

# GARTELMILL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

## Board Meeting Minutes

- **Date:** June 16, 2026 | **Time:** 6:30 PM ET | **Location:** 8344 Watermill Drive, Millersville, MD
- **Meeting Type:** Quarterly Board Meeting (Q2), open to homeowners | **Duration:** Approximately 1 hour
- **Present:** Elizabeth DiBiagio, President | Erin C., Vice President | Laura W., Treasurer | Leigh Anne Wagner, Secretary (recorded minutes) | John A., Member at Large
- **Absent:** Kyle M., Member at Large (former President, available for continuity as needed)
- **Quorum:** Met (5 of 6 directors present).
- **Also present:** Several community homeowners; turnout was notably strong relative to prior meetings.

## CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Elizabeth DiBiagio called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees, noting that turnout was significantly stronger than at prior meetings. She framed the board's 2026 priorities: increased transparency, better communication, and a standing cadence of quarterly meetings open to the community.

Board introductions were made: Elizabeth (President, four months in role), Erin (Vice President), Leigh Anne Wagner (Secretary, approximately one month in role, recording tonight's minutes), Laura (Treasurer, succeeding Tina after 20 years of service), and John (Member at Large). Kyle, former President, continues as a Member at Large to support continuity.

## TREASURER'S REPORT (Laura W.)

The Association is in stable financial standing, with operating reserves of approximately \$12,000.

Annual dues remain \$75 per lot across the community's 87 homes. Delinquent accounts have improved to 6, down from 9 reported on May 20 following the certified third notices mailed June 1. A small number of those notices were returned undeliverable and need follow-up on correct addresses. Three of the six accounts are more than a year past due, with the longest-standing balances in the range of roughly \$500 to \$600 each. The board's practice has been to continue sending notices and to recover outstanding balances at the time of sale, an approach that has reliably recouped past dues on prior resales.

To bring enforcement in line with the Association's governing documents, the board intends to vote in January 2027 to apply the delinquency remedies already set out in the Declaration. Section 9 (Effect of Nonpayment of Assessments) provides: "Any assessment not paid within thirty (30) days after the due date shall automatically be assessed a late charge of \$25.00 and shall bear interest from the due date at the rate of eighteen percent (18%) per annum."

## OLD BUSINESS

**Common Area Storage.** A homeowner is storing a trailer-style smoker in the community open space, which raises common-area insurance and safety concerns. The board will issue a certified letter directing its removal by August 1. If it is not removed by that date, the board will have it removed from the common lot at the homeowner's expense.

**Street Tree Replanting.** A handful of the community's original street trees need attention. Many are Bradford pears, a species now considered invasive in Maryland, and several have split or come down in storms. Because the planting strip between the sidewalk and the street is the homeowner's responsibility, replacing a tree there falls to the property owner. The board encouraged homeowners to choose native replacements. There are several local garden centers that have native plants and often offer a discount, fall is the best season to plant, and a sidewalk-friendly species will avoid lifting the pavement down the road. The county recently ground several stumps and replaced sidewalk sections that tree roots had lifted; residents can report sidewalk issues directly to the county through a 311 request.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Community Website.** The new HOA website ([gartemillhoa.com](http://gartemillhoa.com)) is live. Minutes, budget, bylaws, and community updates will be posted there, complementing the Facebook and Instagram channels and traditional mail. Residents can subscribe to updates, and Elizabeth is working with Leigh Anne on a monthly update article. A document archive will be maintained for posterity and to support resale disclosure requests, since board minutes from prior years are frequently requested in resale packages and have not historically been available.

**Community Events.** The spring yard sale was a success, and the board is eager to build on that momentum. Ideas under discussion include a summer cookout, potluck, or happy hour, possibly hosted in the common area so more residents learn where it is, along with the return of a fall dumpster day, when a roll-off would be placed on a side street or court for a week for everyone's use. The board also hopes to coordinate trick-or-treat timing for Halloween. Finally, one resident asked whether a neighbor might be willing to help another get to and from doctor's appointments, with gas covered, and Elizabeth will circulate more information for anyone interested.

**Governance: Maryland SB 758 (Independent Elections).** Effective October 1, 2025, SB 758 requires HOA board elections to be administered by an independent party. Board members may no longer oversee the election, handle ballots, or count votes, which means the longstanding practice of mailing ballots and dues together to the PO box is no longer workable. The board's preferred path is to have a neutral homeowner volunteer run the election, approved with no more than 25% objection, with the board providing written procedures but taking no part in counting or advocating for candidates. Several residents have expressed willingness to help. The board also discussed updating the nomination process so candidates can be proposed before ballots go out, whether through a second mailing or an online nomination form, with each household continuing to receive one vote. More detail will follow next quarter.

**Budget Overview.** Elizabeth opened a transparent conversation about the budget, stressing that no change was being proposed and that the goal was simply to share the full picture. Dues have been held at \$75 per lot for more than 25 years, generating roughly \$6,525 a year at full collection across 87 lots. Against that, costs have climbed steadily. Common-area landscaping is now the single largest expense at about \$3,300 a year, more than half the budget, and has roughly tripled since the early 2010s; the board plans to seek competitive bids from several companies and to follow up on areas that have not been maintained. The most immediate need is removing dead and hazardous trees in the common area, a safety and liability matter that can run from \$500 to \$2,000 or more per large tree. Insurance, the annual PO box, and state filings continue to rise as well, while the snow-removal line, which covers only the front half of the community, is rarely fully used and could be trimmed.

To put the dues in perspective, the buying power of \$75 in 2000 is roughly \$149 today, so the same dollar amount now stretches about half as far. The board does have room to act under the Declaration: it may set

dues anywhere from the \$75 floor up to a \$150 ceiling by board vote, and may raise that ceiling by up to 10% in a year, while any larger increase or a special assessment for common-area work requires a community vote. Historically the board has been reluctant to raise dues at all. No action was taken at this meeting. The board's intent is to keep Gartelmill a community association rather than a formal HOA, to avoid drawing reserves down to zero, and to keep the conversation open by posting the full budget online.

### **OPEN COMMENTS**

Informal community discussion followed on sidewalk repairs, school traffic and the new signal, and a water main repair. No action items resulted.

**Next Quarterly Meeting:** Tuesday, September 16, 2026, 6:30 PM

**Minutes recorded by:** Leigh Anne Wagner, Secretary