the exclusivity ownership had a sunset date and it does not.
- 7. President's Message and unit owner's discussions**
 - Donna Ortelle apologized for the microphones not working and would try to speak loudly. Donna asked if everyone could hear and everyone could. Donna asked if anytime during the meeting if someone couldn't hear, just raise their hand. Donna stated Karen Wilson will be recording the meeting for accurate meeting minutes. Donna also apologized that the agenda handed



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

out at the beginning of the meeting had her specific talking points on it and was not the original bullet-point agenda that was emailed out.

- **Willow Brook (WB) Estates Website updates** - Dave Wilson (61 WBD-P) is updating the website as needed and it looks great. If you have contractors (licensed and insured) information you want to share with the community, please forward the information via the locked mailbox or thru the Contact email so can be added to our website. Please check the website frequently.
- **Email boxes for HOA officers and concerns** –
 - Email and lock box submissions seem to be working well, and we are trying to be as responsive as possible. If we don't respond in a week, please resend it. Please use the contact@willowbrook-HOA.org email box or the lock box for questions and concerns.
 - Our thanks to Fran Sledge (194 WBD-P) for maintaining the bulletin board with notices and decorations. The lock box is frequently checked for written concerns as well as for HOA checks.
 - Please contact the HOA via email or lock box (using the Additions, Alterations and Improvements Form found on the website) for permission when making any changes or modifications to outside of the house. This form includes information needed from the contractor performing the work (license & insurance certificates).
- **Bird Feeders** -
 - As far as bird feeders, as we mentioned in the past, our HOA (including both Plainville & Farmington residents) has adopted the Wildlife feeding regulations (Farmington 78-5, adopted 11/9/2021) which were emailed out 4/4/2024. According to the regulations, bird feeders can only be used from December 1st to March 31st UNLESS the food is not desirable to bears (thistle or Nyger). These regulations are also posted on our website. Please abide by the rules so that the bears are kept out of our neighborhood and especially out of our trash bins.
- **Yard waste and clearing land** -
 - Please do not throw grass clippings, branches, dead plants, or other items in the rear of the home (wooded areas). Residents are not permitted to do any clearing of land in the rear of their homes or anywhere else in the community without HOA permission.



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

- Donna Murty (31 WBD-Plainville) asked why Ali's blows the leaves into the woods during fall cleanup. She has huge leaf piles behind her unit, and the leaves blow back into her yard. Donna Ortelte stated that shouldn't be happening since Ali's uses dumpster to put grass clipping and leaves in. Someone on the board will follow up with Ali's on this issue.
- Eileen Lupia (86 WBD-Plainville) stated that the condos and neighbors behind her are blowing yard waste in the woods. Donna stated that there is a small buffer zone behind those homes and they shouldn't be putting yard waste in there. Donna asked if Eileen sees it again, let her know so she can address it.
- Glenn Benoit (40 WPD-Plainville) asked if poison ivy on the edge of the woods could be sprayed. Both his and Eileen's property has poison ivy encroaching into their lawns. Donna said they need a DEEP approved product. This request will be addressed offline.
- We received a complaint from a Plainville neighbor on Washburn Street about some of our residents putting yard waste in the buffer zone. The HOA board is working to resolve this issue.
- **Trash and recycling** –Effective 1/1/26, the Town of Plainville started picking up the cost for the 38 units in Plainville and are using CWPM Waste Removal and Recycling Services as the vendor. The Willow Brook HOA is paying for the remaining 28 units located in Farmington and is also using CWPM as well. Please note that all trash & recycles must be in the bins since CWPM uses fully automated trucks. As part of the Plainville tax base, bulk trash pickup is included once a year. The dates for the bulk pickups are 4/6/26 - 6/29/26 **or** 9/14/26 - 10/26/26 (Plainville residents only). Each Plainville resident needs to call for the date the works best for them. There is a list of certain items that can be picked up, and it will be posted on our website.
- **Food drive** - The Willow Brook community stepped up during the holiday season collecting 252 pounds of food for the needy. We thank everyone who participated and especially Linda Firmani (18 WPD-P) for organizing this event. The letter that we received from the Plainville Community Food Pantry is posted on our website.



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

- **Tag Sale** – Mary Campbell (21 WPD-P) asked again who would be interested in a tag sale. Not a lot of positive response last time but we had eight households interested in the spring and ten interested in the fall this time. We will table this until we have more interest. Fran Sledge (194 WBD-Plainville) asked if individual households could hold a tag sale. Mary stated that she thinks it's against our by-law rules, but we will verify that.
- **Commercial Real Estate Sign** – concerns brought to our attention that the location is a potential hazard by obstructing views to pull out of the community. The HOA board reviewed this and came up with a solution to have commercial real estate signs a little further inward by the front fence to prevent any hazards. So, if selling, please have the realtor contact the HOA board for sign placement. Faith Franck (71 WBD-Plainville) asked if an open house sign is allowed in our community. We need to look at the by-laws, but the understanding is one can be placed up in the front by the entrance on open house day.

8. Snow removal and Lawn/Tree Maintenance updates – (Armand Minutillo)

- Donna said that our Declaration states: “The maintenance of grounds in the Common Elements (lawns) including mowing of lawns shall be performed by the association and shall be a common expense (Declaration p 15)”. We have been warned by Ali's about grubs or issues if they skip certain lawns, and although we have allowed signs to skip fertilization by Ali's for homeowners who requested this, Ali's will now fertilize ALL lawns. If you want to add your own fertilizer on top of that, that is up to the homeowner.
- **Lawn Fertilization** - Fertilization has been a topic of questions from several residents. Armand has specifically handled this topic multiple times with Greg Ali, who's the owner of Ali's nursery. And Greg said regrettably, he can no longer honor that policy of skipping certain yards. In terms of the exposure to Ali's, Greg stated that we pay these fertilization services, if residents opt out, that's a potential exposure for him, and he's received this feedback in other communities, and that's why he shut it down. Glenn Benoit (40 WPD-Plainville) asked about getting a couple days prior notice of fertilization. Armand did ask Greg about the notice for fertilization as well. Given the weather, Greg said he can't continue with this exception notification. Ali's hires a third-party vendor (Costello) and Armand established a relationship with Scott Costello and will see if he can give us a couple of days' notice. Marty Hurwiitz



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

(96 WBD-Plainville) stated that the fertilization subcontractor does a poor job and asked if we can separate that part out of the contract. There was discussion around this, but we have a five-year contract with Ali's for all lawn services. The board will bring with up with Ali's to see if maybe the subcontractor could be changed. Lorna Zammett (206 WBD-Farmington) asked if tick control was in the contract. Amanda stated there was not so the homeowner would have to address that themselves. There are five fertilizer applications per year: 1 – pre-emerging crab grass and fertilization (done 4/27), 2 - fertilization with grub control, 3 - fertilization with weed control, 4 - grub control, 5 – slow-release fertilization (Standard mowing day is Thursday)

- **General Maintenance Update - Items in scope for Ali's existing contract**
 - Repair/re-grade emergency exit gravel from plow damage ASAP
 - Repair damaged concrete sidewalk from plows (not the asphalt curbing)
 - Rake and re-seed perimeter of water basins #7 & #6 (done by Mother's Day)
 - Fix the ruts that were caused by the erosion/plow damage (Donna Murty (31 WBD-Plainville) complained that job not done well, Armand agreed and had already spoken to Greg Ali about it and it's supposed to be corrected with top soil put down first)
 - Install fresh brown mulch at mailbox parking area
 - Install fresh brown mulch in beds at front of homes – end of May/June 2026
 - Shrubs at front of homes will be trimmed – fall 2026
 - Remove/replace dead common grounds trees (will inventory within next two weeks) Ron Brown (66 WBD-Plainville) asked about trimming dead branches/tops. Armand will ask Ali's if that is included.
 - Re-cut to 3' diameter ring and mulch all trees – (asked Ali's to do in maintenance contract)
- **General Maintenance Update – Not in Ali's contract**
 - De-thatching grass common areas and lawns – not a contractable service by Ali's
 - Weed killer spray all water basins #1-7 as needed – date and pricing TBD
 - Spread wood chips from 2026 tree removals at emergency exit – possible community workday?



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

- Jim Kearney (119 WBD-P) asked why the back gate in the emergency exit was unlocked. Armand stated that he personally unlocked it before snowstorms so the plow could get thru. Donna stated that we got approval to do that from the Fire Marshal. Armand will relock the gates now. Jim also asked if both Farmington & Plainville Fire Departments had keys to the lock. Donna stated that it was reported that they both did.

9. Beautification Update – (Met four weeks ago and had a laundry list of twenty-five items – top ones listed below but all come at a cost)

- Water basin #7 (main entrance): Plant additional trees around rock basin
- Water basin #6 (at Whispering Pines): Plant additional trees around rock basin
- Main entrance/right side: Install arbors to match two existing arbor berms
- Water basins #4 & #5 (both sides of Whispering Pines stop sign): remove existing stone and install rip-rap stone to match design at basins #7 & #6. Donna stated that the rocks in that basin were specially brought in by Lovley Development. Glenn Benoit (40 WPD-Plainville) stated he likes the existing stone in these basins but would like weed fabric under the rock. Armand stated that now that the front entrance basins are finished, the board will ask for feedback from the community on how to proceed with the other areas. However, weed fabric is strictly prohibited via the town engineers so the weeds would need to be sprayed by a DEEP approved weed killer product.
- Install soil, grade and seed around 8 raised utility boxes (4 raised/4 flat)
- Line painting: received one quote @ \$2600
- Flowers at main entrance pillars (to be taken out of maintenance budget)

10. Tree Removal Standards and Practices -

- Though it primarily affects residents that live along the Farmington Conservation Easement wooded zone, all residents are notified of the following: (Per the Town of Farmington/Town Planner's Office and per Town Regulation) - **If there is a dead tree in the Conservation Easement (owned by Willow Brook Estates HOA and managed/overseen by the Town of Farmington) which poses a potential risk of falling on a home or people walking below, a request must be submitted to the Town for removal. If the Town authorizes, the HOA Board will coordinate**



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

removal and incur the cost from the HOA maintenance funds. However, if a resident wants to remove a dead tree in the Conservation Easement because it is unsightly, the Town says let it fall naturally in the woods. If a resident rather not see the unsightly tree, once this Town approves removal, the resident homeowner may remove it at their expense.

- All Residents: If a resident homeowner identifies a dead tree on HOA common grounds, the resident shall notice the HOA Board, in writing via the HOA contact email/lockbox process. The HOA Board will then coordinate an inspection, if needed, with a licensed arborist and if the tree necessitates removal the HOA Board will coordinate and incur the cost from the HOA maintenance funds. Note: To supplement the homeowner notice of dead tree as mentioned above, the HOA Board will periodically walk the grounds to proactively identify dead trees that have the potential for posing a potential liability risk to homes or people.
- Essentially, the standards and practices as outlined above are based upon criteria including, but not limited to whether the tree is live, dead, poses a liability risk to homes or people, and its location, specifically is it within the HOA common grounds including around the resident homes OR in the Conservation Easement zone.
- Mark Zammett (206 WBD-Farmington) thanked the board for getting the big tree that fell in his yard from the easement area cleaned up. He asked who owns the easement? Armand validated that the HOA owns the conservation easement, but the town, through regulation, has the authority to dictate to the HOA what you can and cannot do. Mark follow up question was is the HOA responsible for the property tax on that land? Mary stated that the HOA does not pay any property taxes. That tax is incorporated into your home taxes. Karen Maher (100 WBD-Plainville) asked since Plainville has no easement, how does that work? Armand stated that is very similar to how it works on the Farmington side. Jim Kearney (119 WBD-P) asked what the limit of our HOA liability insurance is. May stated two million dollars.
- Armand stated that three trees were recently cut down because they were dead (validated by an arborist) and posed a threat. The cost of those three trees was \$3,500. One of those trees was over 100 feet tall. The tree company took away the larger piece then mulched up the rest and left it down by our



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

emergency exit. (Armand asked if anyone is interested in helping spread it to please contact him) Sharon Colburn (109 WBD-Plainville) stated that the tree company did not finishing picking up the tree trunks in her yard.

Armand will call the company to make sure that is taken care of.

11. Proposed road and driveway sealing –

- The bad weather we had this winter caused a lot of crack damage to our roads. Therefore, the Board obtained three quotes for crack filling to prevent further damage to the roads and driveways. Those areas include all roadway cracks as well as the cracks at the bottom 18” (apron) of all driveways. The recommended contractors stated that this will extend the life of our roads and save us money in the long run. Those contractors were: Lee & Sons \$7975, Constantine Paving & Sealing \$5470, and Northeast Crack Filling \$6115. The board decided to go with Constantine. The contractor will clean/blow out all affected areas, fill the cracks with hot rubberized crack filler then dust with fine sand to ensure immediate traffic. Since we are using money from our budgeted repairs and maintenance line item, a vote is not needed to perform this work. But that does mean other projects will need to be pushed off. We are asking Constantine to do this work sometime between mid-June to mid-July so any grass seeding should take root by then and the warmer weather should reduce the size of the cracks. PLEASE NOTE: ANY OUTSIDE WATERING (INCLUDING IRRIGATION, WATERING LAWNS, WASHING CAR, ETC) NEEDS TO BE OFF THE DAY BEFORE AND THE DAY OF THE CRACK REPAIRS SO NONE OF THE RUNOFF GOES INTO THE ROADWAYS. We are asking Constantine for at least one weeks’ notice before they start the crack filling so we can give residents ample notice.
- Please note that the Declaration Section of our by-laws identifies driveways as a **limited common element** (pg 13) which shall be maintained solely by the Unit Owner and not the Association; however, this one-time driveway crack filling is being including in this contract.
- Jim Kearney (119 WBD-P) asked about getting quotes on sealing the driveways. The contractors that we got quotes from did not recommend it since our driveways are so new. Gary Brasile (124 WBD-Farmington) also contacted another vendor who told him the same thing. Marty Hurwiitz (96 WBD-Plainville) said that he and his neighbor Bob had their driveways



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

sealed and the machine that brushes all the snow off the driveways took all the sealant off which turned his lawn black.

12. New Business –

- Some residents have stated that there are critters living under their three season porches. So, if you have a three-season porch (no foundation underneath), please check the area around it for signs of animals. If you need to mitigate the issue, please make sure the vendor is licensed/insured and a copy of the insurance certificate is sent in.
- Although not discussed in our meeting, another resident stated that their orange hatchway (Bilco) door was rusting. The notice on the inside of that door states that the door is supplied with a primer finish which must be painted with an exterior alkyd base enamel paint within forty-five days of installation. (Armand has a recommendation of the paint he used.) Also, since that hatchway is not part of the foundation, some residents are finding the area around it is sinking in and they needed to backfill that area. Please note that the hatchway door and surrounding area is the responsibility of the homeowner, not the HOA. Again, if you need to mitigate either/both issues, please make sure the vendor is licensed/insured and a copy of the insurance certificate is sent in.
- Although we have signs that we are a private community and there is no solicitation allowed, solicitors are coming into our property. Residents have a right to ask them to leave even if they have a permit. The latest one was a bug extermination company in which both Armand and Karen asked them to leave.
- Donna stated that we all need to abide by the HOA by-laws and called out the rule about dogs being always leashed.
- Once the closing happens on the Diesel property, Karen Wilson will get new contact information and will be updating our directory. The new directory will be emailed out but will NOT be put on our website.
- Lorna Zammett (206 WBD-F) (lzam2@comcast.net) reported she put a table together for eight women in our community that are attending **Wonder of Women WOW Event**. This event supports the Women & Girls fund of Main Street Community Foundation as it commemorates its 25th anniversary during its annual WOW event on Thursday, April 30, 2026, from 5:30-8pm at The Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. Lorna stated that there are still two



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

seats available at our table and residents are carpooling. This is a good organization that supports women/girls in the towns of Bristol, Burlington, Plymouth, Plainville, Southington and Wolcott.

- The Willow Brook HOA Board is proposing to adopt the following rule (modification) under Section 25.4 in order to maintain the aesthetic appeal and property values of the community: **The display of political signs may be posted on a unit or on a Limited Common element adjoining a Unit as long as it is posted no earlier than fourteen (14) days before an election, taken down within seventy-two (72) hours post-election, is located in the limited common area which is within five (5) feet of the front of the Unit, no larger than 18” x 24”, no more than three (3) signs per unit, and no taller than three (3) feet from the ground.** There was much discussion about the proposal with many residents weighing in on this. Jim Kearney (119 WBD-P) cited the CT & Federal laws regarding this signage. Al Sidlovsky (43 WBD-Plainville) asked why only three signs. John Gladysz (200 WBD-Farmington) made a motion to accept the changes. At the end of the discussion, Donna stated that to amend the declaration, we must provide ten days’ notice to the members and then send it out for comment for two weeks. And then we can act on it in thirty days. Therefore, there is more work to do on this before we can vote.

13. Financial Overview – discussed after Committee Reports

- **HOA accounts receivable (A/R) - co-treasurer (Fran Sledge)**
 - Fran welcomed snowbirds back. She also thanked Neil Wasserman (155 WBD-Farmington) for building the little library and John Gladysz (200 WBD-Farmington) for installing it. There are a lot of great books so please stop by and check it out.
 - **A/R** – Sends out the HOA invoices, collect the checks, and deposit the checks into the Willow Brook Estates Bank account. Quickbooks is the accounting software used to track all HOA financial information.
 - **HOA fees** – The transition from the \$198.50 to the \$250 HOA fee starting in October 2025 went smoothly. Courtesy invoices are sent out a few days before the beginning of the month and are due the 1st of the month with a 15-day grace period. Please let us know if you change your email address so that you get the courtesy invoice. The drop box at the mailboxes has been a very convenient way to make safe and secure



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

payments. For those of you who have your bank send your payment, please make sure the payments are received by the HOA by the 16th of the month. The banks are cutting paper checks and then mailing them so that can take up to five days for the HOA to receive them. At this time, we can still only accept personal or bank checks for your HOA payments. No credit card payments or automatic payments will be accepted at this time due to costs that the HOA would need to absorb. (direct bank transfer charge \$1.99 per transaction, Venmo charges 1.9%, which would be \$3.77 per transaction, PayPal charges \$2.99 cents per transaction) If you have any questions regarding your HOA payments, you can email Fran at treasurer@willowbrook-hoa.org or accountsreceivable@willowbrook-hoa.org or drop a note in the drop box.

- **HOA budget & accounts payable (A/P) - co-treasurer (Mary Campbell)**
- **Balance Sheet/Trial balance** - The balance sheet, trial balance sheet and the 2026 budget sheet were given out in the meeting. Mary stated we did transfer to reserve the \$7500 that was allocated in 2025. We only had ~\$2700 balance in our checking account at 2025 yearend. For 2026, Mary stated as of today, we are on budget. We shifted some priorities around and spread the enhancement/improvements out to five years to stay in budget. Mary also brought up the fact that for liability purposes, any resident having outside work done on their property, the HOA requires license & insurance certificates from the vendor. Mary supplied a documentation with a partial list of who is required to submit a license and insurance certificate **prior** to any work being done on the home. Christine Dauphinais (51 WBD-Farmington) asked who's responsibility is it to provide that information, vendor or homeowner? Mary stated it's the homeowner's responsibility to ask the vendor. The vendor can send the information directly to the HOA contact email/lockbox. John Gladysz (200 WBD-Farmington) suggested that we go one step further to list the HOA as an additional insured. Mary acknowledged that is the correct way to do it. Gary Brasile (124 WBD-Farmington) asked who gets the certificate for Lawn Core (irrigation vendor that most of the HOA uses). Mary stated that Karen Wilson will handle that. Karen Maher (100 WBD-Plainville) asked what about in an emergency situation (garage door



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

broken and can't get car out)? Mary said to get the certificates as soon as possible after the issue is fixed. Please note that insurance certificates are only good for one year.

- Mary Campbell stated that she is resigning as Co-Treasurer effective 7/31/2026 due to personal reasons. The community thanks Mary for all her efforts and many wanted to not accept her resignation. Donna asked for volunteers to take Mary's place. Mary said she would be willing to train whoever takes her place. Donna stated is no own steps up and we must get a management company; it will be a \$50 per household per month charge.

14. Social Committee

- Irene Melasky (30 WPD-Plainville) reported that there was great turnout for both the August 10 social event at the Kinsmen Brewing company and for our December 6 holiday event at Bistro 24. The food and comradery were wonderful. The community gave a big round of applause for the work the committee did. The committee is getting together soon to plan the summer/holiday events and have asked the residents for any ideas as to event venues to please contact any member of the social committee: Irene Melasky (30 WPD-Plainville), Eileen Lupia (86 WBD-Plainville), Jackie Hurwitz (96 WBD-Plainville), Sandy Michalik (90 WBD-Plainville)

15. Adjournment – HOA Board was thanked for all their hard work. Motion was made to adjourn at 7:45pm and was seconded so meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wilson
Secretary Willow Brook HOA

Website: <https://willowbrook-hoa.org>

Email concerns to: contact@willowbrook-hoa.org

Officers: Donna Ortelle president@willowbrook-hoa.org

Armand Minutillo vp@willowbrook-hoa.org

Karen Wilson secretary@willowbrook-hoa.org



Willow Brook Estates Homeowners Association, Inc.

Mary Campbell & Fran Sledge treasurer@willowbrook-hoa.org