



**Westside Trails Homeowners Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2026 | 7:00 PM**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Old Business:

• Livestock Proxy Votes:

The Board reviewed, counted, verified, and confirmed all submitted livestock proxy votes. Out of 116 homeowners, a total of 89 votes were received. At present, Westside Trails consists of a total of 242 lots. Of these, 127 lots remain under ownership of the developer, while the remaining 117 lots are owned by individual homeowners.

Following additional review, research, and consultation with experts—including guidance from Montana State University Extension—the developer has issued a final determination to **maintain the existing covenants with no changes.**

The developer’s decision was based on the following detailed findings:

1. Covenant Integrity and Property Protection:

Covenants are in place under Montana law to ensure all owners have the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their property. The existing covenants clearly require a minimum of 2 acres for horses, which was in place at the time all homeowners purchased their property. Changing this standard would be unfair to those opposed and could undermine confidence in covenant enforcement. Consistent enforcement of reasonable and enforceable covenants is critical to protecting property values and the long-term stability of Westside Trails.

2. Soil Conditions and Forage Limitations:

The 2-acre minimum requirement originated from recommendations by Montana State University Extension due to the area’s poor soil conditions. The predominant soil type produces limited forage, and sustainable grazing practices require leaving half the forage to maintain plant health. On a 1-acre lot, usable forage would only sustain a horse for a short period of time, making long-term grazing impractical and unsustainable. Overgrazing would result in long-term soil damage and inability to regrow pasture.



3. **Environmental Impact and Long-Term Land Degradation:**

Allowing multiple animals on small parcels would result in significant soil degradation, loss of vegetation, and long-term damage to the land. Once pasture is depleted, it can take many years to recover. This would negatively affect property appearance, usability, and resale value across the community.

4. **Septic System and Drain Field Risks:**

Many septic drain fields in the community are shallow and not designed to withstand consistent livestock traffic. Expert guidance advises against allowing animals on drain fields due to the risk of soil compaction and system failure. Damage to septic systems would be costly and would negatively impact property values. Even limited grazing poses risks, and permanent use of these areas for livestock is strongly discouraged.

5. **HOA Management and Enforcement Challenges:**

Implementing and maintaining an Animal Husbandry Committee would significantly increase the burden on the HOA Board. Establishing, monitoring, and enforcing standards related to fencing, shelter, and humane care would be complex, time-consuming, and potentially costly. Consistent enforcement across all properties would be difficult to achieve.

6. **Animal Care and Compliance Concerns:**

Observations within the community indicate that some current animal owners are not properly maintaining pens or managing manure. Improper practices, such as feeding hay on the ground without regular manure removal, create unsanitary conditions and demonstrate the challenges of ensuring proper animal care. Expanding livestock allowances would likely increase these issues and require ongoing education and enforcement.

7. **Waste Management and Groundwater Risks:**

A single horse can produce significant amounts of waste annually, including thousands of gallons of urine and tens of thousands of pounds of manure. On small parcels, there is limited space for proper disposal, and in many cases, waste is not being adequately managed. Over time, this raises concerns about contamination of soil and potential impacts to well water, including elevated nitrate levels, which pose health risks.

8. **Consistency with Expert Recommendations:**

All research and expert input consistently indicate that the proposed level of livestock density is not appropriate for the lot sizes within Westside Trails. The original covenants were established with input from Broadwater County, Montana State University Extension, and legal counsel, and align with best practices for the area. Deviating from these recommendations would conflict with established expert guidance.

In summary, all findings indicate that allowing increased livestock density would not be beneficial to the environment, infrastructure, or long-term sustainability of Westside Trails. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the community to uphold the existing covenants as originally approved and avoid changes that conflict with expert recommendations.



Final Developer Determination:

- Horses – No
- Expanded Chickens (18) – No
- Roosters – No
- Goats – No
- Cows – No

Unauthorized livestock restrictions remain in effect, and compliance with existing covenants is required.

• Contractor Requirements (Mowing & Weed Control):

The Board discussed contractor compliance requirements and agreed that all contractors must submit proof of insurance and Form W9. Communication will be sent to ensure compliance.

• Financial Review:

The Board reviewed the Profit & Loss Statement, Accounts Receivable Aging Report, and Balance Sheet.

• Credit Card Processing Fees:

The Board discussed implementing a 2.99% credit card processing fee for HOA payments. At this time, no decision has been made to move forward.

New Business:

• Quarterly Newsletter:

The Board discussed launching a quarterly newsletter for homeowners. Topics may include seasonal maintenance tips, community events, and holiday decoration contests. This initiative is forthcoming.

• Community Improvements:

Discussion was held regarding potential community improvements, including a playground and trail system. These projects may move forward pending additional details from the developer and will be presented to homeowners for a community vote.

• Road Work & Development Updates:

The Board discussed upcoming road work needs, scheduling, and updates on the approval and progress of Phase 3 and Phase 4.



• **CCR Compliance & Enforcement:**

The Board discussed future enforcement of CCR compliance and potential penalty fees. Unauthorized livestock restrictions remain in place, and non-compliance with CCRs will be addressed.

• **Park Development & Volunteers:**

The Board discussed the need for homeowner volunteers should the community park project move forward.

• **Welcome Letter:**

The Board discussed preparing a welcome letter to provide new homeowners with important HOA and community information.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Westside Trails Homeowners Association
Board of Directors
