

Soapstone Cluster Association

Draft Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

6:36 PM – Microsoft Teams

Board Members Present: Sebila Raubacher, President; Jeff Davis, Treasurer; Adam Smith, Secretary (joined at approximately 6:58 PM)

Community Members/Guests Participating: Debra Mayer, Carol Ivory, Barbara Eppler, John Eppler, Janna Marchione, Steve Hevesi, Steve Hudson

A quorum was established with two of the three Board members present at the call to order.

1. Call to Order

President Sebila Raubacher called the meeting to order at approximately **6:36 PM** and confirmed that a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The Board considered the minutes from the **August 12, 2026 Board of Directors meeting**. No corrections were offered.

Board Action: Approve the August 12, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

Vote: Approved by consensus of the directors present (Sebila Raubacher, Jeff Davis); no objections.

The President noted that approved minutes and agendas are posted on the Cluster website.

3. Member Comments

- **Wheelbarrows:** The Cluster's three wheelbarrows are in poor condition. The Board prefers to replace rather than repair them, given limited volunteer capacity.
- **Street light:** The street light near the park path has been out for some time. It is a Dominion Energy fixture.
- **Leaf pickup:** The landscaping contract includes two leaf pickups with an option for a third. The first is planned for late October and the second for late November, with a third if needed.
- **Landscaper performance:** Members reported that sidewalks and parking lots are not being blown, leaves are being blown into private yards, and branch pickup was incomplete. The Board will review the landscaping contract scope; the contract expires March 31, 2027.

Follow-up actions:

- Treasurer to check the common-grounds budget and purchase one or two replacement wheelbarrows.
 - Report the street light outage to Dominion Energy.
 - Schedule the first leaf pickup and instruct the landscaper not to blow leaves into residents' yards.
 - Review the landscaping contract for gaps in scope.
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4. Treasurer's Financial Report

Financial Position as of September 30, 2026

Operating cash was approximately \$41,000, total assets approximately \$361,000, and reserves approximately \$321,000. Year-to-date net income was approximately \$1,000. Legal fees are nearly over budget because of collection actions, and approximately \$15,000 has been spent on tree work to remove dead limbs.

FY26 Audit

A draft audit report has been received with no material findings. It is not yet final; the President is resolving several items with the auditor, including the allocation of an insurance claim. The final audit will be distributed to the membership when complete.

Annuity Dissolution

The auditor has determined that approximately **\$18,000** of the annuity proceeds must be allocated to capital reserves. The transfer will be made once the audit is final. Current reserves exceed the level in the reserve study, and a new reserve study will be conducted in 2027.

Retaining Walls

Rotting wood ties and retaining walls along sidewalks remain a priority. The Board is seeking contractors for partial replacement.

Follow-up actions:

- Finalize the FY26 audit and transfer the annuity allocation to reserves.
 - Obtain quotes for wood tie and retaining wall replacement.
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5. Delinquency Report and Collection Procedures

Total delinquencies have decreased from approximately **\$23,000** to approximately **\$18,000** following individual demand letters sent by the President. The remaining balance is owed mainly by three households, all referred to legal counsel. One account is now in foreclosure proceedings. The Board expects to recover legal fees, late fees, and interest through that process.

The President reported that a separate delinquency procedure is not needed because the collection process is set out in Article VIII of the Bylaws. Changes will be made through the proposed Bylaws amendment (Item 6).

6. Bylaws Amendment – Late Fees (Article VIII)

The President presented the counsel-reviewed redline of Article VIII. The amendment would:

- Replace the fixed \$15 late fee, set in 2007, with authority for the Board to set late fees and interest within the limits of the Reston Deed and Virginia law.
- Make administrative updates clarifying that late fees, interest, and legal fees are added to the owner's account.
- Remove the Board's authority to forgive delinquencies by special resolution.

Members asked what would prevent a future Board from setting excessive fees. The President noted the late-fee cap under the Reston Deed and the interest cap under Virginia law; both are to be confirmed with counsel. The Board also agreed to ask counsel about citing the Virginia interest statute in the amendment.

Board Action: Include the proposed Article VIII amendment in the Annual Meeting packet for a membership vote, pending counsel's review of the interest-cap and late fee-cap citation.

Vote: Approved by voice vote (Sebila Raubacher, Jeff Davis, Adam Smith in favor).

Follow-up actions:

- Confirm the late-fee and interest caps with counsel and ask about adding the Virginia law citation.
 - Distribute the redline to the membership and include it in the Annual Meeting packet.
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7. Window and Patio Door Design Standards

The President presented the near-final draft, posted on the Cluster website. Like-for-like replacements meeting the standards would not require an individual DRB application. The draft specifies durable materials, neutral colors, and trim limits, allows any manufacturer, and adds French doors as a patio door option. The standards apply going forward only.

Members suggested adding skylights to the standards.

Decision: Before submitting the draft to the DRB, the President will ask Reston Association staff to add skylight standards.

Follow-up actions:

- Contact Reston Association staff about adding skylight standards.
 - Submit the standards to the DRB after Reston Association responds.
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8. Board Recruitment for 2027 Term

A recruitment email with a candidacy form has been sent, with a **November 15, 2026** deadline that may be extended. The Association needs at least three directors. Given the high turnover in the neighborhood, the President asked members to encourage neighbors in person. Members noted that delinquent owners are not eligible to serve.

9. New Business

Electronic Voting

Virginia law permits electronic voting if a non-electronic option is offered, and counsel advised that the Board must adopt electronic voting guidelines. The Treasurer reviewed an online platform ElectionBuddy, which costs about \$99 per election plus a small fee for multi-factor authentication. Its privacy and security practices were judged acceptable. For the first year, both paper and electronic ballots will be offered. Members noted the need to update member email and phone contact information.

Board Action: Submit the draft electronic voting Resolution and Policy (Exhibit A) to counsel for review, with formal adoption targeted for the December Board meeting.

Vote: Approved by voice vote (Sebila Raubacher, Jeff Davis, Adam Smith in favor).

Community Email

Because Association emails are frequently filtered as spam, the President will purchase a paid HubSpot subscription (about \$84 per year) so emails come from the Association's own domain.

Bamboo and Erosion

A volunteer bamboo containment day is scheduled for **Sunday, October 18, 2026, at 11:00 AM**. Fairfax County has indicated funding may be available for bamboo removal and erosion control; the Association is awaiting the application. Members discussed erosion on common property. The Board noted that owners also need to manage their own downspouts and drains and will share guidance when provided by Fairfax County.

FY28 Budget – Preliminary Planning

The Treasurer will prepare preliminary FY28 estimates. A draft will be presented at the December meeting for member input before inclusion in the Annual Meeting packet. Members were advised that an assessment increase is expected because of contract escalations, the trash contract fuel surcharge, and reserve needs. Members also raised landscaping quality, which will be considered in the budget.

Follow-up actions:

- Submit the electronic voting documents to counsel and post them for member comment.
- Update member contact information.
- Follow up with Fairfax County on funding applications.
- Prepare a preliminary FY28 budget for the December meeting.

10. Adjournment

The next Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 9, 2026**. With no additional business, the President adjourned the meeting at approximately **8:22 PM**.

Summary of Board Actions and Decisions

Formal Board Actions

1. **Approval of August 12, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes** – Approved by consensus of the directors present.
2. **Article VIII Late-Fee Amendment** – Include in the Annual Meeting packet for a membership vote, pending counsel review. Approved by voice vote, 3–0.
3. **Electronic Voting Documents** – Submit the draft Resolution and Policy to counsel for review. Approved by voice vote, 3–0.

Decisions/Consensus Recorded Without a Formal Vote

1. Replace one or two common-area wheelbarrows, subject to budget.
2. Schedule leaf pickups for late October and late November, with a third if needed.
3. Ask Reston Association to add skylight standards before submitting the window and patio door standards to the DRB.
4. Purchase a paid HubSpot subscription.
5. Offer both paper and electronic ballots in the first year of electronic voting.

Matters Explicitly Not Yet Decided

1. Formal adoption of the electronic voting guidelines (targeted for December).
2. Changes to the landscaping contract or vendor.
3. Final late-fee and interest amounts, to be set by the Board if the amendment is approved.