Island Park Woodland Homeowners Association, Inc.

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Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, March 8th, 2025 @ 9:00am | Island Park Woodland Community Area

Meeting Opening and Approval of Minutes
The meeting begins with a confirmation that a quorum is present, including Wade Ralph, Lyndee Carhart, Nancy Blakley, and Maria Tunis. The previous meeting's minutes, which had been sent to the board via email, are motioned for approval by Wade and seconded by Nancy, officially approving them.

Financial Overview and Board Election Announcements
The checking account has $56,921, and there is $15,435 in the contingency fund. A total of 159 assessments have been collected, five short of the target 164. Some homeowners are paying in installments, while others have not paid; the unpaid amounts will be recovered upon property sales. Seventeen houses are currently for sale. The upcoming June election is discussed, with Maria Tunis and Lynn Anklam running for renewal. Lyndee will not seek re-election. Maria and Lynn agree to serve another two years, after which Maria plans to step down as president, advocating for term limits for the role.

Leadership Transition and Board Nominations
Maria stresses the need for leadership transition and personal readiness to step back from the presidency after what will be 14 years of service. Though willing to stay involved in other capacities like managing the website or serving as secretary, she emphasize that someone else should take charge. A nomination newsletter will be sent out, and board members are encouraged to recruit interested candidates before the May deadline to allow for ballot preparation for the June meeting.

Landscaping Updates and Boat Launch Enhancements
Discussion shifts to old business, particularly landscaping. Jose's team has completed thorough cleanups at both the front entrance and rear of the property—each costing around $2,000. Their work included cleaning around the Tdock area. Maria and others agree the job was well done. There is also planning around the boat launch area, where decorative fencing using 4x4 or 6x6 posts and rope is being considered to block access to the gravel zone. The posts will be concreted into the ground due to frequent flooding. A picnic table has been added to the area. There's talk of acquiring more picnic tables via Facebook Marketplace.

Tennis Court Renovation and Pickleball Courts
Renovation of the tennis court is expected to begin in the coming week, following an $8,000 deposit. The court will be resurfaced and converted into a dual-use space with two pickleball courts. The last resurfacing occurred in 2014. The surface is fiberglass, so not suitable for activities like rollerblading or hockey. There is openness to adding basketball hoops. New nets will be installed, and pickleball nets will be portable. A growing pickleball community in the neighborhood is acknowledged, and the idea of organizing a regular play day is supported.

Signage and Easter Egg Hunt Planning
Mr. Stegman is preparing signage for the seawall area, including "No Trespassing" signs, which should be ready within the week. Posts and screws will be used to install the signs. Planning begins for the annual Easter egg hunt on April 19th. Volunteers are needed for stuffing eggs, buying prizes, scattering the eggs, and clean-up. Maria has the eggs in storage and will provide them. Community members, particularly Kelly and her group, are suggested as potential volunteers.

Seawall Maintenance and Sediment Removal
Conrad presented two quotes for seawall sediment removal. The first involves a contractor using a backhoe or track hoe to clear sediment directly in front of the seawall and install riprap, but he cannot maneuver equipment around the corner. This plan relies partially on the natural current redistributing sediment. The second quote, priced at $6,200 but negotiable to $5,900 if debris is left on-site, includes suctioning out loose silt and gravel and adding larger riprap for long-term erosion control. Both contractors agree this would be a more durable solution than the current situation. It's noted that even with filter fabric under the riprap, some sediment will still shift. A board member recounts the original seawall construction, emphasizing that large boulders were installed and silt placed above a fabric layer. Despite repeated flooding, the structure has remained stable, though annual maintenance via trash pumping is expected due to the area's tidal activity.

The conversation shifts to a problematic section near the seawall, where initial plans called for a ladder and tie-off point to be placed over a single rung to avoid obstruction. Budget constraints prevented the wall from being extended fully, leading to makeshift solutions and long-term issues. The area, previously overgrown with mangroves and firebrush, has now settled—but during winter low tides, the silt and debris buildup becomes highly visible and problematic.

There's a disagreement on whether the issue stems from erosion or simple material settling. Chad insists that there's no erosion, only displacement due to activity in the area—particularly from children stepping on the rocks and general use. Another counters that the area has visibly changed over the past six months. The real issue seems to lie in the loose rocks and the ladder's interference with boat access, which has led to lost props and dangerous collisions.

Trash Pump Proposal and Silt Removal Strategy
A proposal is presented to purchase a trash pump—estimated around $1,000—to manage ongoing silt accumulation in front of the concrete seawall. This sediment buildup is blamed on slower water flow following the repositioning of the wall. The trash pump could serve as a long-term maintenance tool, used to extract the silt and redeposit it safely.

Clarification is made that such a pump will not remove the problematic small gravel, only sand and silt. Permitting concerns are raised, but it's confirmed that removing dirt and silt from in front of the seawall does not require a permit. Concerns about explaining this to a neighboring property owner are dismissed as manageable.

Revisiting the Concrete Seawall Extension Option
The conversation revisits an older idea of extending the concrete seawall to a nearby palm tree, an initiative that had originally been dropped due to financial limits. A new quote from Florida Structural places the cost of the extension at about $34,000. The expansion would provide more dock space—enough for two or three larger boats—especially helpful given increased boat traffic due to the continued closure of Punta Rassa.

There's additional context about broader county efforts to improve 10 Mile Canal, which include removing banks and vegetation to enhance water flow and reduce freshwater flooding. While unrelated to Hurricane Ian (which brought saltwater flooding from the Gulf), these upgrades could significantly improve drainage. Still, some concern is voiced that ongoing construction by the county might eventually conflict with private seawall work.

The rising cost of the seawall extension is noted as a reason to act sooner rather than later. While the extension is the most expensive of all possible solutions, it's seen as a permanent fix that would reduce or eliminate the need for repeated manual maintenance and risk of erosion. There's acknowledgment that although one speaker now has more free time, they can't continuously shovel silt or operate a pump indefinitely. The

aging of the volunteer labor force is also a factor.

The point is stressed that winter low tides make this an ideal time to perform repairs or modifications, as the water level reveals the full extent of the issue and provides easier access to the problem areas.

It's revealed that some of the riprap materials and large boulders currently in place were generously provided at no cost by the original contractor, including the rocks now helping to prevent vehicular access to the ramp. Despite these good-faith efforts, the 57 stone is too small and shifts easily—especially under foot traffic or during storms. There's also risk of injury due to the instability of the surface, and no clear way to keep people from launching boats from the area, which was never intended as a kayak or small craft launch.

Questions are raised about why no large boulders or screening are placed further up the slope. It's clarified that drainage infrastructure exists and that three rows of large boulders already line the bottom, but small rocks have still been shifted by both human activity and recent flooding.

A participant calls for a cleanup effort—moving trees and debris to better evaluate options. Increased boat traffic is also cited as a contributing factor to wave wash and potential erosion. The group discusses how boaters fail to slow down in the canal, compounding the sediment displacement issue.

Finally, the construction plan from Florida Structural is detailed: the seawall extension would replicate the existing design and curve around the palm tree, requiring excavation of the existing slope and small rocks. The current bank near the palm tree has held up well due to the natural reinforcement of rocks and roots, so care would be taken not to disturb that area unnecessarily. The proposed construction aims to both preserve this natural stability and provide a smoother transition from land to water without risking further erosion.

Silt Line Issues and Potential Solutions

The discussion resumes with concerns about the accumulating silt line in a specific area where water flow converges, causing significant buildup. While it's been acknowledged from the beginning that silt would be a problem, there was initial hope that this could be handled with a trash pump. There's ongoing uncertainty about whether the county will remove a nearby island, a move that could impact silt dynamics and boat ramp usage.

Despite prior claims that county plans might remove boat docks or ramps, those proposals were reportedly shot down. The group references a prior engineering study indicating that removing the island and nearby vegetation might dramatically reduce water levels, even predicting drops to just one foot deep in certain areas. This raised alarm, as such a drastic change would affect boat access and dock usability. However, some members argue that nearby waters remain deep (up to 25 feet in rock quarries and 18 feet across the creek), suggesting the projections are flawed or overestimated.

The conversation shifts to past investments. A significant amount of money had been spent on jackhammering out large rocks to allow for better boat access, essentially trying to open up the space for larger vessels. However, the result is currently unusable due to the accumulation of silt and gravel. The frustration is evident, as members feel they paid for access that is now blocked. Some gravel installed to improve the situation ended up worsening the silt issue, getting pulled down by water flow. Members now propose clearing everything out before considering additional investments like extending the seawall.

One major proposal is extending the seawall to fully resolve the erosion and dock usability problems. The group debates whether they can afford this. Although some express concern about budgeting, others highlight that they have $57,000 available and will soon resume collecting dues, half of which can go

toward dock-related improvements. There's general agreement that it might be wiser to fix the issue now rather than delay and face increased costs in the future.

Clarification is provided regarding what contractors were told to bid on. The work involves digging out eroded materials and continuing the seawall up to a palm tree, including installing a rock top. This would resolve erosion and make the dock usable. One member volunteers to handle the silt removal separately, estimating around $1,000 for necessary pump equipment and possibly a helper. However, it's noted that this pump won't handle large rocks and that silt accumulation has persisted despite prior efforts.

There's recognition that silt issues may never be fully resolved due to tidal flow and boat activity. Still, if erosion and usability are the main concerns, extending the wall remains the best structural solution. Previously, budget constraints stopped them from doing the full project, but they had the foresight to install an end panel that can be removed and extended in the future. It's expected that more jackhammering will be required due to underlying limestone, potentially triggering a change order. However, it's argued that the current bid includes this extra work and shouldn't result in significant cost overruns.

As the group considers pumping out the silt, a new challenge emerges: where to put the removed material. One suggestion is to redistribute it onto nearby grass, asserting that the sediment came from their own ramp and property. Others caution against this, noting that because the area is classified as an impaired waterway and part of a drainage system, environmental regulations may prohibit such action. They cite similar issues in nearby Iona, where enforcement has been strict. One member agrees to follow up with environmental authorities, confident that prior outreach efforts and positive relations with officials will help clarify what is permissible.

The discussion contines with concerns about silt accumulation and water flow near a seawall, particularly in an area that was flagged as problematic from the beginning of the project. It's noted that while silt can be removed with a trash pump, broader uncertainties remain regarding the county's plans—especially whether a nearby island will be removed and whether boat docks will be affected. The group expresses skepticism and frustration with the status of a $32 million dredging plan that now appears to be halted. There is also discussion about a previous engineering study which suggested that removing the island and its vegetation could cause the water level to drop by a foot, a projection participants challenge by citing deep nearby water bodies such as rock quarries and creek sections with depths of 18 to 25 feet. The engineering assumptions and projections are met with doubt, especially given the practical knowledge of the waterway.

The group revisits the significant investments made in the past to make the boat area more accessible, including jackhammering rocks, moving a wall, and removing large debris. These efforts were costly and aimed at allowing boat access, even for larger vessels. Despite these expenditures, the area remains problematic due to persistent gravel and silt build-up, which has rendered the improvements largely unusable. The frustration stems from paying for upgrades that have not delivered the expected utility, and the discussion begins to pivot toward solutions, including possibly removing or extending the seawall to fully resolve the issue.

Suggestions are made to dig out the problematic materials and assess whether a $40,000 extension of the seawall would be necessary. Some participants express willingness to undertake physical labor themselves if it would help, emphasizing that the gravel is settled but still makes the site unusable. The conversation then leads to more decisive proposals, such as completely removing the seawall. Financial aspects are considered, with one speaker noting there's $57,000 already set aside, and that no new assessment should be necessary unless unexpected costs arise. The consensus begins to form around doing the work now to avoid higher costs in the future.

The group discusses the scope of the bids received for seawall work, clarifying that contractors were

instructed to remove eroded materials and continue the seawall to a specific landmark (a palm tree), including necessary matting and rockwork. This would address erosion and improve dock usability. One speaker volunteers to manage silt removal separately, proposing the use of a trash pump for about $1,000. It's clarified that the seawall extension will not prevent silt accumulation—only help manage erosion—so additional maintenance like silt pumping will still be needed.

Further clarification is provided that silt accumulation is caused by natural tides and boat movement, and while some mitigation is possible, complete prevention is not. The idea of pumping the silt onto nearby grass is debated, with concern raised over environmental regulations and whether such material from an impaired waterway can legally be relocated without permitting. One participant insists that because the material originated from their own property, it should be permissible, but agrees to confirm this with authorities. There's optimism that newer, more cooperative contacts in local government may ease the regulatory process.

The discussion turned contentious as members revisited past decisions on landscape and erosion control. One member pointed out that the silt problem is ongoing and was supposed to be addressed by a landscape committee that once proposed a solution involving posts and ropes to prevent erosion. That plan, according to the speaker, was rejected. Disagreements erupted over who actually blocked the plan, with one member accusing "Chad" of shutting it down, while others denied that claim. The group became divided, highlighting a lack of consensus and a history of unresolved disputes about prior efforts.

Attention shifted to whether the community could afford to extend the seawall. The current budget could cover the costs, as long as the price didn't increase drastically. The contractor had provided a number that was deemed reliable, with the caveat that if the community helped handle engineering paperwork themselves, they could save approximately $3,000. A volunteer was sought for that task. Members discussed the implications of potential hidden costs and the importance of a clearly written contract to prevent surprises later on.

The group discussed how to manage the annual accumulation of silt if the wall is extended. The plan involved using a trash pump to remove the sand during low tide and temporarily store it in the parking lot. However, concerns were raised about relying on volunteers to do the work, particularly as demographics in the neighborhood change. Fewer residents are willing or able to volunteer, and there's concern about long-term sustainability. The group acknowledged that eventually they might need to pay for this service, and that volunteer capacity is not a permanent solution.

A member asked about the timeline if the seawall project were approved. The organizer explained that until this meeting's vote was finalized, a formal timeline couldn't be established. If approved, it might still be several months before construction starts due to the contractor's workload. The group discussed backup options, including a simpler $6,000 dig-out, as a stopgap. Permitting was also briefly mentioned and confirmed as part of the process. One member emphasized that it's either "extend the wall or do nothing," prompting further urgency.

Voting on Proposals and Financial Implications

A formal motion was made to vote on three options: a $2,000 light dig-out (rejected unanimously), a $6,000 dig-out (only four in favor), and full seawall extension, which was the majority. Members expressed concerns about change orders that might increase costs and whether this would negatively impact the annual budget. It was explained that their operating expenses total $26,000 annually, with an additional $12,000 buffer for unplanned events like hurricanes. With nearly $57,000 currently available and more income expected from dues in June, leadership felt confident that the seawall could be financed—even with some increase in cost—without endangering other obligations like landscaping and insurance.

To manage the risk of unexpected costs, the group agreed that any major changes would nullify the current vote, requiring a new one. They added a $3,000 contingency buffer and agreed to use their own engineer for permitting to save money. **The final vote to extend the seawall passed with majority support, with the understanding that the vote would be revisited if the contractor's number changed significantly.** Russell was tasked with getting a revised and firm number in writing. Copies of the current proposal were made available to anyone who wanted them.

Other Business and New Topics
In closing, a community member brought up "Elevate Florida," though there wasn't yet enough information to discuss it in detail. It was briefly noted that they were looking into it and had pulled materials to review.

A homeowner shared their experience with repeated flooding, having already flooded twice, and explained that they no longer live in the affected house, having bought another property along the coast. They are now weighing options offered by the Elevate Florida program, including elevating or demolishing their current house. The homeowner expressed a preference for demolition but voiced concerns over a clause requiring HOA (Homeowners Association) approval to rebuild on the same lot. They questioned whether this requirement stems from Florida statute or simply from the HOA bylaws.

The discussion highlighted the ambiguity and potential limitations of the HOA's authority over whether a demolished home can be rebuilt, even if the new structure complies with updated codes. The homeowner sought written assurance from the board confirming their right to rebuild before making a final decision.

While Elevate Florida offers to cover up to 75% of costs, which is significantly more generous than FEMA's $35,000 cap, the remaining percentage must be self-funded unless additional support is available for Sanibel Captiva residents. Attendees noted that with one more flood within a five-year span, homeowners could face a 50-50 split on future assistance due to regional flooding thresholds in Lee County.

Three options available through Elevate Florida were outlined: elevating a structurally sound home, demolishing and rebuilding elevated, or demolishing and donating the lot to the city. Most properties in the community are slab-on-grade, making elevation difficult or unfeasible. One attendee emphasized the importance of confirming that the HOA cannot block reconstruction if demolition occurs, and requested an official vote or documentation from the board to confirm.

Several board members voiced support and indicated they did not anticipate any opposition, but the homeowner stressed the importance of a formal board resolution rather than a verbal or individual promise. They emphasized needing a written letter from the HOA within the next 30 days for the Elevate Florida application process, which their spouse was managing and was believed to be completed.

Another resident noted they were already in the review stage of their application and had initially chosen elevation, though they hoped to potentially switch to another option after final discussions with the Elevate Florida team. Importantly, they shared that no HOA approval had been requested during their own application process.

Meeting Adjournment and Next Meeting Date
With no further questions or comments, a motion was made by Maria to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nancy Blakely. Before closing, the board discussed scheduling the next meeting. June 14th was selected, even though it falls right before Father's Day, as no attendees objected. It was confirmed that this meeting would be the annual meeting and that ballots would be sent out in the mail ahead of it. The meeting was then officially adjourned.