

BRIEF HISTORY OF HARBOR RIDGES ASSOCIATION (HRA)

(Composed Summer 2021, by Mitch Leavitt, based on notes from Grace Frudden. Please submit corrections & suggestions.)

In 1996 several residents organized to protect the natural attributes of Ridges Road. They incorporated THE HARBOR RIDGES ASSOCIATION, INC (HRA), as a non-profit corporation in the State of Wisconsin in 1997.

THE HARBOR RIDGES ASSOCIATION, INC MISSION STATEMENT (BYLAWS)

To unite the residents of Ridges Road in an organization for the purposes of providing a significant voice in local affairs and of providing responsible representation of views of the property owners to local authorities.

To inform the Town Board of the Association's views concerning Anclam Road, Harbor Lane, Point Drive, Ridges Drive, Schmitz Road, and Toft Road about:

- *density of development,*
- *width of road,*
- *traffic issues,*
- *environmental issues.*
- *To engage in any lawful activity within the purpose for which a non-stock, non-profit corporation may be organized under the Wisconsin statutes.*
- *To bring together the diverse elements of the neighborhood: the Baileys Harbor Condominium owners, the Baileys Harbor Marina Condominium owners, the Baileys Harbor Yacht club condominium owners, and the homeowners on Anclam Road, Harbor Lane, Ridges Road, and Schmitz Road.*
- *To protect the unique qualities of Anclam Road, Harbor Lane, Point Drive, Ridges Road, Schmitz Road, and Toft Road; to preserve the qualities that define Ridges Road as a Rustic Road; to maintain the ecological integrity of the area.*
- *To create liaisons with other organizations which support similar goals such as The Ridges Sanctuary and*
- *To include residents of Baileys Harbor who support the goals of the Association,*

Members of the association met twice annually. Membership has varied over the years. For some years, Dottie Troller (now deceased) wrote and distributed a regular newsletter to members, which was widely appreciated.

HRA interacted productively with the Town of Baileys Harbor (Town) board of directors, offering advice on management of the road. Membership dues were distributed to support local causes including. Annual contribution recipients included:

- Baileys Harbor library
- Baileys Harbor fire department
- Baileys Harbor Community Association
- Baileys Harbor July 4 Fireworks
- Flag pole in front of Town Hall
- Chairs and tables in Town Hall
- The Ridges Sanctuary
- Friends of Toft Point
- Door County Land Trust
- Door County Property Owners
- Emergency Medical Services equipment (Automatic Defibrillator, etc)

HRA members were actively involved with the effort to designate Ridges Rd as a State of Wisconsin "Rustic Road". In addition to formally recognizing the aesthetic qualities of the road, this designation also allowed the Town of Baileys Harbor to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph from the prior 45 mph. Previous attempts to reduce the speed limit were denied by the State of Wisconsin highway department. "Rustic Road" designation allowed the Town to authorize the lower speed limit, an outcome supported by HRA. We helped change the schedule of mowing the roadside to the end of the summer, after most of the native plants have bloomed and gone to seed. For some years, members removed litter from the roadside.

For many years Grace Frudden attended the Town Board meetings, serving as a liaison for residents of Ridges Rd, Harbor Lane, and all of Baileys Harbor. Through her efforts HRA maintained a productive and cooperative relationship with the Town. Grace 'retired' from that role in 2018, and no one has filled that position in her place.

For several years, the organization has met twice annually, early in the season for an annual meeting, and again near the end

of the season for a social meeting. Current organization expenses include some refreshments at the meetings, postage, copying, and a few miscellaneous costs. In 2017 the board decided to suspend the collection of annual membership dues until a need for funds is once again identified. Donations will be accepted.

In 2020 and 2021 the HRA board of directors convened for an annual meeting. The Covid-19 pandemic precluded large gatherings in 2020 and 2021, so the two typical annual gatherings have been temporarily canceled. As of this writing we hope they will resume in 2022. The Board of Directors recognizes that ownership of properties evolves and many current residents are likely unaware of the organization. We intend to pursue some 'outreach' in 2022, hoping the potential health consequences of social gathering will have resolved.

NOTES ABOUT HARBOR LANE & SCHMITZ ROAD

Development of the land near the intersection of Harbor Lane and Schmitz Road, previously occupied by The US Life Saving station, and Schmitz Gazebo, has been a matter of contention over the years. See map appended to this document. In 1972, owners of The Baileys Harbor Yacht Club requested the town to vacate Harbor Lane, a short road off Ridges Road that encircled the nearby Baileys Harbor Yacht Club. That would allow less restrictive development of the site, but would limit public access to the lakeshore. One hundred and seventy-six residents of Ridges Road and Baileys Harbor signed a petition to deny that request. Conditional permission was initially granted by the Town. However, those conditions were never met.

HRA has formally presented opinions regarding the matter to the Town, and influenced the course of development. After the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club burned in 1993 the property was ultimately purchased by "Blue Sky Harbor, Ltd". In 1995, the company requested permit to build a larger resort on the property, much larger than the prior Baileys Harbor Yacht Club (BHYC), or the current BHYC Condominiums. Concerned that such a development would negatively impact the neighborhood, some Ridges Rd residents, including Dottie Troller and attorneys Grace Frudden and Joe Melli, organized neighbors to resist the construction. They formally created The Harbor Ridges Association, Inc. (HRA), in 1997. Significantly, HRA members engaged legal counsel in 1997 that eventually led to a 1998 **legal judgment identifying that no portion of Harbor Lane had ever been vacated by the Town**, because the conditions for potential vacation were never met. The importance of this legal decision would become important subsequently when Blue Sky Harbor, Ltd., once again requested permission to expand their development (see below).

Careful review by HRA members of (a) the history of the property and (b) Town decisions to **conditionally** vacate portions of Harbor Lane, supported arguments that limit higher density development.

In 2005 HRA submitted **written approval and support** of development of 48 units on the site as proposed by the property owner. However, the plan was never pursued.

In 2015, Blue Sky Harbor Ltd asked the town to vacate Harbor Lane (the road that runs between the Baileys Harbor Condominiums and the waterfront). This would allow the company greater flexibility in developing their land. Once again, Grace Frudden applied her legal prowess and reminded the Town Board that previous agreements precluded that option. The Town of Baileys Harbor resolved that Schmitz Road extends from Ridges Rd to Harbor Lane, completely, rather than only part of that distance. No portion of it has been vacated. This is documented as a Town Road Agreement recorded with the Door County Registrar of Deeds. So Grace deserves our sincere appreciation and thanks.

There is a formal agreement with the Town that the public may use the area just north of the marina between Harbor Lane and waterfront.

Harbor Ridges Association web site: <http://www.harborridgesassociation.org/Home>

Links to other internet sites of possible interest:

Baileys Harbor Historical Society web site: <http://www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org/>

History of Ridges Rd YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvtOrQ6Itag>

Peninsula Pulse article about fires in Baileys Harbor: <https://doorcountypulse.com/bucket-brigade-to-rescue-boat/>

History of the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club: <https://www.bhycr.com/the-history-of-baileys-harbor-yacht-club-resort/>

WI DOT Rustic Road description of Ridges Rd: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/travel/road/rustic-roads/rr39.aspx>

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