

# The Refuge at Whitehall Homeowners Association

Special Meeting, December 15, 2026

Larry Drake opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. He introduced new members Mark Palmer and Woody Fields. Mark has assumed the position of Architectural Review Board Chairman and Woody has filled the open position of Vice President.

Larry offered the petitioners 30 minutes to state their case on the petition signed by 20 residents and presented to the Board. Carlisle Harrison stated that the petition stands as presented. Larry read the petition for the benefit of those present that were not approached by the petitioners.

After reading the petition, Larry stated that there were several items that were addressed in the 2015 Annual Meeting and, for that reason; he will not address them again. Larry indicated that, in his case, the realtor did not do a very good job of providing information about the Covenants and Restrictions but Larry and his wife have learned. The C&R are posted on the Refuge website ([refugeatwhitehall.org](http://refugeatwhitehall.org)) for residents to look at or download. The fee schedule developed by this Board is also posted showing fees for violations of the C&R or the By-Laws.

When Larry and Nieta moved into the neighborhood in 2013, he observed a number of needs in the neighborhood and was told by neighbors of things that needed addressing. At the HOA Annual Meeting in 2014, he was voted onto the Board and was ultimately voted into the President position by the other directors.

At the next Board meeting the Directors discussed that there were a number of items in the minutes dating back to 2012 that were discussed but never resolved due in large part to attempts by the then President to establish a large structure on the Board of several committees and other duties assigned to other neighbors. That structure seemed to lead to things not getting done as items were passed back and forth but not resolved. The Board then discussed that they would plan to get some of the things done.

The first thing the Board wanted to do is to get the railing placed on the dock for safety reasons as well as liability issues. The second item was to place the Community Information board at the entrance to the neighborhood that had been talked about but not done. Lastly the one item they wanted to get done was replacing the sign on the entrance that kept getting broken vandals and replacement of the three signs outside the neighborhood pointing into The Refuge and the signs at the Pavilion. All of the signs were in bad shape and did not reflect well on the neighborhood.

Larry then addressed that in the past minutes was a documented effort at getting things done but were never accomplished. He then indicated that the petitioners were saying the HOA meetings were not using Robert's Rules of Order. He related his 48year career in telecommunications leading a number of national projects and a large part of that career was at AT&T and other operating companies. In that career he not once used Robert's Rules of Order and is not familiar with it at all. He has never been trained on it. He has also looked at the requirements for Corporations on the South Carolina website several times and has never seen any requirement the he or the Board has violated.

Larry pointed out that the Board is a volunteer job and he has had trouble keeping people on the Board because of these continuous attacks. The current Board is down to three members and has two openings that need to be filled to insure enough people are looking at issues and making comments. Volunteers are always welcome to join the Board and are really needed.

Larry then indicated that the signs had been replaced as well as the Refuge sign on the brick wall at the entrance. He then addressed the railing on the dock. The Board talked to one contractor that gave a price of \$6200 but he could only work on it on Sundays. The Board then talked to Stover Construction and he gave a price of somewhere around \$5500 and could start within a week and complete the job in three days so he was selected. Mansoor stood and pointed out that the price we selected was very good and that he would have charged over \$12,000 for the same work. Following completion, the Board was slammed because the residents had not been given full disclosure on who was solicited for the job, who did the engineering studies and other complaints. Engineering studies on an existent dock?

Russ Miller spoke to the fact that this meeting could serve as the catalyst for improvements in the future information provided by the Board and that it's time to draw a line in the sand and move forward leaving all the old complaints behind. Craig Sheasley pointed out that he had participated in the audit of the Refuge financials and was pleased to report that the financials are in good shape and the budget was well organized and developed. Frank Glover has done a masterful job of pulling together to the financials we got from William Douglas who we fired in September 2016. Craig also indicated that not providing full disclosure to the residents could well lead to one or more of them developing an erroneous assumption. He has been in the neighborhood long enough to be aware of some frayed feeling but it is time to put all of that in the past and move on with a new future.

Larry addressed the hiring of William Douglas (WD) Management. Even in past Boards efforts had been made to find a management company and, because of a referral from another organization, we asked them to make a presentation to the Board. Based on that presentation, the Board hired the to take care of a number of items that tend to be a load on the Board itself. From the outset, WD performed poorly not as the company itself but due to the Manager assigned to our neighborhood. Larry spoke to the management itself and indicated the poor performance of WD but it appeared that no subsequent training of the

Manager was done. For that reason, the contract was terminated. The financial records were so bad that Frank had to really struggle to reconstruct them. Frank ultimately resigned from the Board due to the harassment of the Board and because someone in the petition questioned the \$5000 that was transferred to the Operations account from the Reserve account. That was done so that outstanding bills could be paid

Carlisle Harrison addressed the issues on the petition and indicated that no one questioned the decisions that the Board had made but the lack of information provided to the residents and had that information been provided we would not be having this meeting. He stated that all HOA meetings are to be run using Robert's Rules of order stating resolutions of the Board.

Carlisle also addressed the funds used to maintain Preservation (PL). He said no information was given to the residents about the use of HOA funds and the repayment structure. Nieta Drake pointed out that the 10 residents on PL met at her house and decided how to pay for the lawsuit requirements that were not discussed with the residents prior to the arbitration. Also not discussed with the residents was the additional \$6700 the Board authorized for engineering studies and core samples. Robert Young pointed out that he had been the Chair of the Preservation Lane Advisory Committee. Prior to the arbitration, he had presented to the then Board a plan for using crushed concrete to build up the base of PL and a plan for using plantation mix to top dress the entire lane. This plan was given to the Board prior to the arbitration meeting but the Board ignored it altogether. That's why he dropped off the Board.

John Thompson related that he was pleased with the things the current Board has accomplished and he feels better about the things knowing the process of contractor selection and that the residents would appreciate just an email or maybe a quarterly newsletter to let residents know about the Board decisions and how they were arrived at. Larry committed at the meeting to provide better information.

Carlisle questioned why his request to join the Board earlier in 2016 never received and feedback from the Board as to why he was not selected. Larry pointed out that the Board by that time had already selected two persons to fill the vacant slots.

Russ Miller suggested that if there is a problem with a Board member you go to talk directly to them rather than just complaining about it. Larry admitted that they had done a weak job of dissemination information but that this Board agrees and has committed to doing a better job of providing information. He also indicated that the Board, when they went in, were somewhat miffed at some of the things that were said and were probably for that reason hesitant to conform to prior rules.

A resident asked if there was continuity on the Board and why it seems the rules change with each new Board. Larry explained that the Board seats rotate a couple each year for three year terms and, that each Board has the right to develop new rules to address current conditions.

It was also asked why the dues are now due in January when they used to be due in March. Larry indicated that a previous Board had made the change before he even moved into the neighborhood.

Robert Young brought up that there was a special meeting in April of 2016 to vote on how to handle the \$6700 engineering costs. He thinks that was a big mistake because the Board hired the same engineering company (Connor Engineering) that had done the original design. That was a waste of money. Larry pointed out that that expense was incurred without any notification about it at all.

A motion was made from the floor that the current Board stay in place with the proviso that better communication with residents as discussed and agreed to at this meeting be accomplished. The motion was seconded by John Thompson. All agreed as amended.

It was requested that the Annual Meeting date be changed from February 15 to another date. Larry said he would do that.

A motion was made to have the budget posted on the Refuge website. The motion was seconded and all voted aye.

Another motion was made that minutes of Board meetings be placed on the website prior to board approval to keep from a delay in residents seeing the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and all voted aye.

Woody Fields made a motion to re-engage the previous accountant, if he agrees, at a cost of \$150-\$200 per month. All voted aye.

Woody suggested we bring up the issue of lighting in the neighborhood. The entrance lights are in bad shape. Rodney McLeod has been replacing the bulbs but they burn out or are vandalized frequently. The Board is considering a plan to replace the whole lighting system due to trees growing around the wires. Once a plan is developed, it will be publicized in the minutes. Woody has also had SCEG come and do a photometric study of lighting in the Refuge and there is going to be a quote to bring the neighborhood up to standard. The dock lights will also be studied.

Larry also indicated that the Board is also looking at a finding a "handyman" that can come in and give us quotes to repair some items such as the door on the dock.

Woody also indicated that he is looking at all of the contracts we have to determine if the requirements are being met and if the cost is proper. Some of the contracts have just been automatically renewed and need further study.

A motion was made and seconded to close the meeting. All voted aye

Larry closed the meeting at 8:20 p.m.