

**MINUTES OF MEETING
LAKE ASHTON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Lake Ashton Community Development District was held on **Monday, February 23, 2026** at 9:00 a.m. at the Lake Ashton Clubhouse Ballroom, 4141 Ashton Club Drive, Lake Wales, FL.

Present and constituting a quorum were:

Brenda VanSickle	Chairperson
Mike Costello	Vice Chairman
Steve Realmuto	Assistant Secretary
Debby Landgrebe	Assistant Secretary
Greg Ulrich	Assistant Secretary

Also present were:

Jill Burns	District Manager, GMS
Jan Carpenter	District Counsel, Latham Luna
Garrett Posten	District Engineer
Matt Fisher	Operations Manager
Christine Wells	Community Director
Pete Wittman	Yellowstone Landscaping

The following is a summary of the discussions and actions taken at the February 23, 2026 Lake Ashton Community Development District Board of Supervisors meeting.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS

Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Burns called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., called roll, and recited the pledge of allegiance. Five Supervisors were present in person constituting a quorum.

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Ms. VanSickle requested to move Solitude and Yellowstone after the engineer.

On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Meeting Agenda, was approved 5-0.

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THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS

Public Comments on Specific Items on the Agenda *(the District Manager will read any questions or comments received from members of the public in advance of the meeting)*

Ms. VanSickle opened the public comment period.

Michael Lee (6217 Pinehurst Loop) – spoke about the one community meetings and what a merger would involve. Encouraged residents to ask questions.

John Tice (3616 Blackmoore Ln) – talked about Lake Ashton living and some of the comments and actions by Board members about this topic. Iris is not a threat.

Iris Realmuto (3624 Blackmoore Ln) – President of Lake Ashton Living, Inc. stated rather than spending money on legal fees, it would have been simpler and more cost effective to approach her to discuss concerns. She has worked to alleviate any issues with LakeAshtonLiving.com being mistaken for the CDD website. Spoke about unacceptable demands resulting in unnecessary expenses.

Diane Kaldor (3755 Litchfield Loop) – stated she has received a lot of unbiased opinions from Iris and feels what she contributes to the community isn't appreciated and residents won't know it until they lose it. She is in support of Lake Ashton Living.

Bill Martin (5509 Hogan Ln) – listened to the discussion the Board had about streetlights at the last meeting and requested working with the Winter Haven side to get a full picture. Encouraged an effort to fully explore the merits of ownership of on-grid and off-grid streetlights.

Deborah Murray (4163 Murfield Loop) – concerned about continued use of the CDD lawyer against Lake Ashton Living website and Iris Realmuto. The second demand letter states remove completely the CDD/HOA drop down menu and all contents therein. The Lake Ashton website and Iris are protected by the first amendment of the US Constitution. How much money has the CDD Board spent and willing to spend on lawyer fees pursuing Lake Ashton Living?

Frank Kennedy (3065 Dunmore Dr) – stated Iris never had a motive other than to help the community. He has donated towards Lake Ashton Living and uses the website often. We talk about this place being a paradise and seems like your treating Iris like a pariah. Getting disgusted with the community and has considered moving.

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Bev Hines (1423 Colonial Court) – stated the Lake Ashton Living website is a godsend. Iris has been so hopeful and easy to work with. Doesn't understand the confusion.

Marianne Zak (4031 Birkdale) – stated Lake Ashton Living is the most accurate and up to date way to give and receive communication for the community. Lake Ashton Living in a jewel and nothing in the community compares to its content. Thanked Iris for all she does to make the community simply the best.

Margie Dersham (3621 Blackmoor Ln) – stated Lake Ashton Living website is easy to use and Iris is always helpful. Used for Ladies 18 golf. Feels this needs to be taken off the agenda.

Kristy McKibben (5581 Hogan Ln) – stated they were in support of Iris. The tagline "another day in paradise" is used in a thousand places and cannot be trademarked or copyrighted because it's a commonly used phrase so is not legally defensible.

Joan DiBattista (4548 Back Nine) – stated Lake Ashtons Veterans Association Auxiliary, nonprofit. They put on a craft fair once a year and are charged \$100 fee to use the ballroom. Requested to review the procedures and waive the \$100 fee.

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Consideration of Minutes from the January 26, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting

Ms. Burns presented the minutes from the January 26, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting and asked for any comments, corrections, or change. Minor updates from Ms. Landgrebe – pg 6 striping (not striking) of parking lot and she was listed as a second motion – pg 11 wanted it verified it was Brenda and not her. Mr. Realmuto referred to Marianne Zak's comments referencing a letter Steve read and there was no mention of that letter in the minutes.

On MOTION by Mr. Costello, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Minutes from the January 26, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting, were approved as amended 5-0.

FIFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Engineering Report

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Mr. Posten discussed three options for pond 20 bank erosion repairs and Board members asked questions.

On MOTION by Mr. Ulrich, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Toole's Tractor Service quote, were approved as amended 5-0.

Mr. Poston discussed parking lot striping. There wasn't a good option to gain more spaces on the East side. The West exhibit was provided for Board review. Garrett will bring back an additional quote.

Mr. Poston discussed the Berwick pavement void. The city has ruled their systems out but he noted a coincidence the void is on top of multiple of their utilities. He suggested digging down to find where the infiltration is occurring. Ask the city if they find it's their utility are they open to reimbursing the District. He will bring the cost back to the Board.

The encroachments will be handled as they come up but prioritize the ones that affect the wetlands. Garrett recommended quarterly follow ups of the wetlands. He will review the encroachment off Ashton Blvd on the North side towards the cul-de-sac and bring it back to the Board.

A. Operations Manager

Mr. Fisher presented the Operations Manager's Report, which is included on page 127 of the agenda package for review. Ms. Landgrebe asked what it would cost to change from the sprinkler system to a drip system. A lot of plants are dying. Mr. Realmuto asked what they would be looking at should they need to replace all those plants.

I. Landscaping Update

a) Presentation of Monthly Landscaping Checklist and Report

Mr. Wittman noted irrigation inspection was done last week and everything was fine. No major repairs and only a couple of emitters needed to be replaced. The dog park was treated for pest issues.

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III. Aquatics Update

a) Presentation of Monthly Aquatics Checklist and Report

Mr. Wilson reviewed the Solitude pond checklist. Canal 1 is pretty clean with a little bit of native vegetation left. The water level is very low. Canal 2 has some pennywort on the backside closer to the golf course. He noted they will get that sprayed. Pond 35 has some growth so they will get the boat in and treat that. Pond four at the front has a band of eelgrass around the perimeter. There was a fish kill, mostly tilapia due to cold weather. Pond 5 has had fish kill problems. He suggested aeration or a native planting in that area. Aeration would be in the \$8K range for pond 5 plus to add a breaker to run power to the system. Mr. Fisher noted a littoral shelf would help. Mr. Ulrich suggested finding out how much it would cost to put some plants in.

SIXTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Old Business

A. Discussion of Lake Ashton Living, Inc. Club’s Treatment (requested by Supervisor Realmuto)

The Board members, Ms. Burns, Ms. Carpenter, and Iris Realmuto discussed the Lake Ashton Living website confusion. Ms. Carpenter will summarize a letter and send it and will copy Ms. Burns on everything so it will be public record.

B. Consideration of Options for Streetlights

Mr. Ulrich presented some streetlight options including solar and proceeded with Board discussion on what would be best for the District both costs saving wise and aesthetically.

On MOTION by Mr. Ulrich, seconded by Mr. Costello, with all in favor, to let the contract for the first 81 pole contract expire and go for another year, was approved 5-0.

SEVENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

New Business

A. Consideration of Request from LAVA Auxiliary Regarding Rules Chapter III Rates Being Charged (requested by Supervisor Costello)

Supervisor Costello stated they were approached by LAVA Auxiliary to suspend the \$100 fee for their craft fair. Ms. Wells stated the charge is for the extensive set up and clean-up process when involving people from the public. The rule is if more than 50 people

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from outside of Lake Ashton are there, the fee is to be paid. Any clubs raising monies for non-profit organization are charged \$100 fee.

On MOTION by Mr. Costello, seconded by Ms. VanSickle, with Mr. Costello and Ms. VanSickle in favor and Mr. Realmuto, Mr. Ulrich and Ms. Landgrebe opposed, to waive the \$100 fee, the motion failed 2-3.

B. Discussion Following “One Community” Meeting (“One Community” is a Lake Ashton Registered Club That is Not Affiliated or Endorsed by Lake Ashton CDD)(requested by Supervisor Costello) and Discussion Regarding Merging of Districts (requested by Supervisor Landgrebe)

The Board discussed the merging of Districts. Ms. Carpenter will come back to the next meeting with what it would cost to do and make sure of all the procedural steps to actually file.

C. Consideration of Work Authorization for Revised Amenity Management Services

Ms. Burns noted the Supervisors have a revised version. She spoke to all Supervisors prior to the meeting to answer questions. There is an open position with the GMS field team that Matt is interested in taking and they would like to offer to him. Board members are looking to find a way for Matt to take this opportunity but not remove him from Lake Ashton entirely.

Ms. Burns presented a proposal to the existing staffing agreement for on site staff, none of the other positions outside of Matts would change. Matt would be moved from operations manager to field management services. It would not be full time on site at Lake Ashton. It contemplates the hiring of a third maintenance person. For the same price of the current staffing contract, they are proposing Lake Ashton hire a third maintenance team member and Matt would still be there doing field operations management, overseeing all of the site contracts that are in place. Twice a month option.

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On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Work Authorization for Revised Amenity Management Services, was approved 5-0.

Ms. Landgrebe recommended adding discussion of pool services to the next meeting agenda. Staff will bring back proposals for the next meeting.

EIGHTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Monthly Reports

A. Attorney

Ms. Carpenter reminded the Board that next month is the rate hearing on the gate strike. Mr. Realmuto questioned the invoice from the attorney dated November 12th, charges for research and drafting memorandums and October 22nd regarding continued research regarding rule making procedures. Ms. Carpenter noted it was drafted because a question came up in other Districts about firearms at government meetings. There is a conflict in the law. It was decided not to bring this up at the meeting. She noted she will provide a credit for this on the next bill. The October 22nd was the FEMA response and how to address the issues.

B. Lake Ashton Community Director

Ms. Wells reviewed the Lake Ashton Community director report on page 118 of the agenda package. Securitas update, a repair was made to the gate and it should be open by 2:00 PM. A draft email is ready to go to residents. The Board discussed gate strikes and restaurant updates (RFPs have been sent out with date to be returned April 3rd) as well as TVs for the restaurant and bingo equipment quotes.

On MOTION by Ms. VanSickle, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with Ms. VanSickle, Ms. Landgrebe and Mr. Costello in favor and Mr. Realmuto and Mr. Ulrich opposed, to fund the TVs for bingo and the restaurant, was approved 3-2.

Ms. Wells spoke about moving the two-door refrigerator from the kitchen inventory to the clubhouse inventory and bring it into the clubhouse ballroom. She asked the Board to consider replacing the media center computer with something else. She recommended to surplus the community director laptop, the activities office computer and the media

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center computer as well as a rolling gas grill that is in restaurant inventory. She recommended replacing the community director laptop and getting a new computer for the media center. Mr. Realmuto is okay with surplussing everything but the media center computer.

**Mr. Realmuto left the meeting room at this time.*

On MOTION by Mr. Ulrich, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all 4 remaining Supervisors in favor, surplus everything but the media center computer, was approved 4-0.

C. Operations Manager

1. Landscaping Update

(a) Presentation of Monthly Landscaping Checklist and Report

Mr. Fisher stated he will come to the next meeting with quotes for Aberdeen mulching along the fence line and the revised parking lot striping proposal.

2. Aquatics Update

(a) Presentation of Monthly Aquatics Checklist and Report

Mr. Fisher stated he will bring quotes for pond 5 plantings in the littoral shelf from Solitude by the next meeting. He will get with Ms. Wells to formulate a plan for interval visits for the wetland encroachment.

**Mr. Realmuto returned to the meeting room at this time.*

D. District Manager's Report

I. Next Lake Ashton CDD Board of Supervisors Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2026 @ 9:00 AM (Budget Workshop Scheduled for 10:00 AM @ March Meeting)

II. Next Joint Board Meeting Scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2026 @ 11:30 AM @ the Lake Ashton II Health and Fitness Center (*following the Lake Ashton II CDD March Board Meeting*)

Ms. Burns stated the next scheduled Board meeting is March 16, 2026 at 9:00 AM with the budget workshop scheduled at 10:00 AM. The joint meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2026 at 11:30 AM. Ms. VanSickle reminded Board members to have their strategic plan submitted prior to the agenda for the joint meeting.

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NINTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Financial Reports

A. Combined Balance Sheets

B. Capital Projects Reserve Fund

Mr. Realmuto noted on the second page under capital reserve fund – revenues interest earned seems very low as if only a small portion had been invested. He wanted to make sure they are fully invested in the interest earning account with the state.

C. Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance

D. Approval of Check Run Summary

Ms. VanSickle presented the financial reports.

On MOTION by Mr. Realmuto, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the Check Run Summary, was approved 5-0.

TENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Public Comments

Jean Miller (5437 Hogan Ln, Winter Haven) – spoke about gate strikes at the Thompson Nursery Rd entry. Her and her husband are being assessed \$975 gate strike fee because the gate came down on them. The gate was functional again within minutes of reporting to the guard.

Iris Realmuto (3624 Blackmoore Ln) – stated she is representing Focus 20/30. The committee is requesting that they be put on the agenda a snapshot of just the restaurant questions.

Jim Helmer (6140 Pebble Beach Blvd) – asked to address the inadequacies of the official Lake Ashton CDD.com website and why so many residents have come to rely on Iris’s website as opposed to the official website. Per the attorney, the problem is the confusion between the official website and Iris’s website. Nobody has talked about the Lake Ashton.com and the clubhouse calendar has not been updated since July 2021. Ms. Burns stated Florida law requires certain items to be posted on a CDD website. The website is compliant with those items and has more items than what is required by Florida statute. All the info that Iris gets related to the CDD is public record and submitted from their office.

Marianne Zak (4031 Birkdale Dr.) – stated its very dark at the Lake Ashton entrance on Thompson Nursery Rd and hard for seniors to see. She asked for solar lights on both sides of the entrance. Agrees with getting televisions. The nearest entrance to

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disabled parking should be open to the disabled under the American with Disability Act. Spoke about Iris’s website which is state of the art unlike the Lake Ashton website.

Angie – spoke about Iris’s website and suggested putting up a disclaimer stating this is not an official government website and shouldn’t be confused with the official CDD and HOA website. Ms. VanSickle stated she didn’t go straight to litigation but went to Ms. Carpenter to avoid Sunshine violations.

ELEVENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Supervisor Requests/Supervisor
Open Discussion**

Ms. Landgrebe asked about the card reader for the backdoor pricing. Ms. Wells met with Securitas after the last meeting and still doesn’t have a quote. She asked Nation for a quote as well. Asked if a letter went out regarding encroachment from the maintenance facility/storage units. Jan will check on it. A letter will go out that says to a condition that is reasonable and inspected by our engineer.

Ms. VanSickle stated everyone should come to meetings prepared. Questions could be asked of staff ahead of time to help shorten meetings.

Mr. Realmuto spoke on Jill’s example about confusion out front was not really a case of confusion. A lot of what is being presented by staff is raising a whole lot of issues, very few of which are related to cases that the websites themselves are being confused or that Lake Ashton website is being confused with the official CDD website.

TWLEFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

On MOTION by Mr. Costello, seconded by Ms. Landgrebe, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

Jill Burns
Secretary / Assistant Secretary

Signed by:
Brandi Vandell
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Chairman / Vice Chairman