



OLD FARM ESTATES GAZETTE



OldFarmEstates.org



OFE.Trustees@gmail.com



Facebook.com/groups/OldFarmEstates

Join us at a Trustee Meeting!

2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 13014 Olive Blvd.
Corner of Fernview & Olive Blvd.
Please enter at rear of church

ISSUE 82

First Issue 2025

President's Message

Pam Welker

Old Farm Neighbors,

I hope this spring finds you enjoying the warmer weather, the sound of the birds and the local turkeys, and kids outside enjoying the longer evenings.

As I mentioned in the Fall 2024 Gazette, we have completed our financial analysis and based on several factors, which we will explain more in this Gazette, we are recommending an increase to our annual assessment with a vote in June that, if approved, would take effect in 2026. We did not take this decision lightly and spent a good amount last year and early this year determining what was the right amount of an increase that would be enough to cover costs, while not keeping too much money in reserves year after year.

The recommended increase is from \$280 to \$380 annually with an annual increase option tied to Consumer Price Index (CPI). The increase option is a common practice for HOAs to follow and was recommended by our legal counsel. There will be multiple ways to receive information on this proposed increase.

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Residents have access to:

- **Our website:** OldFarmEstates.org > Current Residents section > Frequently Asked Questions
- **Spring General Meeting:** May 20, 7:30 PM at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 13014 Olive Blvd
- **Informal Poolside Q&A:** Mid-June (details to come)

As I was preparing this article and reading all the other articles, I was amazed at all that is going on and how much we have accomplished as a Board and as a community. The work on all the common ground areas, the new ways we are working to communicate electronically, the community engagement events, and the continued updates at the pool are all driven by people's passion and commitment to the community. I want to take time to thank everyone for making our community a great place to live.

Indenture Vote: YAY for Chickens!

Stephanie Fortus

New Chicken Coop HOA Requirements

Our OFE Board has drafted a new indenture to account for the recent State of Missouri legislation which says that Homeowners

Associations can no longer restrict the ownership of up to six chickens. However, we need your help.

Action Required - Vote Chickens!

The current indenture restricts chicken ownership entirely and to comply with the new State of Missouri's law, our current indenture should be rescinded. To rescind this indenture, our residents will receive a ballot asking if the current indenture should be rescinded. Since that restriction is no longer legal, we ask for your vote to rescind.

Timing & Questions

Residents will receive a ballot to vote on this revised indenture in mid-June via postal mail. If there are questions, residents can reach out to me, Stephanie Fortus, or can visit our website's FAQ section to learn more.

Slow Down for Safety

Jessica Cabot & Sara O'Neal

An OFE Priority

Our neighborhood is growing, which is wonderful for our sense of community—with more families, more kids on bikes, and more people out walking to the playground or school bus stop.

In fact, Parkway School District informed us that, "across our routes that go through Old Farm, there are 160+ students that could be walking along the sidewalks to receive bus service each morning." The way we drive through our neighborhood directly affects their safety. Unfortunately, we've also seen an increase in unsafe driving: rolling stop signs, speeding, texting, and even several



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serious accidents involving parked cars over the past few years.



We hear your concerns and want to update you on the steps being taken—and how *you* can help.

Police are Listening & Acting

We're grateful to the Saint Louis County Police Department for stepping up their presence in the month of April. Thanks to their efforts:

- 14 citations were issued for speeding
- 8 non-moving traffic citations were written
- 4 written warnings were issued
- A radar sign was placed on Greenbough through April to monitor and deter speeding

We'll continue to stay in touch with the department to review their findings and discuss additional strategies.

We also want to recognize Officer Lauren Carter and the entire Saint Louis County Central Precinct team for not only increasing enforcement but expressing interest in attending neighborhood events

and being more involved in our community. Keep an eye out for their smiling faces at future food trucks or family nights!

County Traffic Conversations

We've also been in touch with Saint Louis County Transportation & Public Works, and here's what we've learned:

- A traffic study on Greenbough was conducted in early April
- Stop signs at Greenbough/ Bookbinder are fully visible
- Average speed recorded: 33 mph
- 85% of drivers are going at least 26 mph

Speed bumps are currently not permitted on county roads unless part of a new pilot program. Old Farm has been added to the list for future considerations, but:

- There's no current Saint Louis County funding.
- It's a slow-moving process with no guarantees.
- Removable speed bumps are not allowed.
- The HOA cannot fund speed bumps independently.
- They are *"not out of the realm of possibility"*—but the process will take time and resources.
- We will continue following up with Saint Louis County to stay informed on future developments.

How You Can Help

Your voice matters. The more residents who speak up, the stronger our case



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becomes. If you have concerns, here's who to contact:

Councilwoman Gretchen Bangert

314-615-5437

councildistrict2@stlouiscountymo.gov

Saint Louis County Transportation & Public Works

Wendy Firsching – 314-615-1132

Christopher Hauber, PE – 314-615-1102

Saint Louis County Police – Central County Precinct

Officer Lauren Carter – 314-615-0111

You can also request a radar trailer in your area or report specific problem intersections.

Let's be the example

We also ask all residents to recommit to safe, attentive driving in Old Farm. Slow down. Come to a full stop. Never text and drive. Respect school buses. And talk to any family members or guests who drive through our streets. We love our community—and it's up to all of us to protect the people who make it so special. Thank you for your support and partnership in making Old Farm Estates safer.

Get Involved:

Committees & Volunteering

Deb Colonius



The old proverb, "it takes a village," is widely used to describe the concept of a supportive network of people who contribute to the overall well-being of a community. For our Old Farm Estates subdivision, it truly does take a village to enable a strong community. That's why we need your involvement more than ever!

As a Trustee and a member of many of our neighborhood committees, I see first-hand what it takes to help make Old Farm Estates and our 558-home subdivision a great place to live. We have several volunteers who work hard to create a great place to live, donating their time, energy, resources, and hard work to ensure the success and sustainability of our community assets. But to continue thriving, we need your support and involvement.

Where do we need support?

Resident volunteers are needed in many ways. As a Trustee and member of two separate committees myself, we receive numerous ideas about creating new activities and events, such as subdivision leagues like softball, corn hole, washers, or pickleball, or starting new, meaningful traditions. But we can't do that without you!



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How can you get involved?



There are so many different opportunities to get involved and stay connected with our community. Old

Farm Estates has

established committees to focus on key areas of responsibility within the neighborhood. If a resident is interested in volunteering to serve on a committee, they should contact the committee chairperson. Volunteers are always welcome.

Architectural Review Committee

Chairs: Sam Craig & Steve Oslica

Communications Committee

Chairs: Sara O'Neal & Pam Welker

Community Engagement Committee

Chair: Deb Colonius

Finance Committee

Chair: Brandon Cabot

Neighborhood Preservation Committee

Chair: Ric Benckendorf

Pool Committee

Chairs: Deb Colonius, Sara O'Neal, Kathleen Owen

Swim Team Committee

Chairs: Kim Griffin, Jess Kassing, Kari Mueller

Learn more at:

OldFarmEstates.org/committees

Get Involved:

Citizen's Police Academy

Jessica Cabot

The Saint Louis County Police Department is inviting residents 18+, who have no criminal record, to participate in a 6-week Citizen's Police Academy starting May 21 on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This is a free program offered to residents in the Central County Precinct.

Each week, a different unit, like crime scene detectives or K-9 teams, will offer a behind-the-scenes look at their role in our community. Classes include:

- Informational classroom and hands-on training
- Department facility tours
- An overview of police operations
- Instruction and demonstrations by Department employees

If you're interested in attending, contact the Saint Louis County Police at PCT2NPO@stlouiscountymo.gov or call Officer Lauren Carter at 314-615-0111.





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OPT-IN: OFE Email Updates

Greta Walton

Soon, our HOA Communications Committee will launch new digital communications. Please take a moment to OPT-IN to receive Old Farm Estates digital communications. Residents may choose from different types of digital communications to stay informed and in the know.

All residents can sign up now by completing a short OFE Digital Communications OPT-IN form:

[Tinyurl.com/OFE-News-OPT-IN](https://forms.gle/TtQs6M8JZYhgDxEv7)

By staying connected and engaged with our committees, residents are guaranteed to make new friends, support our community, and strengthen and sustain our neighborhood's legacy. Sign-up today!



We'd like to give a SHOUT OUT to some amazing neighbors!

**Carrie Rife &
Brian Rouse**

Both have contributed amazing photos and videos to help us refresh our new website with beautiful visuals that capture aspects of our residents and our landscape.

Website-worthy Photo Fun

Request for Old OFE Photos

Jessica Cabot & Greta Walton

The Old Farm website needs some spring cleaning. To enhance our digital space and provide residents with easily accessible information, some of our resident volunteers are redesigning the website. But we can't do this without your help!

We are looking to add great, website-worthy photos from our residents to our redesigned website. If you'd like to contribute to our efforts, please use this form and upload your photos to our shared folder:

<https://forms.gle/TtQs6M8JZYhgDxEv7>

We'd love to share photos with or without people, wide-angle landscapes, historical events – whatever is available to showcase your love for our community!

Questions? Please reach out to Jessica Cabot or Greta Walton. Thank you for your support!





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Old Farm Estates Finance Update

Chris Rife

The Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association of St. Louis County (OFE) provides residents with updated financial statements each year. In this issue, Trustees have included a balance sheet, as of December 31, 2024, and an income statement for the twelve months ending December 31, 2024. OFE is a non-profit corporation established for the purpose of operating the homeowner's association of the Old Farm Estates subdivision.

OFE is a subdivision of 558 homes located in Saint Louis County with a current annual assessment of \$280 per home. The assessment covers homeowner membership at the pool and provides funding for maintaining the assets of the subdivision such as the playground, trail, and common ground. Other expenses include property and liability insurance and utilities. Additional revenue sources include guest fees at the neighborhood pool, swim team, and fundraising.

Fundraising is not budgeted for and is from contributions from generous neighbors and sponsors of the neighborhood. Funds for each of the above categories are tracked and segmented within the work papers of the financial statements. Financial statements are available online via **OldFarmEstates.com > Current Residents > Documents > Financials**. Bank reconciliation

and the check register are tracked and reported to the Trustees monthly.

Basis of Preparation

The 2024 fiscal year end OFE financial statements were prepared on a modified cash basis based on income and expenses flowing through OFE controlled bank accounts during the calendar year 2024. Modified cash basis is a hybrid approach of accrual and cash basis accounting. Cash basis accounting records income when cash is received and expenses when they are paid or clear the owner's bank account. Accrual accounting reports receivables and payables which are income and bills, respectively, which have not yet cleared the owner's bank account.

OFE income is paid from homeowner assessments collected by a third-party management company named City & Village Tax Office (CVTO). The income is delivered to OFE monthly based on the assessments collected by CVTO from the prior month. CVTO charges a 5.50% collection fee and handles the administration, accounting, collection, and tracking of assessments.

In May 2024, CVTO changed reporting and accounting systems. CVTO has a custodial bank account holding assessments as they're collected and disbursed to OFE. The Treasurer has reconciled OFE revenue received with the CVTO financial reports and CVTO bank statements to specifically recognize the funds disbursed to OFE during 2024.



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The OFE financial statements were prepared to the best of the Treasurer's ability based on the OFE and CVTO bank statements and assessment records provided by CVTO. The revenue and expenses reported balance to the OFE controlled bank statements. The OFE Trustees evaluated the value of an Audit or CPA prepared financial statements and it was determined that the current level of financial reporting is sufficient and cost effective for the current OFE budget. The level of reporting presented for 2024 also complies with Missouri State Statute for Homeowners Associations.

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2024, OFE had \$186,676 of total cash. Cash is allocated to the following items:

- ~~\$104,356~~ \$105,740 – operating cash
- \$27,375 – pool fundraising
- ~~\$3,543~~ \$4,725 – swim team fundraising
- \$315 – trail / common ground fundraising
- \$49,703 – Reserve fund – asset preservation

Funds are held between two banks and OFE is below the \$250,000 FDIC insurance limit.

OFE has an assessment receivable due from CVTO in the amount of \$75,836. This number is the assessments paid to CVTO in December 2024; however, those funds were not yet delivered to the OFE controlled bank account. As of December 31, 2024, those funds are with CVTO in their custodial bank account. No revenue entry

was made for this receivable. The purpose of showing this receivable is for the reader of the balance sheet to see the funds collected by CVTO that will be deposited to the OFE controlled bank account the following month.

The 2024 income statement is not comparable to the 2023 income statement due to the differences in prior years of revenue recognition. In 2024, the Treasurer changed the accounting method for revenue recognition strictly to cash received by an OFE controlled account.

Fixed assets are primarily business personal property assets related to the pool. Historical costs for other assets and land owned by OFE are not known. OFE does report and pay business personal property taxes to St. Louis County based on historically reported assets and those assets are included in the fixed asset costs. Depreciation is estimated based on the estimated useful life of the asset and the schedules provided by St. Louis County business personal property tax forms.

There were no outstanding checks as of December 31, 2024. The only liability is the CVTO management fee of \$5,162 which is 5.5% of \$93,859 of assessments paid in November and December 2024. OFE does have one year remaining on its pool contract with Midwest Pool for lifeguard and pool services. Because the financials are prepared on a cash basis, this future liability is not reported and will be reported as an expense when it is paid out.



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Income Statement

The income statement shows total revenue collected of \$172,439 and this excludes fundraising dollars. OFE received \$142,023 of assessments for fiscal year 2024. This covers roughly 506 homeowners or 91% of the subdivision. Collections were 92% of the budgeted assessment amount of \$154,000.

Expenses, excluding fundraising costs, totaled \$169,851 or 97% of the budgeted amount of \$174,832. Insurance was higher in 2024 because OFE prepaid for a three-year term of directors' and officers' liability insurance policy. Minimal expense was incurred for common ground projects. A fundraising category for swim team was set up as a funding source for swim team operations as the costs were slightly above swim team revenue for 2024.

Excluding fundraising, the income statement shows a change in net assets of \$2,589 for the fiscal year end 2024. Pool fundraising dollars paid for \$4,379 of the pool improvements in 2024.

Commentary & Outlook

OFE collected sufficient funds to cover budgeted operations in 2024. In 2025, the budgeted expenses are higher due to cost increases for services and the lack of spending on long term common ground projects in 2024. OFE has funds available to cover most of the known neighborhood operating costs for 2025; however, OFE will need to be thoughtful in how it spends operating and reserve cash to preserve neighborhood assets because of revenue

limitations from the assessment ceiling of \$280 per home.

In 2025, OFE will use reserve funds to cover asset preservation spending with the goal of maintaining assets of the neighborhood. The reserve fund will need to be replenished for sufficient reserve coverage and funding ongoing neighborhood improvements as asset lives expire or deteriorate. A higher level of assessment may be necessary in the future to provide funding for asset spending and inflation adjusted operating expenses. A fixed revenue structure with a floating expense budget is not sustainable.



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2024 Balance Sheet

Finance Figure 1 – OFE 2024 YE Balance Sheet

Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association Balance sheet			
		12/31/2024	12/31/2023
Operating cash		105,740	97,550
Fundraising - Pool		27,375	23,101
Fundraising - Swim Team		3,543	
Fundraising - Trail / Common Ground		315	
Reserve fund - Asset Preservation		49,703	50,000
Total cash		\$ 186,676	\$ 170,651
Assessment Receivable - funds due from CVTO		75,836	76,010
Fixed assets - cost - see footnote 2		33,734	
Depreciation		13,794	
Net fixed assets		\$ 19,941	
Land - see footnote 1	Acres	-	
1924 Peppermill - woods, creek	1.44		
13046 Weatherfield - woods creek	4.08		
1704 Bookbinder - east side, field	21.13		
1715 Bookbinder - pool, west side field, creek	5.00		
1750 Creve Coeur Mill - playground, playground parking, entrance, path/trail.	16.80		
13053 Weatherfield - woods	1.29		
1204 Old Farm - entrance	0.30		
TOTAL	50.04		
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 282,452	\$ 246,661
Outstanding checks		\$ -	\$ -
Fees payable - CVTO mgmt fees		\$ 5,162	\$ -
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$ 5,162	\$ -
NET ASSETS		\$ 277,290	\$ 246,661
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		\$ 282,452	\$ 246,661
Footnotes:			
1) Land - cost is not known. Transfer of 1750 Creve Coeur Mill noted as 10/4/12 with \$0 sale price.			
2) Fixed assets - Major assets such as playground, pool, buildings, etc. are fully depreciated with \$0 cost entered.			



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2024 FYE Income Statement vs 2024 Budget

Finance Figure 2 – OFE 2024 YTD Summary of
Income Statement vs 2024 Budget

Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association								
2024 Year to Date Summary								
	12/31/24 FYE - 12 months ending				2024 Full Year Budget			
	Total	General Operation	Pool Operation	Swim team	Total	General Operations	Pool Operations	Swim team
Revenue								
C & V - Assessments delivered to OFE	142,023	142,023			154,000	154,000		
C & V - Interest Income	299	299			270	270		
C & V - Misc credit	21	21						
C & V - Recording & Releasing	132	132			308	308		
C & V - Legal/Costs Recovered	0	0			0	0		
Misc Income	0	0			0	0		
Pool Revenues	14,539		14,539		14,574		14,574	
Swim Team Revenue	12,596			12,596	12,531			12,531
Bank Interest	2,830	2,830			1,500	1,500		
Returned Check	0		0					
Fundraising	16,203	644	9,499	6,060				
Bank Fee Charged	0		0					
Total Revenue Collected	188,642	145,949	24,038	18,655	183,183	156,078	14,574	12,531
Expenses								
C & V - Collection Fee (5.5%)	(6,842)	(6,842)			(8,470)	(8,470)		
C & V - Gen Office/Copy	(629)	(629)			(1,854)	(1,854)		
C & V - Returned check	(291)	(291)						
C & V - Postage	(554)	(554)			(2,757)	(2,757)		
C & V - Recording Fees	(66)	(66)			(696)	(696)		
Insurance	(17,134)	(17,134)	0		(18,234)	(17,134)		(1,100)
Legal	(937)	(937)	0		(4,596)	(3,118)	(1,478)	
Utilities	(20,123)	(6,082)	(14,042)		(16,510)	(7,343)	(9,167)	
CG Maintenance - Annual	(20,508)	(20,508)	0		(19,416)	(19,253)	(163)	
CG Maintenance - Long Term	(329)	(329)	0		(5,000)	(5,000)	0	
Cul de Sac	0	0			0	0	0	
Phone/Internet/Tech	(1,363)	0	(1,363)		(1,382)	(191)	(1,191)	
Printing/Mailing/Welcome Wagon	(1,110)	(1,110)	0		(1,986)	(1,741)	(245)	
Community Events	(309)	(309)	0		(500)	(500)	0	
Misc	(564)	(564)	0	0	(1,000)	(761)	(239)	
Pool Management	(60,917)	0	(60,917)		(60,650)	0	(60,650)	
License & Permits	(708)	0	(708)		(816)	0	(816)	
Pool Maintenance - Annual	(15,447)	0	(15,447)		(4,275)	0	(4,275)	
Capital Expense	(6,823)	0	(6,823)		(15,000)	(4,209)	(10,791)	
Swim Team	(13,778)	0	0	(13,778)	(10,814)	0	0	(10,814)
Fundraising	(3,362)	0	(846)	(2,517)				
Reserves	(297)		(297)					
Trash	(1,122)	(685)	(437)		(876)	(247)	(629)	
Total Expenses	(173,213)	(56,040)	(100,879)	(16,294)	(174,832)	(73,274)	(89,644)	(11,914)
Change in net assets	15,430	89,909	(76,840)	2,361				
Change in net assets, no fundraising	2,589	89,265	(85,494)	(1,182)	8,351	82,804	(75,070)	617
Expenses % of TOTAL Revenue						-40%	-49%	-7%



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2025 Budget

Finance Figure 3 –
OFE 2025 Full Year
Budget

Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association				
	2025 Full Year Budget			
	Total	General Operations	Pool Operations	Swim team
Revenue				
C & V - Assessments Collected	154,000	154,000		
C & V - Interest Income	300	300		
C & V - Recording & Releasing	300	300		
Legal/Costs Recovered	0	0		
Misc Income	0	0		
Pool Revenues	15,000	15,000		
Swim Team Revenue	12,500			12,500
Bank Interest	2,000	2,000		
Returned Check	0			
Fundraising	0			
Bank Fee Charged	0			
Total Revenue Collected	184,100	171,600	0	12,500
Expenses				
C & V - Collection Fee (5.5%)	(8,470)	(8,470)		
C & V - Gen Office/Copy	(1,900)	(1,900)		
C & V - Postage	(2,800)	(2,800)		
C & V - Recording Fees	(700)	(700)		
Insurance	(12,000)	(12,000)		
Legal	(6,000)	(6,000)		
Utilities	(21,000)	(21,000)		
CG Maintenance - Annual	(25,000)	(25,000)		
CG Maintenance - Long Term	0	0		
Cul de Sac	0	0		
Phone/Internet/Tech	(1,480)	(1,480)		
Printing/Mailing/Welcome Wagon	(2,200)	(2,200)		
Community Events	(1,000)	(1,000)		
Misc	(1,000)	(1,000)		
Pool Management	(62,900)		(62,900)	
License & Permits	(850)		(850)	
Pool Maintenance - Annual	(2,000)		(2,000)	
Capital Expense	0			
Swim Team	(12,500)			(12,500)
Fundraising	0			
Asset Preservation (Reserves)	(42,500)	(42,500)		
Trash	(900)	(900)		
Total Expenses	(205,200)	(126,950)	(65,750)	(12,500)
Change in net assets	(21,100)	44,650	(65,750)	0
Change in net assets, no fundraising				
Expenses % of TOTAL Revenue		-69%	-36%	-7%



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Reserve Budget

Based on the 2023 OFE reserve study recommendations and numerous discussions with the OFE Finance Committee, OFE has implemented a reserve budget to account for capital expense and long-term spending for the neighborhood. Spending for these categories will be referred to as asset preservation costs and will generally follow the reserve study schedule. The money spent will be subject to trustee discretion, asset life, budget constraints, feasibility, and there is no guarantee that everything on the schedule will be spent each year.

Finance Figure 4 – OFE Current Reserve Funding Model without recommended annual assessment increase

OFE will book a provision expense each year against the operating expenses to fund the reserve. Money spent on asset preservation will be deducted from the reserve, not operating expenses.

The purpose of the reserve study was to provide a schedule of the neighborhood assets and their remaining useful life. By provisioning dollars to the reserve, dollars will be set aside for the estimated costs and allocations to preserve OFE assets. 2025 is the first year of implementing this concept and below is the estimated balances and spending from the reserve.

Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association of St. Louis County.						
Reserve						
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Beginning Balance	\$ 49,703	\$ (332)	\$ (20,547)	\$ (32,259)	\$ (24,493)	\$ (44,759)
Estimated spend on asset preservation from reserve study (today's \$\$\$)	\$ (92,535)	\$ (63,990)	\$ (56,800)	\$ (38,675)	\$ (68,100)	\$ (69,865)
+ Provision to reserve	\$ 42,500	\$ 43,775	\$ 45,088	\$ 46,441	\$ 47,834	\$ 49,269
Ending balance	\$ (332)	\$ (20,547)	\$ (32,259)	\$ (24,493)	\$ (44,759)	\$ (65,355)
Metrics:						
Suggested to have 2 times annual average spend for assets in reserve.						
Annual spend today's \$\$\$ (20 yrs)	52,276					
Annual spend inflation 3% (20 yrs)	72,001					
Reserves beginning balance	49,703	(332)	(20,547)	(32,259)	(24,493)	(44,759)
Reserves ending balance	(332)	(20,547)	(32,259)	(24,493)	(44,759)	(65,355)
Average reserves	24,686	(10,439)	(26,403)	(28,376)	(34,626)	(55,057)
Reserve coverage based on AVG reserves	0.47	(0.20)	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.66)	(1.05)
Reserve coverage with inflation AVG reserves	0.34	(0.14)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.48)	(0.76)



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The Reserve chart, Finance Figure 4, on the previous page, outlining 2025 – 2030, shows the difficult decisions the Trustees need to make on spending on OFE assets because there is inadequate funding to support the asset preservation schedule detailed within the reserve study. At this rate, less investment would be made, or operating expenses would need to be reduced to fund a higher provision, or operating cash would be used to cover costs. While OFE does have operating cash, it must fund the operating budget for the whole year while receiving most of the revenue over a three-month period.

Finance Figure 5 – OFE Estimate Reserve Funding Model with recommended annual assessment increase

Below, in Finance Figure 5, is an estimate of what the reserve budget could look like if the assessment was raised to \$380 per year. This assumes \$40,000 of the \$55,000 is used for the reserve. Please note that this is for example purposes only and not a commitment to fund or spend at this level.

The consultant who prepared the reserve study suggested homeowner associations should have funds to cover two times the average annual spending on assets. With the higher level of assessments, OFE would have the funding to complete projects outlined on the asset preservation schedule and reach a point of having reserve coverage of 2.01 times - see 2029 and 2030 columns.

Old Farm Estates Homeowners Association of St. Louis County.						
Reserve						
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Beginning Balance	\$ 49,703	\$ (332)	\$ 19,453	\$ 47,741	\$ 95,507	\$ 115,241
Estimated spend on asset preservation from reserve study (today's \$\$\$)	\$ (92,535)	\$ (63,990)	\$ (56,800)	\$ (38,675)	\$ (68,100)	\$ (69,865)
+ Provision to reserve	\$ 42,500	\$ 83,775	\$ 85,088	\$ 86,441	\$ 87,834	\$ 49,269
Ending balance	\$ (332)	\$ 19,453	\$ 47,741	\$ 95,507	\$ 115,241	\$ 94,645
Estimate \$40K additional from assessment increase		40,000				
Metrics:						
Suggested to have 2 times annual average spend for assets in reserve.						
Annual spend today's \$\$\$ (20 yrs)	52,276					
Annual spend inflation 3% (20 yrs)	72,001					
Reserves beginning balance	49,703	(332)	19,453	47,741	95,507	115,241
Reserves ending balance	(332)	19,453	47,741	95,507	115,241	94,645
Average reserves	24,686	9,561	33,597	71,624	105,374	104,943
Reserve coverage based on AVG reserves	0.47	0.18	0.64	1.37	2.02	2.01
Reserve coverage with inflation AVG reserves	0.34	0.13	0.47	0.99	1.46	1.46



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Finance Figure 6, is the projected spend for the OFE asset preservation schedule. This is a work in process because OFE has evolving needs in the neighborhood. For example, the trail was not considered in the original reserve study. Spending on the trail has been added to account for it being a key asset in the neighborhood that needs reinvestment. With the recent levels of rain and erosion, OFE needs to work to preserve the trail, and volunteers cannot be expected to fully cover this.

Finance Figure 6 – OFE Projected Spend Schedule for Asset Preservation

It should be noted that all spending is subject to Trustee discretion, remaining asset life, budget constraints, feasibility, actual bid costs, and the schedule is not a guarantee that everything will be spent each year. The costs listed are estimates and upon further due diligence trustees might find an item to be cost-prohibitive. The goal of the schedule is to ensure funds are set aside for preserving neighborhood assets and it will be refined over time.

All these financial figures are available on our OFE website to view in larger versions.

Category	Name	Next Activity	Expected Life (years)	Remaining Life (years)	Unit Cost	Qty	Replacement Cost (today's \$)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Capital	Security system and cameras upgrades	2025	6	0	\$5,000	1	\$5,000	\$5,000					
Capital	Sectional repairs to asphalt parking lot	2028	5	3	\$75	145	\$10,875				\$10,875		
Capital	Crack fill, seal coat, & restripe asphalt parking lot	2028	5	3	\$2	2,900	\$5,800				\$5,800		
Capital	Mill and overlay asphalt parking lot	2031	20	6	\$14	2,900	\$40,600						
Capital	Improve neighborhood lighting	2027	5	2	\$7,500	2	\$15,000			\$15,000			
Common Ground	Allocation for structural repair & upgrades	2025	5	0	\$1,000	1	\$1,000	\$1,000					\$1,000
Common Ground	Allocation for plumbing repairs & upgrades	2025	5	0	\$1,000	1	\$1,000	\$1,000					\$1,000
Common Ground	Allocation for electric repairs & upgrades	2025	5	0	\$1,000	1	\$1,000	\$1,000					\$1,000
Common Ground	Replace playground equipment	2026	18	1	\$50,000	1	\$50,000		\$50,000				
Common Ground	Replace in-ground basketball hoop	2030	12	5	\$3,000	1	\$3,000						\$3,000
Common Ground	Trail Improvements	2026	5	1	\$10,000	1	\$10,000		\$10,000				
Common Ground	Common ground drainage repairs / improvements	2028	5	3	\$10,000	1	\$10,000				\$10,000		
Common Ground	Creek erosion abatement	2029	10	4	\$50,000	1	\$50,000					\$50,000	
Common Ground	Tuckpoint masonry at entrance monuments	2028	5	3	\$5,000	1	\$5,000				\$5,000		
Common Ground	Refurbish entrance monuments	2032	18	7	\$10,000	1	\$10,000						
Pool	Paint and resurface pool	2025	10	0	\$12,000	4,080	\$48,960	\$48,960					
Pool	Minor Paint and resurface pool	2030	10	5	\$4.00	4,080	\$16,320						\$16,320
Pool	Replace pool pumps	2036	12	11	\$5,400	3	\$16,200						
Pool	Replace pool filters	2036	15	11	\$3,500	3	\$10,500						
Pool	Replace pool chairs and loungers	2030	8	5	\$285	42	\$11,970						\$11,970
Pool	Replace pool picnic tables	2033	12	8	\$650	20	\$13,000						
Pool	Replace starting blocks	2027	18	2	\$3,200	4	\$12,800			\$12,800			
Pool	Replace diving board	2029	18	4	\$4,800	1	\$4,800					\$4,800	
Pool	Replace lifeguard stands	2028	14	3	\$3,500	2	\$7,000				\$7,000		
Pool	Refurbish restrooms & storage room	2027	14	2	\$4,500	2	\$9,000			\$9,000			
Pool	Refurbish guard shack	2034	10	9	\$10,000	1	\$10,000						
Pool	Tuckpoint masonry at pool	2027	5	2	\$10,000	1	\$10,000			\$10,000			
Pool	Replace roof and gutters over awnings and pump room	2026	16	1	\$285	14	\$3,990		\$3,990				
Pool	Replace roof and gutters on guard shack	2041	16	16	\$680	20	\$13,600						
Pool	Allocation for structural repair & upgrades	2027	5	2	\$10,000	1	\$10,000			\$10,000			
Pool	Allocation for plumbing repairs & upgrades	2025	5	0	\$5,000	1	\$5,000	\$5,000					\$5,000
Pool	Allocation for electric repairs & upgrades	2025	5	0	\$5,000	1	\$5,000	\$5,000					\$5,000
Pool	Repair / Replacement of concrete flatwork & pool deck	2025	5	0	\$165	155	\$25,575	\$25,575					\$25,575
Pool	Replace black aluminum fencing around pool	2032	18	7	\$44	210	\$9,240						
Pool	Replace chain link fencing around pool	2029	18	4	\$38	350	\$13,300					\$13,300	
Projected Capital Expenditures (today's \$)								\$92,535	\$63,990	\$56,800	\$38,675	\$68,100	\$69,865
Projected Capital Expenditures (@3.5% inflation)								\$92,535	\$66,230	\$60,846	\$42,880	\$78,146	\$82,978



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2026 Assessment Increase

Frequently Asked Questions

Old Farm Estates Trustees

In April, residents received notification of a proposed increase to the annual HOA assessment from \$280 to \$380, with a possible annual adjustment tied to inflation (consumer price index (CPI)).

We understand how financial changes can be stressful, especially for neighbors on fixed incomes. As a dedicated HOA with Trustees who all serve as volunteers, we are committed to transparency, flexibility, and supporting our community.

To provide additional insights, we've prepared some frequently asked questions to provide more detail. There will be multiple ways to receive more information on this proposed increase to come:

- **Our website:** OldFarmEstates.org > Current Residents section > Frequently Asked Questions
- **Spring General Meeting:** May 20, 7:30 PM at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 13014 Olive Blvd
- **Informal Poolside Q&A:** Mid-June (details to come)

Q: Why is an annual assessment increase necessary now?

A: Costs for maintaining our shared spaces – like landscaping, pool upkeep, insurance, and utilities – have increased sharply. We also need to build our reserves for long-term maintenance, as recommended by our

2023 reserve study. The study identified specific improvements to make over the life of an asset with corresponding funding recommendations. This confirmed that our current funding model is inaccurate. Right now, we are not collecting enough to keep up with inflation or future repairs, which puts our neighborhood assets and property values at risk.

Q: Can residents review the HOA's financial reports and the 2023 reserve study?

Yes, we are committed to transparency. Financial reports and the 2023 reserve study are available for review on the Old Farm Estates website in our Documents section, and during our HOA meetings.

Q: What if I'm on a fixed income or need more time to pay?

We understand that not everyone can pay at once. Our OFE HOA recognizes the need for payment flexibility. That is why we are actively partnering with City & Village to define new payment process flexibility to ensure we meet the needs of our residents and neighbors.

Our goal is to implement, starting in 2026, a new due date extended to January 31, with the ability for residents to have the option to split the assessment total into two payments – January 31 and July 31 – to make it more manageable.

Q: Will assessments increase every year after this?

A: The proposed assessment change allows for modest increases based on inflation.



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Trustees will evaluate this each year as it is contingent on external, market-driven prices and rates. The goal is to have a sustainable model that avoids sudden, large increases in the future.

A: Q: What will the increased annual assessment fee be and will it be recurring?

A: The new proposed annual assessment fee is \$380 with the option of an annual increase commensurate with, and not exceeding, the Consumer Price Index. This amount will help us cover the rising costs of necessary repairs and improvements. It is not the intent or goal to raise the assessment every year. As Trustees managing the funding sources, the neighborhood does need a mechanism to increase assessments to cover escalating costs and ensure there are sufficient funds for operations and preservation of the subdivision assets. Future increases will be determined by the Trustees each year and will be limited to the Consumer Price Index.

Q: What will the additional assessment funds be used to support?

A: Assessment funds will be used to: fund the reserve at the recommended level, cover rising costs, allow us to complete additional upgrades and asset preservation recommended in the reserve study, and can pay professionals to do work such as tree cutting instead of relying solely on homeowners. As maintenance requirements become more complex or time intensive, we require more skilled professionals to tackle larger projects which

will require funding. Trees planted in the 1960s have gotten quite big!

Q: What happens if the increased assessment ballot measure does not pass?

A: This will be a topic we will do our best to cover in more detail in the upcoming Spring Gazette, at the General Meeting, as well as the poolside meeting, which we are offering in early June. If the increase does not pass, we will continue to defer maintenance, depend on volunteers to do professional work, ask for donations, risk not having enough in reserves to cover critical maintenance, and have continued deterioration of our neighborhood assets.

Q: Can residents review the HOA's financial reports and the 2023 reserve study?

A: Yes, we are committed to transparency. Financial reports and the 2023 reserve study are available for review on the Old Farm Estates website in our **Documents section**, and during HOA meetings.

Q: How did the HOA determine the necessity of this increase?

A: To determine the necessity, scope and timing of required maintenance and replacement of assets and the financial needs of OFE, the OFE Trustee Finance Committee conducted a detailed review of our financials and the current conditions of OFE community assets. The Trustees obtained a professional reserve study in 2023, which provided external, non-partisan guidance. The OFE Trustee Finance Committee reviewed, analyzed, and



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synthesized the data, then made a recommendation and proposal to the Trustee Board.

Q: When will residents be asked to vote on the increased assessment?

A: Voting will take place in June 2025. If the assessment is approved, the new assessment will become effective for the 2026 assessment.

Q: How many votes do we need to pass the increased assessment?

A: For a proposed amendment change to pass, the OFE Indenture of Restrictions requires the affirmative vote of a 60% majority of the votes cast by mail-in ballots or drop-off at City & Village Tax Office, each lot being entitled to one vote.

Q: How can I learn more or share my thoughts?

A: We'd love to connect with you! Here are ways you can learn more and engage with us:

- **Our website:** OldFarmEstates.org > Current Residents section > Frequently Asked Questions
- **Spring General Meeting:** May 20, 7:30 PM at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 13014 Olive Blvd
- **Informal Poolside Q&A:** Mid-June (details to come)

Thank you for helping us protect the value and charm of Old Farm Estates. We're proud to be a volunteer-led neighborhood HOA, and we appreciate your support as we plan, together.

Committee Update: Finance Committee – 2024 Review

Sam Craig

Pursuant to the Old Farm Estates Indenture, a Financial Review Committee was formed to inspect the financial reports and records for the period from January to December 2024. The committee consisted of Trustees Steve Oslica, Ric Benckendorf, and me. The committee met with Chris Rife, our Treasurer, on March 13 and April 27, 2025, to review the following records:

- OFE Revenue, Expense and Cash Balance statements
- Monthly bank statements
- Check registers
- Receipts and invoices; and
- Bank account reconciliations

Appropriate comparisons and cross-checks were conducted to validate that the financial statements prepared by the Treasurer reconciled to the original documentation. No judgments were made as to the appropriateness of the expenses recorded. These decisions were made when the Board approved the annual budget or provided approval of supplemental appropriations throughout the year.

It is the opinion of the Financial Review Committee that the 2024 financial records are well documented and that the financial statements fairly represent the financial position of Old Farm Estates subdivision for the calendar year ending December 31, 2024.



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Committee Update: Architectural Review

Sam Craig

Our Indenture of Restrictions tasks the Trustees with preserving and enhancing property values of the homes in our subdivision. That responsibility, as it pertains to external projects on our homes, is delegated to the Architectural Review Committee. We are here to review and approve all proposed exterior improvements to your home.

2024 ARC Recap

In 2024, it was a busy year for the Architectural Review Committee. We reviewed 12 projects for homeowners including:

- New and replacement decks
- Several new fences
- Replacement fences
- New retaining wall to prevent washout
- Concrete patio in a backyard
- A garage modification

When and How Do I Need to Submit an ARC Application?

Prior preparation is key when partnering with our Architectural Review Committee. Residents can find ARC resources at

OldFarmEstates.org/architectural-review:

- Steps to Obtaining Trustee Approval
- Architectural Review Application Form
- Fence Installation Guidelines
- Solar Panel Installation Guidelines

We promise to act as quickly as possible so as not to delay your projects.

Once a resident submits an application and the necessary project drawings and specifications, the Committee will conduct a site visit to review the project in detail, making a recommendation to the Trustees. Each project will be reviewed by the Trustees at the monthly business meeting. The Committee works to get projects before the Trustees in a timely manner, please remember to submit your project prior to construction and allow sufficient time to get the necessary approvals from the Trustees.

Committee Update: Pool Season Opens Soon

Volunteers Always Needed

Kathleen Owen

Our 2025 OFE Pool Committee has some very exciting news to share as our HOA dollars were hard at work this spring getting our neighborhood's biggest shared community asset into tip-top shape.

In early April, we began the process of resurfacing the pool. This included sandblasting the pool and baby pool surfaces from the gutters down to the drain. We removed all the old paint to a paintable surface and patched all the existing imperfections and cracks from normal wear and tear. All expected repairs were made, and unexpectedly, our expert



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contractors complimented us that, for the most part, our pool is in great shape for its age.

What does this mean?

That means our dedication to diligent maintenance is working, and we need to continue efforts to sustain the longevity of our shared community asset. We upgraded the paint used this time to an epoxy. This should give us a few extra years before we must repaint again. Another benefit of using epoxy is that, for residents and guests who sit on the gutters, their swimsuit bottoms shall no longer turn white. YAY!!!!

What additional maintenance occurred?



All the caulking around the pool has been stripped away, ground out, and replaced, which is important. This is what keeps water from getting into places it should not, which can expand and contract during the winter season, damaging the concrete and potentially creating cracks.

Additionally, while the pool was empty, we replaced all the light fixtures in the pool. Once completed, the pool will be filled, and a leak inspection is scheduled for early June, to verify the pool does not have any leakage issues. This is a recommended best practice to baseline and track any potential repairs needed related to leaks before they become significant.

As always, our Pool Committee and several volunteers came out during our volunteer days and put in a lot of man hours to prepare the pool for opening the season. This is no small feat. Some noticeably new changes you will see are that we have extended the storage room by the pump house to make room for our pool assets in a safe dry space. We are looking to replace both lifeguard stands and are adding screen doors to the bathrooms to keep out bugs and leaves.

We continue to partner with Midwest Pool Management for our maintenance, lifeguards, and all things pool. We are fortunate to be able to partner with them and continue with our tradition of employing our neighborhood's young adults as guards. This year, we will renegotiate our contract with Midwest Pool Management, and we will do our due diligence to make sure we are partnering with the best for our community.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

A special thank you to all the residents who volunteer and donate time and money to make our pool the star of the show. If you have not been to the pool recently, I encourage you to do so. It keeps improving and has gotten a serious facelift over the past couple of years. We always have more work to do and with your help we will continue to put our best foot forward in making this a beautiful community that you all deserve.



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2025 Pool Registration

Annual Mandatory Registration
Required
Sara O'Neal

The Old Farm Estates Swimming Pool 2025 Season is Saturday, May 24 through Monday, September 1, 2025. Below, you will find details about how you and your family can participate in a variety of ways to both enjoy and support our neighborhood pool!

Pool Registration

An annual household pool membership registration is mandatory for pool admission and **must be completed PRIOR to the pool season**. Old Farm Estates Subdivision Homeowners who are current on assessment fees are eligible for pool membership. Resident Pool Membership includes all people living in a household. Prior to your first pool visit, complete your annual household pool membership registration by visiting:

OldFarmEstates.org/pool-information

During registration, please ensure that all names are listed on your registration form to ensure access as a Registered OFE Pool Member. **Note:** Renters are considered Residents within Old Farm Estates.

Daily Sign-In Process

During each visit, all pool guests must sign in, daily, through a simple process at our guard shack. This helps us track the number

of visitors, verify who is visiting, and ensure the safety of all pool guests.

Non-Resident Guest Passes

Registered OFE Pool Members who wish to bring non-resident guests may purchase guest passes. Guests must be accompanied by a Registered OFE Pool Member, and payment can be made via cash or Venmo.

Daily Guest Pass: \$5 per single guest, each day, available at the guard shack.

Pool Pass Punch Cards: Purchase a Pool Pass Punch Card 10-pack for \$40 which will provide entry for ten visits/guests at the pool.

Pool Updates & Events

Please visit the OFE website calendar for pool hours and for any changes to the hours of operation throughout the season. You can even sync our OFE calendar with your personal digital calendar to stay updated all the time!

Additionally, consider hosting a private event or attending one of our sponsored events.

Learn more at:

OldFarmEstates.org/pool-information

Residents may follow

OFE's private Facebook:

Facebook.com/groups/OldFarmEstates

Subscribe to the OFE Google calendar:

OldFarmEstates.org/calendar



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Swim Team



The Old Farm Estates Swim Team is open to both OFE pool members and non-residents, ages 5–18, who can swim at least one length of the pool. Non-residents need to purchase an OFE Swim Club Membership to participate. Register each swimmer separately. Payment will be collected during the first week of practice (cash, check, or Venmo accepted).

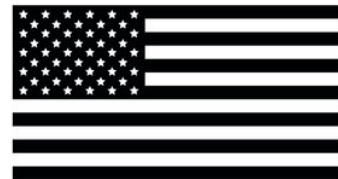
Print the 2025 schedule now:
[Tinyurl.com/2025-OFE-Swim-Meets](https://tinyurl.com/2025-OFE-Swim-Meets)

Learn more at:
OldFarmEstates.org/swim-team

Additionally, visit to learn more:
OldFarmEstates.org/pool-information

- View hours, rules
- Learn about family SPIRIT banners
- Register your family for the annual, mandatory pool registration process

Fourth of July Parade & Pool Party



Each Fourth of July, Old Farm residents are invited to participate in our neighborhood parade. The theme for this year's parade is **"America the Beautiful"**. Residents are encouraged to band together and create themed floats by street, by district, by family, with neighbors, and/or friends. Children can also decorate and ride their bikes to show their independence and pride.

The parade begins at 11:15 am at Fern Ridge High School with the Monarch Fire Department leading the way. The OFE Pool & Swim Team Committees vote on the best float and the winner of the float contest receives a prize. To register your float, contact Kim Griffin or Kari Mueller by Saturday, June 28, via email at kim4griffin@gmail.com or kschepker13@gmail.com.

Following the parade, at 12:00 pm, the pool opens for an Independence Day Celebration. There are numerous kid contests and games, a Dad Cannonball Contest, and available concessions that benefit the Swim Team. All residents are welcome!



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Save the Date for Trivia Night & Call for Auction Donations!



Our Old Farm Annual Trivia Night & Silent Auction is on Saturday, August 23, 2025. This is our neighborhood's largest fundraising event, supporting the Old Farm Swim Team.

We're looking for donations to include in our fundraising event and we truly appreciate your engagement and generosity. If you have contacts or donations and are willing to contribute to the cause, please reach out to Kim Griffin or Kari Mueller at kim4griffin@gmail.com or kschepker13@gmail.com. Donations are due on Friday, August 15.

Invite your family and friends, even if you don't have a child on our swim team! Adults, over the age of 21, are welcome to this fun-filled evening. Registration details coming soon to our Facebook group and website.

- Doors open @ 5:00pm
- Trivia starts @ 5:30pm
- Tables of 10 people
- 8 rounds of trivia
- Silent Auction | 50-50 Raffle | Games

Family Pool Spirit Banners

Don't forget to secure your family's spirit banner! Displaying a banner on the fence at the pool shows your OFE pride and plays a crucial role in supporting our pool. Thanks to families like yours, we can continue to make OFE a wonderful place to be.

Learn more or sign up now, visit:
OldFarmEstates.org/sponsor-information
Tinyurl.com/OFEFamilyBanner25

Sponsorship Opportunities

Own a business? Check out our simple, reasonable marketing opportunities and turn neighbors into new friends and customers! We have four sponsorship levels available to meet your marketing budget, along with an opportunity to promote at our **Old Farm Trivia Night on Saturday, August 23, 2025.**

Learn more or sign up now, visit
OldFarmEstates.org/sponsor-information
Tinyurl.com/OFEBusinessBanner25

Did You Know?

Our OFE HOA is preparing to launch new email communications. Residents can choose to receive updates on a variety of topics, including:

- HOA News
- Community Volunteer Info
- Swim Team Information

Stay in the know by registering for our digital communications. OPT-IN now via **Tinyurl.com/OFE-News-OPT-IN**.



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Committee Update: Communications to Connect

Greta Walton

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing communication channels to share both general and time-sensitive information.

To help achieve this commitment, the communications committee is always working to ensure residents are provided with easy access to stay in the know! We meet monthly, at minimum, to discuss ways to engage with residents, plan for HOA and committee needs, compare what other subdivisions offer for communications, and work together to offer simple ways for our residents to connect with each other.

Creative, action-oriented volunteers are welcome!



COMING SOON: NEW - OFE HOA Digital Communications - visit to OPT-IN now!
[Tinyurl.com/OFE-News-OPT-IN](https://tinyurl.com/OFE-News-OPT-IN)

Facebook Group: Our subdivision invites residents to join our private Facebook group where we share neighborhood news, safety updates, and engage as a social community. Request to join at Facebook.com/groups/OldFarmEstates.

Website: An OldFarmEstates.org website refresh is currently underway! Our goal is to provide new content, updated information, and enhance our site to simplify where to find what. Visit often to stay connected and engaged, find information and resources, or search who to contact if you have a question. Feedback is welcome!



Shared Google Calendar: Subscribe via OldFarmEstates.org > Events > Calendar and sync your personal digital calendar with our OFE calendar. Stay in the know about committee updates, pool hour changes, Trustee meetings, and more!

Gazette Newsletter: A semi-annual newsletter with updates on subdivision events and other relevant information. If you have a knack for writing and an interest in writing a community interest article, we welcome your participation.

Trustee Questions & Concerns: Our Old Farm website has a dedicated Trustee Contact Us page so residents can reach out to their district's Trustee. If you're not sure of your district number, there is a handy map available to review. **Visit:** OldFarmEstates.org/Trustees.



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Subdivision Meetings:

- **General Meetings:** Open to all residents, this is a large bi-annual meeting that provides general community updates. Notes are shared within our Old Farm Estates' Resident Information web page.
- **Monthly Trustee Meetings:** The Trustees hold regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. These meetings are open to all residents. The agenda is focused on specific topics.

Committee Update: Engagement

Deb Colonius

The Old Farm Estates Engagement Committee is hard at work with our 2025 schedule of events, and we'd love your participation and support. We take pride in fostering a sense of community spirit through planned activities for all residents, from the young to the retired, and we welcome all who want to increase community engagement.

What does the Engagement Committee do?

The OFE HOA Engagement Committee oversees planning community events and making sure that homeowners can meet their neighbors. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment, where all feel welcome. Focus areas include:

- Increasing communications and awareness of engagement opportunities
- Ensuring that a variety of events cater to the multi-generational needs of our 558 homeowners to increase overall engagement
- Provide a mix of flexible activities to establish a cadence of consistent neighborhood involvement, strengthen commitment to our community's vision, and make OFE a great place to live.

When does the Engagement Committee meet?

Once per month, we meet to discuss current, planned events, as well as future events and activities that our committee sponsors. Meetings are usually 90 minutes long and are at one of our residents' homes.

To prepare and host community events, we need volunteers to help organize and lead specific events and activities. Additionally, our committee provides opportunities to assist with activity and events set-up and teardown, creating signage, obtaining food, drinks, or prizes, putting up decorations, and communicating with your neighbors and friends to increase involvement.

Review the Old Farm Committees page to learn more:

OldFarmEstates.org/committees



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What events does the Engagement Committee host?

For information about planned activities, consult the OFE calendar, event signage, or the private OFE Facebook group.

- **Annual Traditions:** Egg Hunt, End-Of-School Pool Bash, 4th of July Parade, Flick & Float Nights, Trivia Night & Silent Auction, Fall Fest, Garage Sales, Dog Days of Summer
- **Occasional Events:** Food Trucks, Plant Swaps, Bake Sales, Adult Sip & Swims, Karaoke Night, Subdivision Renovation Tours
- **Welcome Committee:** Welcome new residents and provide information about the subdivision.
- **Committee Partnership:** Fundraising efforts in partnership with the Pool & Swim Team Committees: Occasional bake sale fundraisers and collaborative events (e.g., 4th of July parade and party, trivia night).

Did you know residents can subscribe to the OFE Google calendar?



A great way to stay connected and engaged with our community is to visit the **OldFarmEstates.org/calendar** page, where you can subscribe to the OFE Google calendar.

This provides residents with the opportunity to see all events, including any changes, in real-time! All OFE Committees

add events to the calendar, so if you're looking for engagement, here is your first stop so you know what's coming up!

Please reach out to me via the OFE **OldFarmEstates.org/Trustees** page, if you're interested in learning more.

Committee Update: Neighborhood Preservation

Maintaining our common ground spaces and keeping our streets and sidewalks safe

Ric Benckendorf

First a quick introduction, my name is Ric Benckendorf, a recently added Trustee, who has led our OFE Common Ground & Trail volunteer efforts for 5 years. Both my wife, Kathleen, and I are Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners, certified by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the University of Missouri Extension.

While both of our daily jobs are more associated with quality assurance, project management, and engineering, our shared passion is the outdoors and for our community. We moved to OFE over ten years ago and have volunteered to maintain the bike trail for about the last five years, along with, more recently, the new native garden that we established by the pool.

Hillside Entrance Design

Keri Lammering, one of our OFE friends and neighbors, along with Kathleen and myself,



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met with Erin Goss from Shaw Nature Reserve last fall to discuss possible plans for the hillside between Old Farm Drive and the Fern Ridge school. This was a free service provided by Shaw Nature Reserve.

We discussed the need for low-cost landscape options, like native tree seedlings from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), trading for free plants, and wildflower seed from our own personal gardens and the native gardens already established by the pool area common grounds. There were previous plans and bids for the hillside, but due to our underfunded HOA status, this is not within budget since most of the plants/shrubs/trees would have to be purchased from a nursery.

Erin provided this design template, **[Tinyurl.com/2025OFE-Entry-Design-Package](https://tinyurl.com/2025OFE-Entry-Design-Package)**, that we could repeat several times along the hillside. This is an adjustable plan based on our own needs and budget and could be implemented over time. Erin's design is intentionally tree and shrub heavy, planted in layers and created for beauty, decreased maintenance requirements, and increased benefits for wildlife. While these are growing, we are trying to add some low-cost color that includes annuals and perennials, mostly native wildflowers, which can be maintained by mowing periodically.

Hillside Changes Since Fall 2024

Last fall, we spot sprayed weed/grass killer, spread native wildflower seed, planted

daffodil bulbs for early spring bloom, and surprise lilies for later bloom. We installed some redbud seedlings as well.

This spring, we planted some native liatris bulbs, a few more native shrubs, and split some of the daffodils from near the gazebo and spread them out on the hillside. Throughout the current spring season, we will continue installing more of the trees and shrubs in Erin's plans, which include tiny seedlings from MDC or Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

So far, we have planted between 75 and 100 trees and shrubs. It may be several years before we can even tell that there are trees and shrubs on the hillside, other than the numerous orange flags that serve as tree locators so that we protect our investments from being mowed.

I know that the hillside entrance serves as the first impression of our community. We are proud to call OFE our home, and we know many of you do as well.

It's my intention to keep everyone updated and make the process as transparent as possible. In the past, this hillside had become overrun with invasive honeysuckle bushes, like a lot of our subdivision common grounds. This is one of the main reasons, besides the hill's slope, that this area is so hard to maintain. Even after invasive honeysuckle removal efforts, there are still honeysuckle bushes trying to sprout back that will take multiple spot herbicide



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treatments and cutting. About a third of the hillside still needs an initial eradication.

How Can Residents Help the Hillside Entrance?

To alleviate budgetary concerns and minimize any financial burden to our OFE finances, all trees and shrubs installed so far have come at no cost to the subdivision thanks to plant swaps with native plant friends and volunteer work by Kathleen and me. The upcoming MDC trees and shrubs are also a personal donation from us.

You might have noticed some daffodils, tulips, crocus, etc., on the hillside this spring, but it is sparse and spread out since that is all that we had donated to our committee.

Volunteer Shout Out for Entrance Daffodils - THANK YOU!



We want to give a shout out to

Jennifer & Eric Trapp

They volunteered to divide some of the tightly packed areas of daffodils, located at our front entrance. They transplanted bulbs to cover the whole left side of the monument. Next spring, that whole area

will look beautiful and the plants will get a chance to grow larger and prettier.

Plant Donations

If you would like the hillside to fill in quicker, or have plants on hand to donate, we are in need. Please drop them off at our home, 1966 Burlewood Drive, and leave them on our covered porch. We're in need of:

- **Bulbs:** Potentially you have some that need to be thinned out in your yard
- **Wildflower seeds:** Need to be planted as soon as possible while we still have "April Showers"
- **Annuals:** If you have extra annuals to spare, our hillside will love it!
- **Monetary Donations:** Residents can donate funds, via our Old Farm Venmo account, **@Oldfarm-Estates**, and when submitting payment, within the "What's this for?" text box, please include a note clarifying:
 - *The purpose of your purchase*
 - *Your family name*



Help Needed: Volunteer Time & Energy

There are still some tightly packed areas of daffodils on our hillside that we can take advantage of dividing and splitting into multiple areas around the hill and along the front monument. This will be a great, free resource if anyone else can volunteer.

If residents have any questions, feel free to contact me via text and I will try to answer



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as best as I can. I still work full time, and I am not an avid Facebook user, so I probably will not respond daily, but should be able to answer something weekly.

Holy Honeysuckle! Removing Invasive Plant Species...

One of the primary reasons I wanted to become a Trustee is that our common ground could be a great resource, like a park, for everyone. But it is being overrun by honeysuckle and other invasives. When I was a kid, I could remember walking through the woods easily and being able to enjoy the huge trees, the wildflowers, and all the wildlife in a forest. Now, our forests require a machete to be able to get through them.

How have honeysuckle and other invasives taken over so quickly?

Due to honeysuckle and other invasives leafing out in the spring before anything else does, and they also keep their leaves in the fall longer than anything else, they outcompete and shade out everything else. This includes seedling oaks, walnuts, sycamores, etc. Eventually, when the old trees die out, there will be nothing but densely packed honeysuckles and the vines that they support. You can see a huge difference when an area is maintained and when it is not.

What OFE areas need help with removing invasive species?

Last fall, volunteers did a great job of removing much of the invasive honeysuckle

throughout the wooded Bookbinder corridor. For example, when heading south on Bookbinder, going up the hill from the pool area, part of the east/left side had been cleared, but the west/right side has not been cleared yet.

The hill across from the pool has not been maintained and the trees are getting swallowed by the vines that honeysuckle supports. We need volunteers to help with maintenance, in addition to an increase in funding. Where each resident can contribute to removing invasive species is in your own backyard. Please remove the honeysuckle from your own yards because it will continue spreading if not managed and removed.

How do I remove invasive honeysuckle?

The best method for large honeysuckle removal is to cut it off, but leave a stump, and then within 10 minutes of cutting, use a dauber on the top edge of the stump right by the bark with a concentrate of Tordon or RoundUp herbicide (do not dilute it). If the stump is not treated within 10 minutes of cutting, the wound seals. After a month or so, if the stump is sending out sprouts, then cut it off a little lower and dauber with herbicide again. Once there is no more growth, then cut it down to the ground. To clarify, to dauber is to use a small bottle with a sponge (dauber) top, like daubers used in playing bingo games. Small honeysuckles are best to pull out by hand or use a tool called a puller bear.



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Bluebird House Installations

Our Common Ground & Trail Team have placed 10 bluebird houses and one Boy Scout bluebird house on the trails and on the common ground. They have baffles to keep snakes and racoons from invading.

The Boy Scout bluebird house is the winner so far since it has five bluebird eggs in it. The other 10 keep getting invasive European sparrows, but we have enlisted some volunteer master naturalists to monitor and remove the sparrows. If there are any other conservation projects that you would like to see or be a part of, just contact me.

On the bike trail itself, there are some soft patches in the trail where sandy particles, called fines, were placed instead of gravel. This has caused a safety hazard with some near miss falls for cyclists, so please be careful.

We are getting bids to re-gravel the trail, but that is an unplanned expense to try to fit into our budget. It is estimated to be about \$3,500. Additionally, there is an area that is getting close to washing out. We are looking at the costs involved with adding a drainage pipe and then stabilizing the washed-out area with large rock. There is also a similar area by the Bookbinder bridge that needs some large rock to stabilize it before it cuts into our ballfield area. Again, these efforts are going to require some volunteers, but the rock and pipe are an unplanned expense that may not fit our budget.



Richard Cude for servicing our equipment when the lawn mowers and the brush cutters needed attention after working on the trail.

Dave Voeller for dragging cut honeysuckle and stacking it in neat piles along the trail for future chipping.

Ted Hemmersmeier volunteered to use his skid steer to spread the gravel for the bike trail and help put big rock in the areas that are washing out along the creek.

Creating Clear Bike Trails Paths
About 5 years ago, the bike trail was overgrown with honeysuckle. We have cleared most of it now and many of the brush piles have been removed by multiple chipper rentals, so the full width of the bike trail has been recovered to provide for two lanes. The invasive honeysuckle removal is an ongoing project, but most of the area around the trail has had a first pass.

Establishing Common Ground Nature Trails

Our Common Ground & Trail Team would like to get some nature trails established to make our surroundings more like a park. It is a resource that we are barely using. With



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vision, planning, and volunteerism, we could have a network of trails that would just require an initial mowing and then covering with mulch/wood chips.

We have a source of free wood chips, but the mowing and spreading of chips is going to require volunteers or hiring someone to complete the job, which is currently not in the budget. Our current budget for the common grounds covers the mowing at the pool and front entrance, the front entrance irrigation system, and the landscaping around the entrance and the pool.

We need all the help we can get, so if there are scouting troops or students who are looking to volunteer, or adults who also want to volunteer and give back to our community, please let me know.

2025 Key Dates

MAY

5/3: Document Shred Day
5/3: Pool Prep - Volunteers Needed
5/7: HOA Engagement Committee
5/10: Pool Prep - Volunteers Needed
5/10: Trail Team - Volunteers Needed
5/12: Garden Club
5/13: HOA Trustee Meeting
5/17: Pool Prep - Volunteers Needed
5/20: HOA Bi-Annual General Meeting
5/24: Pool Opens
5/24: Pool Opens: End of School Bash

JUNE

6/2: OFE Swim Practices Begin: AM & PM
6/4: HOA Engagement Committee
6/9: Garden Club
6/9: OFE Meet – AWAY @ Ladue Elks Club
6/10: HOA Trustee Meeting
6/16: OFE Meet vs Creve Coeur Racq. Club
6/21: Adult Sip & Swim, KARAOKE! (3rd Sat)
6/22: HOA Trustee Meet & Greet
6/23: OFE Meet vs Chesterfield Ath. Club
6/27: Flick & Float (4th Fri)
6/30: OFE Meet – AWAY @ Bridgeton

JULY

7/2: HOA Engagement Committee
7/4: 4th of July Parade & Pool Party
7/7: OFE Meet vs River Bend
7/8: HOA Trustee Meeting
7/9: OFE Meet – AWAY @ Lifetime Fitness
7/12: OFE Conference Meet @ Patt HS
7/18: Garden Club
7/25: Flick & Float (4th Fri)

AUGUST

8/6: HOA Engagement Committee
8/11: Garden Club
8/12: HOA Trustee Meeting
8/16: Adult Sip & Swim (3rd Fri)
8/23: OFE Swim Team Trivia & Auction
8/29: Flick & Float (4th Fri)

SEPTEMBER

9/2: Labor Day Back to School Bash
9/3: Annual OFE Dog Days of Summer Swim
9/3: HOA Trustee Meeting
9/8: Garden Club
9/9: HOA Trustee Meeting
9/14: Garage Sale & Shred Event



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