

## 2020-2022 Board Accomplishments

Hello Community Members:

The current Executive Board for Ocona Lake is very thankful to the members for trusting us with the decisions and maintenance of the association. The Board is very proud to share the many accomplishments that have occurred during this Executive Board's tenure.

- I. **No Drama** - I cannot express enough just how thankful I am to the current Board of Directors for their commitment, support, and patience during this difficult time to expand our water system. We have hit many hurdles such as the county delaying us, community members making it difficult to drill wells, and of course out-of-bounds emails and other communication from two or three community members. Through all of this, our board has remained unified and committed to fixing major issues in our community. From the beginning, we have made decisions that are in the **best interests of the HOA as a whole**; with zero drama amongst the members:)
- II. **Sacrifice** - I cannot tell you how many times current board members were out clearing trees from the road, digging up a water line break, using their own personal equipment with no compensation, constructing and painting buildings, cleaning out water reservoirs, and spending hours upon hours mapping and planning for the completion of our water system. All of these things are far above and beyond what any Board of Director is supposed to do. Far above and beyond. One time that comes to mind personally is from the winter of 2021. After a really bad storm that snapped trees in half all over the county; the entire entrance was blocked to all traffic. Gene, Mark, Phil, and myself(Brian) gathered to begin work. The reason this one stands out to me is because of the conditions on the ground and massive amount of work it took. We stood out in pouring rain, in 40 degree temperatures with chainsaws and cleared several large trees most of the day. I cannot state enough that this is **far above what typical HOA Board members are expected to do**. Many people may not know that Gene Kozlowski has been doing this for many years. Our community as currently constructed would not be the same without a few of us who typically engage in this work.
- III. **Participation** - Unfortunately, like many HOA's, we face issues of dealing with people and personalities. Annual meetings in the past have been excruciating and we had many members who just do not want to come or participate. The same

can be said of our monthly Board meetings. They were way too long and mostly unproductive due to way too much conflict management and argumentative behavior that the previous president had to deal with. With guidance from attorneys we wanted to begin encouraging member participation; for *all members* including those in other states who cannot attend in person. There are several small changes that have made this possible.

1. *Order and Timelines* - We stick to time frames and conduct an orderly meeting. There is absolutely no reason to have 4-5 hour long HOA meetings or 3 hour Board of Director meetings monthly. Anyone who has joined us the last couple of years has been able to notice a marked difference. An HOA, really needs volunteers every couple of years to serve on the board. There should be no drama necessary, not an exhausting amount of meeting time, and new board members should be able make decisions that are in the best interest of the HOA. The community must hold future boards accountable for failing to act on such important issues as providing water to all members who want it. Decisions should not be made based entirely upon individual owner's financial situations or the couple of people who complain the loudest. The primary duties of an HOA Board are to maintain the assets of the community and maintain property values. Thats it; nothing more and nothing less. The same few members should not have to serve on the HOA Board for their lifetime due to correctable issues that are causing community members to have zero desire to serve.
  2. *Online voting and surveys* - Proxy voting, although listed in the by-laws and perfectly allowed, suppresses participation in a community with members spread out all over the country. There have also been valid questions raised in the past regarding the validity of who sent what. This is confusing and does not at all include input from all of our members. With most of this community not living in the Western North Carolina area this was an important and welcomed step towards obtaining active participation. We hope participation continues to grow in the years to come.
- IV. **Communications** - While improved communications happened on the previous board we still had dozens of members that we had zero contact info for other than an address from the county. This has been updated and we have better contact information for most of our members. We have also instituted a new community website, a mass email system, and text alerts for emergency situations such as a broken water line or blocked roads. This assists us in reaching as many members as possible as well as saving money on certified mailers.

V. **Water System** - When this board took office we had 3 wells with 38 homes on the 3 wells. We currently have the same amount of homes but with a 4th well plumbed and connected; but due to complications and well technician delays it is not currently online as I am writing this.

1.a) **Problem:** *Too many homes on the wells and no additional capacity for the remaining lots to connect to our water system.* We have faced this issue for many years in this community. There are a lot of details to this issue I am leaving out for several reasons but know that the initial phases of this took an excruciating amount of time. With a warning from Public Health officials and the fact that our county is under pressure to raise their own standards; it was imperative that we actually make progress in this area rather than just stating “we are working on it”. This is also just completely unfair to almost 50 percent of the remaining lot owners in the community who cannot connect to the water system.

**Solution:** The board heard proposals for options to add water capacity and decided the most cost effective; really the only viable option, being to drill additional wells to remain in compliance with our water system.

1.b) **Problem** - *There is no money for well drilling and additional water capacity in this community.* The approximate cost to completely upgrade our water system will be somewhere between \$150k-\$175k; much of that depending on how far down the road the can is kicked. We had to figure out a way to raise money to relieve some of the burden of Special Assessments to members of the community.

**Solution** - The board came up with a plan to reduce the water connection fee for a one time, one year, early hookup incentive. This is to run congruently with the Special Assessments to raise the funds necessary to actually begin construction. Currently there is a little more than **\$60,000** for this work to begin. After many, many delays with the county we are now permitted and have the proper contractors planning and in some cases starting on this project.

1.c) **Problem:** *No plan whatsoever of the current water system or future water line mapping.* On any given year we can have a couple of water line breaks or we can completely blow the budget with the amount of

water line repairs. Many of our water lines are just a couple of inches under gravel which is obviously not good. In many cases we are not even sure where some of the water lines are located. We also wanted to make sure we are working from a plan of action and not just randomly throwing things together which will save us money and time.

**Solution:** We now have a very detailed plan, down to the parcel even, of what the community will look like as we upgrade water lines, drill additional wells, and add capacity. We have a map of the 4 current water zones as well as the 3 additional zones that will be needed. We will know exactly who is on which well, as well as where each lot connects to the community water system. Once completed we can actually have a map created for future board of directors, contractors, and the community as a whole. As previously stated, we also have a detailed spreadsheet of the current homes connected, those who wish to connect now, and just what to do with the remaining lots when they pay their water connection fee. Yes, the details are down to each lot. This is extremely important to have going forward.

## **VI. Additional Accomplishments**

### **A. Updated lien filing process**

- Our lien filing process was a bit outdated and not fully in compliance. It was also not very encouraging for members to pay their dues. So we have updated the information and process requirements as well as adding a \$350 lien filing fee per lot to pay for an attorney to file the liens for us.

### **B. Several new legal documents that we should have been using before that we were unaware of previously. This includes multiple water connection receipts that needs to be completed and filed with the county when members pay their water connection fees. We have an “easement clarification” document to help us with our vague declarations regarding utility easements.**

### **C. Established a timeline and allocated funds for paving the front entrance.**