



Stony Creek Homeowners Newsletter

April 2026

A Message from the President

Spring has sprung! We have numerous exciting updates for you on the activity of the Board and Landscape Committee, and what to expect in the coming days and weeks ahead. Throughout this edition of the newsletter, you can read about four main areas of activity. We are excited about the work we have completed and planned for this season, particularly the project around our primary pond along Stony Lane.

The work considered and approved has been scrutinized as to cost and value provided to the community. We believe that the improvements will enhance our common area and will support and hopefully increase our property values.

The Board carefully reviewed the plans to determine whether it could be accomplished within the current budget and available cash on hand. At the start of the month of April, the Association had \$58,234 in its checking and money market accounts. This included the HOA fees for 2026, surplus funds from 2025 and account receivables for past due fees. With the Board setting aside \$10,000 as a future reserve for potential emergencies, unanticipated repairs and other capital improvement projects, funds available for 2026 are \$48,234:

Current All Funds Sources		Expenses	
Checking	\$21,961	Administration	\$2,256
Money Market	\$35,061	Maintenance - Common Area	\$17,880
Account Receivables	\$1,212	Insurance	\$4,578
Total	\$58,234	Utilities	\$1,200
		Capital Improvement Projects	\$21,246
		Total Expenses	\$47,160
Segregate Reserve Funds		Reserve Funds	\$10,000
Funds Available - 2026	\$10,000	Surplus/Deficit	\$1,074
	\$48,234		

Now that our planning and analysis have been completed, we can accomplish our projects with the funds available, maintain the reserve fund, and still have a surplus of funds at the end of the year (the surplus might be higher if certain line-item expenses are under the budgeted amounts.)

We want to thank the Landscape Committee led by **Mike Noonan, Renee Zahery, Chris Meade** and **Tom Piazza** for all their contributions for assessing our community vision and goals, for identifying, interviewing landscaping professionals, recommending a course of action with concrete proposals from contractors and collaborating seamlessly with the Board to make the community's vision become a reality.

Enjoy the spring and – see you around the neighborhood! -----Ed



Working Together to Keep Our Community Running Smoothly

Over the coming months, you'll notice several vendors and contractors working throughout our community as outlined in this newsletter. Regular landscape and pond maintenance will continue on a weekly basis, and we'll also have tree removal and Phase One landscape projects underway this spring.

To help ensure everything runs smoothly and efficiently, the Association has established clear lines of communication with each vendor. This approach allows for consistent direction, helps avoid confusion, and ensures that the work being completed aligns with the plans and agreements already in place.

We understand that residents may have ideas or preferences when they see work happening nearby. Recently, there was an instance where a vendor was asked by a resident to make a change outside of their contracted scope of work. This created some confusion and required additional follow-up with the vendor to clarify what had been done and why.

To keep projects on track and avoid delays or misunderstandings, we kindly ask that residents not direct vendors or request changes in the field. Instead, please share any questions, concerns, or suggestions with the appropriate Association contact. Our designated representatives are in close communication with

the vendors and are best positioned to address requests and ensure they are handled properly.

In a similar vein, the Board has become aware that some residents have taken the initiative to perform work in our common areas, often with the intention of improving or personalizing those spaces. We truly appreciate the care, and pride residents take in our community.

At the same time, these shared spaces belong to all of us, and their care is coordinated by the Board to ensure consistency, environmental balance, and alignment with our overall plans. For that reason, we ask that any work in common areas be coordinated in advance.

If you're interested in contributing your time or ideas, we'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to our Landscape representative to share your thoughts or discuss potential volunteer efforts so we can work together in a way that benefits the entire community.

Thank you for your cooperation and for helping us maintain a well-managed and beautiful community.

Below is a list of contacts for the Association's primary areas of responsibility. If you have a question, concern, or request, please reach out to the appropriate person so we can assist you as efficiently as possible:

Ken Johnson	630.234.6523	HOA fees, architectural review, real estate closing document request
Mike Noonan	630.639.0932	Landscape Maintenance and Projects
Ed Malek	941.780.1236	Pond and fountain maintenance
Rose Piazza	630.712.2558	Social activities and events
Liz Lekan	708.902.1021	HOA notices and document requests, newsletter ideas, communication
Brad Hucker	847.601.1115	Open space suggestions and volunteering



Pond and Fountain

The fountain returned to the pond in the second week of April. Our pond maintenance professionals have relocated the fountain from its previous location last year to a more central spot in the pond. As planned, we have added LED lights to add some ambiance to the pond in the evening.

We also added sheathing over the power cables to the light and fountain power cables. We are hopeful that this will put an end to the damage caused by the muskrats in the past. Last fall we replaced the timers in the control box and had an electrician finalize the proper wiring to limit/eliminate issues this year and into the future.

The fountain will run from 9 AM to 11 PM in the evening. The lights will operate from approximately one hour prior to sunset until 11 PM. Adjustments to the start time will be made at the beginning of each month as the time of sunset changes.

Our pond maintenance contract this year is with Environmental Aquatics. They will be inspecting and treating the pond as necessary on a weekly basis on Tuesdays. Over a short time, you will notice a darkening of the pond water as black dye will be added. It will enhance the look of the pond so it does not have a brown muddy look and should help minimize the production of algae.

Landscape Maintenance

After the Landscape Committee sought proposals for this year's maintenance of the common area, it recommended and the Board approved staying with Maji Landscaping, Inc.

This year you will see expanded maintenance that will include:

- Spring cleanup (tree/leaf debris removal from landscape beds and turf areas, perennial plant beds prep for spring, bed edging for landscape beds and trees, granular application for pre-emergent weed control for landscape beds and turf areas, and installation of premium hardwood mulch);
 - Lawn mowing every 7 days and line trimming of areas not accessible to mowers;
 - Edging of sidewalks and debris blown off the walkways on a weekly basis;
 - Trimming of bushes twice a year;
 - Bed maintenance as needed to maintain free of weeds;
 - Six applications of fertilizer; and
 - Fall cleanup (includes removing tree/leaf debris and cut back perennials).
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Master Plan – Phase One – Capital Improvement Project

The Landscape Committee spent several months considering and developing a Master Plan for the common area around the ponds and Stony Creek. After obtaining and considering recommendations from various landscape contractors, they presented their plan to the community on April 7th. Based on that feedback, they finalized phase one of the plan which will address the area around the main pond and the area just south of the concrete walking path.

At the Board meeting on April 14th, the Board approved the recommended plan of the committee and selected a landscape contractor for the project. We are now finalizing the terms of the contract with the anticipation that the work will begin around May 15th and be completed about June 15th (weather permitting).

In general terms, the work to be done within the designated project area is:

- Clean-up of beds, and removal of dead and diseased trees and brush;
- Shape, renovate and clean up the shoreline of the primary pond;
- Seed 6' buffer around the pond with “Shoreline Native Seed Mix;”
- Mow, till and grade areas to creek -- adding topsoil, seed and blanket for turf establishment;
- Grade, add topsoil with seed and blanket on northeast corner of pond;
- Chips or mulch in new beds -- establish around trees along slope; and
- Backfill/excavate around sidewalk to eliminate potential trip hazards (steep edges) and improve drainage on flooded areas that are currently dammed up.

Although the work may take approximately a month to complete, it may take as much as two years to achieve the goal and vision of the plan, allowing time for native plants and grass to become established, as well as the eventual elimination of invasive non-native species. To the right is an AI generated depiction of the area as it reaches maturity:



Future phases being considered for upcoming years are:

- 1) Dead tree removal and brush cleanup of the wooded conservation area and enhance the natural paths throughout the wooded area which will enable the Landscape Committee and Board to get a true sense of the potential for beautification and ensure we maximize efforts to restore the natural beauty of our local ecosystem.
- 2) Restore and enhance Pond 3 near the Gazebo which will help to determine if the Gazebo has more appeal at its current location after the cleanup.
- 3) Restore and enhance Pond 2 behind 21 Retreat Ct

Throughout our future planning, the Landscape Committee and Board will always be mindful of community sentiment and financial appetite for annual improvements to the Association’s property.



Black Locust Trees Removal

By the time you read this, the 5 Black Locust trees on the northeast corner of the pond have been removed.

In October when the Conservation Foundation walked the property with members of the Board, both individuals identified these trees as extremely invasive and recommended removal. Others described them as “junk trees” and not worth keeping. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) states the tree is native to southeastern Illinois and other areas to the south and east of the country.

The seeds produced by the tree are toxic and children have been reportedly poisoned from chewing the licorice-like roots and inner bark.

From a Guideline published by the DNR in 2017, Black Locust reduces competition from other sun-loving species and is a potential threat to

natural areas. Most obvious to us is that merely removing the trees is just the beginning of the process for permanent removal. They are difficult to eliminate due to their growth of suckering sprouts from the parent tree (which have already started to sprout under the trees). It may be kept in check by mowing and burning. Cutting alone is effective if repeated several times per year for several years. Using a broad leaf herbicide immediately after cutting enhances the effectiveness of permanent removal.

Because of their invasive nature, poisonous characteristics and high maintenance to control, it was decided by the Board to remove them and begin the process of controlling the sucker growth. In the future, the Landscape Committee along with the Board will decide what more suitable trees can be planted to replace them.

Lydia Court

The Board has acknowledged that there lacks a physical sense of “connection” with our neighbors on Lydia Court. That will end this summer.

The Board is in the process of obtaining signage for placement at the intersection of Stevens Road and Lydia Court, identifying the street as part of the Retreat on Stony Creek.

At the Board’s meeting this month, it requested the Landscape Committee to review a preliminary draft of landscape plantings at the intersection, with the goal of selecting a planting plan that is consistent and complimentary to the plantings at Stevens and Stony Lane.

As the Landscape Committee makes its recommendation to the Board, stay tune for future development of design and schedule for the work.