BROOKFIELD SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT - Meeting Minutes

September 23 7:00PM Quarterly Meeting

Prepared by Marlene Walker (CMW, Conny, 2026 chair) Edits by JCS

Purpose of the meeting:
Quarterly review with emphasis on improving appearance at Pelham Road entrance of the community.

Commissioners in attendance: William Byars, Jenna (Wynn) Byers, C Marlene Walker, Jay Sinnett and Pam Sinnett.

Brookfield Recreation Board Members in attendance: Will Davis (president), Brandy Dellinger (treasurer)

Others in attendance: Sue Doyle (PC), Ben Walker (BF), Shelley Ferraro (PC), Robyn Campbell (BF), Mary Taylor (PC), Kirsten Dodwell (BF), Leslee Newton (BF), Mike Newton (BF)

There was some confusion about the meeting start time and most parties were present at 6:30PM. There was discussion and information was shared in that time, particularly regarding the work done at the Pelham Creek entrances. Chairwoman C Marlene Walker included these later in the meeting under agenda item 10.

Meeting was called to order at 7:02PM (Agenda Item 1)

Will Byars gave the invocation (Agenda item 2)

Meeting minutes (***Agenda Item 3)*** Minutes from the July (with spelling corrections) and April Meetings (as submitted) were approved unanimously. Jay Sinnett will post these on the website.

There was no representative from Grounds Guys (Agenda item 4)

Tax District Treasury Report provided by Jay Sinnett (Agenda Item 5)
Hard copies were provided to all present and Commissioner Walker also showed this on screen. Discussion items – the increase in the electricity costs 25% increase since March due to (1) 18% rate increase and (2) loss of a discount. (Jay later specified that the exact wording on the fading rebate is "Summary of Rider Adjustments".) The balance as of Sept 23 was $8091.42. Of that, $136 is considered "reserved for capital improvements".

Brookfield Representative report (Agenda item 6)
There had not been a board meeting for which a tax commissioner had been present since the last meeting so, Will Daivs, president of the Brookfield Recreation Association provided the update. Will provided a verbal update on finances, conditions and membership. He provided approximate numbers of members and an approximation of expenses attributable to the tax district. Brandy Dellinger nodded in agreement at his report. Commissioner Walker indicated that a formal accounting of the Brookfield Recreation Association finances is needed from the board district which they will provide in the annual accounting..

Will Davis suggested that the neighborhood Facebook page originally set up for the Recreation Association and communication with the neighborhood be limited to Recreation Association members only and that the neighborhood establish a new Facebook page for just the tax district or neighbors. No action was taken and can be added as an agenda item discussion for the next meeting.

There was much discussion during this time in which several key points were made. Commissioner Walker once again pointed out that the BFRA property is owned by its members, yet the tax district draws on funds from both members and non members. Commissioner Walker had a hard copy of the most recent agreement, which has been reapproved every 5 years and provided this to interested parties. Commissioner Jay Sinnett pointed out that this document is available on-line on the Tax district Website.

CMW pointed out that the Recreation Association is obligated to provide an annual accounting of funds from the $50 per household fee to assure that these funds are used only for maintenance, repair, and capital improvement. There is no suggestion that these funds have been misused (in fact, the Rec Association repairs have exceeded the Tax District fees paid to them), but a formal accounting is in everyone's interest.

The Tax District covers both Pelham Creek (PC) and Brookfield (BF) Communities, but, due to PC's dissatisfaction with landscaping and entrance maintenance over the last two years, Pelham Creek residents have been looking into establishing their own funding system and group. (This is ***agenda item 10***, drawn into pertinent conversation.) Commissioner Jay Sinnett provided an estimated breakdown of income and expenses by development (PC and BF). He pointed out that he, as treasurer, cannot provide funds to any individual and suggested that they form an LLC to which he can write checks. Commissioner Walker made a motion to funnel that amount of money attributable to PC directly to them annually and allow them to use the funds at their discretion. This was met with a strong disagreement with long-time resident Mike Newton and others and Commissioner Sinnett moved to table the motion.. The item was not resolved.

During this time, the issue of the over-pruning of the Ligustrums at the pool following the April meeting was discussed. The landscaping company had started to prune them at the pool based on the discussion at that meeting. The people doing the pruning cut them too low and Will Davis and members of the board stopped them from continuing. (Will Davis says that a major "draw" for our pool is the privacy afforded by the Lugustrum hedges.) The landscaper then left the cut branches from the pruning and from other tree they had trimmed in the parking lot. None of the commissioners were present at the time of the pruning and Commissioner Walker upon return from out of town called the company asked them to remove the branches just in time for the pool opening. This discussion came up again later in the meeting.

Update on Repairs to Brookfield lighting sign (Agenda Item 7)

Jay Sinnett was able to to procure new fixtures and repair the lights at the front entrance, with assistance from Will Davis but without the need for a contract electrician. These LED lights are brighter than the previous lights. We thank him for his efforts.

Review of Areas of Responsibility (Agenda Items 8)

Commissioner Walker provided a copy of the Bid package that had been used to select Grounds Guys as the landscaping company for the tax district/recreation association properties in 2010. These included aerial photos and sketches of the Pelham Creek entrance and Brookfield entrance, parking lot, pool and tennis areas.

Commissioner Walker showed the areas for which the landscaper (and tax district) are responsible. We discussed the juniper beds which now are just mulch. The south side of the embankment where the ligustrum are the juniper is healthier. The section along the tennis courts is mostly dead. It was noted that juniper was probably selected for its drought resistance and ability to handle water runoff during strong downpours on the steep part of the berm along Pelham Road.

Commissioner Byers provided photographs of perennials she thought would be able to handle the conditions on the road side of the berm. Commissioner Walker pointed out that there was still $350 of the $400 donation from the April meeting available for plantings if we could find volunteers to do the work. She also noted that the plantings done on the private property of the Cranfill's had taken very well and we could consider mimicking their side for consistency. Conversation transitioned into the next topic.

Review of 2010 Landscaping Bid Process (Agenda Item 9)

Commissioner Walker read from the bid package provided in 2010. She noted that there had probably been significant modifications to the contract where key items of responsibility had been lost or forgone, probably to cut costs, but that her expectation of a landscaping company was still the same.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to take next year's contract out for bid. There was significant discussion in which the following points were made (1) it had been 16 years since the contract had been put up for bid, (2) small, local companies might be daunted at the prospect of having to go through a bid process, (3) we should give Ground Guys an opportunity to make things right.

Commissioner Walker explained that the "misunderstanding" of the ligustrums trimming highlighted a key area of concern. No one on the commission remembered any discussion of specifics in the April meeting of how they were to cut them back, just that they were overgrown and needed to be cut.

Recreation Association board president Davis indicated we need to give exact specifications on the height of the trimming to address the privacy concerns by Brookfield Recreation Association pool members that have been the argument for allowing the over growth over the years.

Commissioner Walker pointed out that commissioners are not experts in landscaping. They rely on the company to make recommendations and to keep to the terms of the contract. The height of the trimming, and, by which method they choose to do so, is, to a large extent, their area of expertise.

At some point in the discussion, a former tax commissioner, long time recreation association board member and current resident pointed out that Duke Power will come and trim them if they are too tall. Commissioner Walker pointed out that height requirements by which the electric company operates is 4 feet higher than the lowest hanging cable and phone lines now using the same poles above the ligustrums.

Pelham Creek residents, at several points in the meeting, expressed their frustrations with Ground Guys over the last two years. One resident says they billed us for work that she did herself. Another resident had them come out twice to "fix" problems. So, although we did not take a vote, it would be fair to summarize that Pelham Creek residents were in mostly in favor, (some felt strongly) that taking next

year's contract out to bid was a good idea. Whereas the residents of Brookfield (and Recreation Association president) wanted to give them a second chance.

In the motion to take the contract was not seconded. Commissioner Jay Sinnett suggested that Commissioner Walker and BFRA president meet with Grounds Guys representatives to give them a chance to "make things right." Commissioner Walker indicated she did not feel she was representative of the community's concept of "beauty in landscaping" and asked that Commissioner Byers be part of this process. Although no formal motion was made, this is the course of action. Jenna and Will Davis agreed to join CMW in talking to Grounds Guys. Commissioner Sinnett suggested that if we can't get a re-bid package underway soon enough that the contract with Grounds Guys in 2027 could be on a month-to-month basis.

A follow up meeting is schedule for 7PM on October 21, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM

Housekeeping items were touched on but not addressed after formal adjournment of the meeting..