

Walnut Grove Estates Community Association

Residents' Handbook



April 2022

Table of Contents

1.	About this Handbook	1
2.	What is a Community Association (Walnut Grove Estates)	1
3.	Welcoming New Residents into the Community	2
4.	Key Roles in the Management of Walnut Grove Estates	2
4.1.	Board of Directors	2
4.2.	Property Management Company	2
4.3.	Community Centre Coordinator	2
4.4.	Social Committee:	2
4.5.	Numerous Activity Coordinators/Committees	3
5.	Understanding the Board and its Role	3
5.1.	Monthly Meetings	3
5.2.	Annual General Meeting (AGM)	3
5.3.	Annual Budget and Membership Fees	3
6.	Understanding Walnut Grove Estates Legal Documents and Agreements	4
7.	The Self-Governing Spirit of the Association.	4
8.	Making Changes to Units and Property	4
9.	Owner and Resident Information	5
10.	Selling your Property	5
11.	Communication within the Walnut Grove Estates Community	5
12.	Events and Activities	6
13.	Use of the Community Centre	6
14.	Safety and Security in the Community	7
15.	Additional Documentation	7
15.1.	Policies and Procedures (see separate Manual).	7
15.2.	ByLaw#2 (See separate document)	7
15.3.	Rules and Regulations (See Separate Manual)	7
16.	Pre-Authorized Debit Agreement Form (PAD)	8

1 About this Handbook

This handbook is written by Walnut Grove Estates (WGE) residents, for residents. It is intended to facilitate awareness of all aspects of the community and support the participation of all residents in Walnut Grove Estates community life.

2 What is a Community Association (Walnut Grove Estates)

Walnut Grove Estates is a specially designated subdivision sometimes called an ‘Adult Lifestyle Community’ suggesting it is for older people; however, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Official Plan of the City of Kingston does not preclude anyone from living in Walnut Grove Estates. For the most part, given the single floor, 2-bedroom design of all the homes, the community suits smaller



families and retired singles, or couples. Nevertheless, families can, and do live in Walnut Grove Estates.

Under the sales conditions and legal title of your home, certain additional covenants are acknowledged by buyers, and these covenants and the associated rules and regulations set certain conditions on Owners that go beyond other neighbourhoods to help maintain property values and the quality of the community.

In addition to maintaining the physical properties of the community (homes, common land and community centre) the Walnut Grove Estates Association fosters quality of life for residents through the encouragement of physical activities, social engagement, later life learning, helping people stay in their homes longer, and neighbourly support.

While the role of the Board is to provide homeowners with the guidance and support regarding the covenants and policies of the Association, the Board also balances the requirement to meet the conditions set out in the bylaws and policies, with individual Owner's independence in regard to their property.

3 Welcoming New Residents into the Community

New residents (either Owners or tenants) are visited by the Welcoming Committee, and receive a **Welcome Package** which contains Manuals, contact lists, information on Walnut Grove Estates operations and activities.

4 Key Roles in the Management of Walnut Grove Estates

Apart from the Property Manager, which is a paid position, all other roles are filled by residents who volunteer their time, and share their skills, unique backgrounds and interests to enhance the strength and vibrancy of the community.

4.1 Board of Directors:

The Board consists of seven members who are elected at the AGM and serve for 2-year terms. All Owners are eligible to stand for election to the Board and are encouraged to do so when positions become available.

4.2 Property Management Company:

The Association hires a Property Management Company to oversee the maintenance of the common areas, to help with the appropriate business issues, bookkeeping, budgets, and to assist in the general operations of the Association. The full role of the Property Manager is documented in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

4.3 Community Centre Coordinator:

The Community Centre Coordinator is a volunteer who oversees all aspects of the Centre with a small team of volunteers. The team looks after the scheduling of activities at the Centre, manages the hall rental process, oversees maintenance/repair, schedules equipment servicing, manages key control, and looks after the facility security. The full role and responsibilities of the Community Centre Coordinator are outline in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

4.4 Social Committee:

The Social Committee is one of the key committees contributing to the social fabric of Walnut Grove Estates. The Social Committee is comprised of a Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and other members. Social Activities such as monthly dinners, dances/entertainment, presentations, First Friday and Friday Happy Hour are arranged and supported by the Committee with other volunteers who support these functions. Social Committee functions are self-supporting and are not funded by the Association fees.

4.5 Numerous Activity Coordinators/Committees:

Walnut Grove Estates has numerous other individuals and groups that focus on various elements of the community, including fitness and recreational activities, a neighbourhood watch program, a newsletter, building and grounds volunteers, a website, and Facebook page. All of the leaders and members of these groups are volunteers and contribute their time to help the community. Suggestions for additional activities are welcome from all members.

5 Understanding the Board and its Role

The Board is group of seven member Owners, working with the Property Manager, to ensure the integrity and spirit of the Walnut Grove Estates Community Association is maintained for the well-being of the community as a whole. Open seats on the Board of Directors are filled by a membership vote at the AGM.



5.1 Monthly Meetings

The Board meets monthly at the Community Centre. A report of the Board meeting appears in the monthly newsletter along with the date/time of the next meeting. A synopsis of the Board’s discussions and actions is published on the Board Meeting Summary.

All members of the Association are welcome to attend monthly Board meetings. Those wishing to make a presentation must advise the Board in writing one week prior to the scheduled meeting and provide any relevant documents to the Board at that time. The Board will set aside up to one hour at the beginning of the meeting to receive such presentations. The Board will then go “in-camera” and non-Board members will respectfully be asked to leave the meeting.

5.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Annual General Meeting of the Association is held once a year and is open to all Owner residents, including tenants. Only Owners, or those with their proxy, are allowed to vote at the AGM, with one vote per dwelling. At that meeting, the Board reports on the past year’s initiatives and strategic goals for the coming year. The Board also reports on the previous year's financial statement, along with the next year's proposed budget, and annual fee level. The various committees reflect on their past year’s activities and identify goals for the coming year.

5.3 Annual Budget and Membership Fees The Board presents a current year budget, and a comparison to previous year performance, at the AGM. An analysis of any estimated expense increases are reviewed, and the annual membership fee is determined by the Board prior to the AGM. The budget and membership fees are presented and voted on by the membership.

The Annual Membership fees are due January 1st of each year. After January 1, members who have not paid in full will be considered in arrears as per By-Law No. 2, Article XII. The Board recommends Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) to simplify the collection of membership fees.



Members can sign up by completing the ETF form included in this Handbook on page 9. Should members wish to pay by cheque, they can be made out to Walnut Grove Estates Community Association (or WGECA) and can be placed in the mailbox located by the main door of the Community Centre.

6 Understanding Walnut Grove Estates Legal Documents and Agreements

The Association was formed as a not-for-profit corporation with Letters Patent dated Feb. 26, 2002. The Covenants and Restrictions, which are permanent, and part of each property Owner's deed were created at that time, along with By-Law #1, which governed the operation of the Association.

By-Law #1 was a vehicle for the developer (Dacon) to begin the operation of the Association while the development was under construction. This was superseded by By-Law #2, passed in September 2012, which moved all control of the Association and the Board of Directors to the homeowners in the community, removing Dacon from any managerial authority.

Over the years, the Association has approved a series of Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations covering the management, standards, and operation of the Association. This latest version of these manuals is included with the Welcome Package.

Unlike condominiums, which have well-defined legal status and are subject to specific provincial legislation, homeowner associations (HOA's) have fewer legal restrictions and mandates.

7 The Self-Governing Spirit of the Association

The Association operates on the principle that our purpose is to protect the property values of the community, and to enhance the welfare of the members of the community. The unique, inter-connected physical structure of our homes creates an interconnection in our lives. (*“My choices impact my neighbours, and my neighbours' choices impact me.”*)

To that end, the Association has created policies designed to maintain the important architectural features of our homes and properties, promote the proper care for all of our common areas, and encourage participation in the social fabric of the community. The common streetscape of our community sets it apart from other neighbourhoods and is an asset to the property values of our homes.

8 Making Changes to Units and Property

An important part of the community feel, and property values, at Walnut Grove Estates is the consistent look of the units and the properties. To maintain this standardization, there are rules in place regarding, for example, front doors, shingles, gutters, siding, and front yard trees etc. These are described in detail in the Rules and Regulations Manual as well as procedures for handling variances and requests for changes.



9 Owner and Resident Information

The Association maintains a list of all members, which is distributed twice a year with the newsletter. Additionally, it keeps a list of email addresses, for those who prefer to receive communications through that channel. Email addresses are not distributed to the general membership. You are encouraged to provide your email address so that you can get the monthly newsletter and special announcements delivered right to your computer.

10 Selling your Property

In order to ensure prospective buyers are fully aware of the nature of the Walnut Grove Estates Community and the conditions of purchase, Owners are asked to notify the Property Manager when their home is being sold. A vendor package is to be provided to the new owner through the seller or their agent. A Closing Certificate and New Owner Information Sheet are to be provided to the Property Manager by the Seller. For more detailed information, see Section 4.1 *Selling Properties* in the Policy and Procedures Manual.

11 Communication within the Walnut Grove Estates Community

There are many ways to keep in touch with the community here at Walnut Grove Estates:

- Our monthly newsletter is chock full of information about the community, board meeting discussions, hot topics in the community, stories about interesting people in the community, all the upcoming activities, and a calendar of events. In addition, a Board Meeting Summary is published and distributed to all members of the Association.
- The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors is usually held on the last Monday morning of the month. All residents are welcome to attend and may provide relevant input on topics of interest to them.

- The bulletin board in the community centre has the latest newsletter, the monthly events calendar, sign-up sheets for future social events, plus important contact information.
- There are numerous recreational activities and social events scheduled in the community every month, many of them free or at very little charge. Everyone is welcome to attend, and your neighbours are eager to meet you.
- Members of the community have also created a Website, which often include photos of our members at the various social events. These can be found at:
<http://www.walnutgrovekingston.ca/>
- And perhaps the best way to keep in touch is just to get outside and meet your neighbours. The lack of fences between neighbours, the front porches, the central post boxes, and the sidewalks and paths mean that there are always people out and about, walking and visiting with their neighbours.

12 Events and Activities

The community has a variety of social and recreational activities that take place on a regular schedule, along with some special events that contribute to the fabric of Walnut Grove Estates, which may include:

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| ➤ Yoga and Tai Chi classes | ➤ First Friday Dinner and Activities |
| ➤ Senior Exercise classes | ➤ Monthly Catered Dinner |
| ➤ Walkersize | ➤ Guest Speakers |
| ➤ Euchre | ➤ Dances |
| ➤ Bridge | ➤ Remembrance Day Event |
| ➤ Table Tennis (Men's' and Women's') | ➤ Canada Day Event |
| ➤ Line Dancing | ➤ Christmas Event |
| ➤ Book Club | |
| ➤ Friday Night Happy Hour | |



13 Use of the Community Centre

The Community Centre is an integral part of life in Walnut Grove Estates and is available for use by the members and tenants. Most of the social, recreational, and fitness events take place at the Community Centre.

The community centre has a library of books for your use. Feel free to take books and or donate books. There is also a TV with a cable connection available for your use, a shuffleboard, darts, table tennis, card tables, and tables and chairs to set up for dinners or functions for about 65 people. There is a full kitchen equipped by the Association. The Social Committee is responsible for consumable food and supplies and this is paid for by a fee for each social event.

Additionally, the Community Centre is available to rent for your family or group function, at a reasonable price. See Policy and Procedure Manual Section 3.2.

The volunteer Community Centre Coordinator has all the details available. All members are entitled to a key to the Centre. A key is available from the Community Centre Coordinator. (see Policies and Procedures Manual Section 3.4)

14 Safety and Security in the Community

Walnut Grove Estates has an active Neighbourhood Watch Program. You can report any suspicious activity to the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator.



Articles about security topics are published in the newsletter, and seminars are held periodically to keep everyone informed of the security issues involved with a community such as ours. If you have any concerns about strangers in the area or unusual events, you can contact the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator. If you are a snowbird, there are additional security issues you will want to address.

An excellent checklist is available at the Canadian Snowbird Association website: www.Snowbirds.org.

A further security issue involves looking out for your neighbours. If you haven't seen your neighbour in a while, just give them a call or knock on their door or ask a Board member to make the contact for you. In this community, looking out for each other is important.



15 Additional Documentation

15.1 Policies and Procedures (see separate Manual)

15.2 By Law #2 (see separate document)

15.3 Rules and Regulations (see separate Manual)