

Houston Laker

Since March 1957 - Edition 68

November 2025 issue

⚡ HOUSTON LAKE ⚡

CHILI

COOK-OFF

& POTLUCK

Judging at
12noon

NOVEMBER 1ST 2025

Lunch at 12:30
Bingo at 2pm

Hot Prizes for the best chili!

Join the City Council & the Venetian Gardens Homes Association for a
Chili Contest and Community Potluck.

Register early for the Chili Contest to receive details on entry &
reimbursement of ingredients.

AND

Garage Sale Bingo is BACK!!

Time to bring in your best worst item you have been storing away.

Play some Bingo and go home with a new treasure.

Register by emailing city-council@houstonlake.gov



**REGISTER
EARLY
LIMITED SPOTS
AVAILABLE**

2025 TRASH & RECYCLING

DATES

City Trash and Recycling Service are handled by Republic Services. For assistance with your receptacles, issues with pick-up, or questions about large items contact customer service at 816-254-1470 or republicservices.com.

One Trash bin and one Recycling bin is picked up every Wednesday. (If you require more than one trash bin and/or more than one recycling bin, you need to contact Republic Services directly at 816-254-1470 to set up any additional service you require for your residence.) They need to be at the curb/edge of street by 6am. Place carts 1 foot from the curb/edge of the street. Leave room for the arm of the truck to pick up and return the receptacles without causing damage to vehicles, fences, etc. **Place the cart at least 5 feet from any object – like a car, tree, pole, fire hydrant, mailbox, electrical box, or cable box – so the automated arm can reach your cart.**

Trash & Recycling pickup is now every Wednesday.

Please maintain this same distance of 5 feet between recycling and waste carts.

Remember only one of each bin is allowed.

A \$10.00 charge per bin, per month, if you need additional bins.

2025 Holidays:

November 27th Thanksgiving Day –No Change pick up will be on Wednesday November 26th

December 25th Christmas Day –No Change pickup will be on Wednesday December 24th

Houston Lake Cookbook

1st and 2nd Edition of the Houston Lake Cookbooks is available for \$3.00 each. Houston Lake History Book = 77 pages of the History of Houston Lake for \$5.00 each.

Email Mary Head at maryjewel40@gmail.com or call (816) 741-5639

Lake Life November Events

Trash and Recycling pick up is every Wednesday

Oct. 31st - Happy Halloween

We are doing the Fall Party instead of Halloween Trick or Treating.

Nov. 1st. City of Houston Lake and the Venetian Gardens Homes Association will be hosting a Fall Potluck & Chili Cook-Off. Starting at noon.

2nd - Daylight Saving time ends. Push your clock back one hour.

12th - City of Houston Lake City Meeting at 6:30pm, City Hall

13th – **Brush/Trees/Limbs Pick-Up**

17th - **NO** = HOA meeting

27th - Thanksgiving Day



Halloween Trick or Treating.

In lieu of trick or treating this year, the City of Houston Lake and the Venetian Gardens Homes Association will be hosting a Fall Potluck & Chili Cook-Off. Residents are very welcome to use the City Hall Parking lot as a "Trunk or Treat" location and/or pass out candy from the porch or from their own residence. Stay Safe! Halloween is Friday, October 31, 2025

This was our involvement in the World Trade Center Bombing of 9-11

On my vacation in September 2011, we flew to Philadelphia and did some exploring around town then drove an Avis car to Niagara Falls. We signed up for a room for two nights in the Seagram tower on the Canadian side at a shack beside the road. The rental part of the tower is somewhat the shape of a whiskey jigger. We were pleasantly surprised that we could look down on the Horseshoe Falls from our room through the plate glass panel that formed one entire side of our room. Besides that, one night we viewed a fireworks display from our room by looking down on the display instead of looking up as per usual.

Then we drove south and somewhere got on a car ferry that took us to Cape May on the southern tip of New Jersey where we spent the night.

As we drove north, we saw signs that said all tunnels to Manhattan Island were closed. We just said that didn't apply to us. I have never turned on the radio in a rental car but, this time maybe we should have. When we arrived at Philadelphia we still had one day of rental on the car but, since we had done our thing there, we decided to go home. I filled the tank and drove to Avis to turn the car in. A young man told us we may not want to turn it in because something had happened. Linda said she only saw one plane land but none taking off from such a busy airport. I went in the office and saw the fiasco on TV. I asked how much they would charge if we drove it to KCI because I had to get home to go to work. They said at \$700.00. They said they would hate to lose the car but understood my predicament. So we drove the car home. When we turned the car in at KCI they said they waived the transfer fee. There were several cars there from many other States.

From "Gene Charles"

Letter from the Mayor

So Many Things! I could use your help with some tasks around the city before the weather changes. Let me know when you are available...

mayor@houstonlake.gov

Road Maintenance and Community Involvement

With the changing weather, it is crucial to address road sealing and repair potholes before these issues worsen. Maintaining our roads, ditches, and culverts is a priority for the city.

Fall Brush Pick-Up and Honeysuckle Removal Initiatives

The city is prioritizing the removal of invasive honeysuckle from key public areas. A focused effort will take place at the playground, targeting the tree line between playground equipment and the silt pond. What has been cut on the equipment side of the tree line needs to be brought to the curb to be picked up. The remaining brush on the silt pond side of the tree line needs to be removed.

Road Signs and Visibility

Some new road signs need to be hung, repurposing a few speed limit signs into more visible areas, and trimming vines and brush that are covering other road signs. If you are a corner property, please consider trimming your hedges and bushes back 2 feet from the signs and to a height of 3 feet for more visibility of oncoming vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Garage Clean-up for Winter Salt Storage

The city is working with Edwards Construction for winter road maintenance. The salt and some equipment will be stored in the city garage. The far-left bay needs to be cleaned and organized before the salt can be brought in. Having these items already on site will hopefully help with the timeliness of pre-treating and clearing this winter.

Looking Forward to 2026

There is still 1 seat to fill for the current two-year term expiring April 2027 that can be filled by appointment of the council. If you are interested, please contact city-council@houstonlake.gov.

The April 2026 ballot will have 2 seats for Aldermen for a two-year term from April 2026 to April 2028. These seats are currently held by Alderman Sarah Loring and Jesse Beshears. As we hope they stay on council for the foreseeable future, it is our duty to make residents aware that these seats will be on the ballot. Candidate filings for these seats will take place from December 9, 2025, to December 30, 2025. For more information, please contact Lisa Shepard at cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

Sarah Schofield
Mayor of the City of Houston Lake



City Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, the 10th day of September, 2025

Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 6:32 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Schofield.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Sarah Schofield, Alderman Jesse Beshears, Alderman Sarah Loring, and Alderman Teresa Olson. A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Loring moved to approve the 08/13/25 City Council Meeting minutes, the 8/27/25 Tax Levy Meeting Minutes, and the 8/27/25 Financial Meeting minutes. Olson 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Riverside Fire Department Report - Keith Payne, Assistance Fire Chief, reported two calls in the last two months. Reminded the City that trees need to be trimmed 14 feet and up and 2 feet back from the road. Riverside Fire Department has an Open House on October 4. Payne noticed fire hydrants in the City have been "decorated" which presents a hazard for the Fire Department in locating the hydrants. Hydrants belong to Missouri American Water and they should be contacted to let them know they need to be repainted. Shepard will call. Schofield asked about reflector poles. Payne will send information regarding hydrants with reflectors.

Platte Co Sheriff's Report- no representative was present. Schofield reported four calls for service in August for a total of 22.03 hours: 1 parking complaint, 1 special patrol request, 1 stalking, and 1 suspicious person-vehicle. Schofield reminded homeowners to report incidents directly to the Platte Co Sheriff's office and to let the City Council know of any concerns. Schofield will call to ask for patrols to occur closer to the monthly contract of 44 hours.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION - none.

VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA) REPORT

Mary Head reported the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 15 - the annual budget will be discussed. Saturday, October 25, is the VGHA Annual Meeting. Absentee ballots and proxy information can be obtained from VGHA Treasurer, Don Miller. More info about the annual meeting will be provided in the Houston Laker. The

deadline to submit news of any kind for the October edition of the Houston Laker is September 21, 2025.

PERMITS - none

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial reports dated 08/31/25 were accepted as presented. MOSIP - Shepard shared her enthusiasm, as well as Kay Honeycutt's enthusiasm, regarding the City's new relationship with MOSIP: the ease in which funds can be invested and accessed (as opposed to CDs), and the built in notification system (checks and balances) when funds are accessed. Loring moved to transfer the funds held in the remaining Sewer Fund CD to MOSIP when it matures in October. Olson seconded. A voice vote resulted in approval. Loring moved to transfer the funds held in the General Fund CD to MOSIP when it matures in October. Olson seconded. A voice vote resulted in approval. Shepard encouraged the Council to consider transferring some portion of the \$150,000 balance in the General Fund checking account to MOSIP in order to garner more interest. Schofield suggested reviewing the MOSIP accounts prior to moving funds from the General Fund to MOSIP at the November or December meeting ahead of the 6 month financial review in January.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Records Room - Shepard reported resident Johnny Nava voluntarily connected the existing dehumidifier to the sump pump by drilling a small hole through the concrete and threading a hose to discharge moisture. Repairs were suggested for rain water that pools when it rains next to the wheelchair access ramp. Use of City Hall - Schofield reported the City's lawyer reviewed the City's insurance policy and verified the City's rental of City Hall is covered as long as there is a signed agreement for the event. Discussion. Council affirmed having the City's lawyer draft a rental agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

Spillway - Schofield shared that a joint meeting was recently held with the VGHA board regarding the spillway. She is going to contact MODOT to discuss options regarding repairs needed. It is possible a survey of the spillway may be needed. It was suggested to check with Platte County to see if there is already a survey of the spillway. Bill Heim with Platte City might be a resource for information about the spillway. City Website, Social Media, & Communication Plan - Schofield and Beshears recently met with Clickit Digital regarding management of the City's webpage. It was suggested to seek other bids. Move to Unfinished Business of October meeting for further discussion. Halloween Event and Holiday Decorations - Halloween Event changed to a Fall Event and was set for Saturday, Nov 1st. Costumes can still be worn. Holiday decorations are in the process of being installed. Need to find help to install the decorations on the telephone poles.

REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

Honeycutt - no report. Shepard thanked Johnny Nava for repairs made in Records Room. She shared that the Chrome Book she uses for City business is not robust

enough to handle City business - she requested a better, and more secure, device be provided to her. She thanked the council for the funds needed to attend an upcoming City Clerk statewide meeting.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Loring is working on connecting Houston Lake with an area "lake group". This could be a resource group for Houston Lake. She is still working on sales tax and use tax for Houston Lake. The Council would need to determine a rate and put it before the residents for a vote. A Chili Cookoff was suggested for the Nov 1 Fall Event. Ideas will be solidified to be included in the Houston Laker. Olson mentioned the car in the City Hall parking lot. Schofield has been looking into this. Beshears is still gathering bids for the bridge. There is a Platte County Parks and Recreation grant opportunity that will open by the first of next year. Beshears is interested in reviewing the City's restrictions regarding livestock, poultry, goats, etc. Schofield indicated adding this to October's agenda.

REPORT FROM MAYOR

Schofield indicated more work is being accomplished on the street signs throughout the City. Street repairs and maintenance are able to be accomplished by volunteers who have coordinated with her. She has worked with a tree company to identify hazardous trees and will send letters to residents. Crawford Climbers will accomplish the City's fall brush pick up. Schofield and Shepard met with James Finney, Building Inspector, recently to discuss the status of our permitting process. Finney is compiling recommendations. A 4th alderman is still needed.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

The next City Council meeting will be Wednesday, October 8, 2025 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Schofield adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

Approved 10/08/2025



General Fund - Income

**Amended Budget
07/01/25-06/30/26**

Bond & Permit Fees	800
Interest Earned	180
Municipal Court Fines	7,000
Property Taxes (PP & RE)	26,297
Houston Lake Sewer & Trash	139,698
Fire Protection Services	28,994
Grinder Pump	19,200
Railroad and Utility Tax	1,800
Utility Franchise Tax	42,000
VGHA Reimbursement	2,500
Transfer from General Fund Reserve	29,550
Total General Fund Income	298,019

General Fund - Expense

**Amended Budget
07/01/25-06/30/26**

MAINTENANCE

KC Sewer Maintenance	99,511
Trash Disposal	40,169
Bridge	40,500
Property/Park Maintenance	10,000

ADMINISTRATION

Employee Salaries and Expense

Mayor	1,200
Aldermen (4)	2,400
City Clerk	2,400
Bookkeeper	3,600
City Collector	600
Code Administration Maintenance	
Cleaning (City Hall)	600
Payroll Taxes - all	1,700
Taxes Withheld from gross	
Training and Education	1,000
Travel/Mileage	150

Utilities

Electric	1,700
Gas	1,900
Water	350

Supplies

Kitchen and Restroom Supplies	200
Office Supplies	2,000
Office Equipment/Maintenance	3,595

Administrative

Advertising	0
Attorney Fees/Acctg Fees/Codifying	6,000
Bond, Permit and Building Inspection	
Court - Domestic Shelter	100
Court - Law Enforcement Training	100
Election Expense	800
Gifts/Awards/Donations	500
Insurance	7,750
Law Enforcement Services	17,000
Special Events	1,000
Technology Services	3,000
Transfer to Grinder Pump Fund	19,200
Transfer to Fire Protection Fund	28,994
Total General Fund Expense	298,019

Grinder Pump Fund - Income

Amended Budget
07/01/25-06/30/26

Interest Earned	250
Transfer from Grinder Pump Fund	
Grinder Pump	19,200
Total Grinder Pump Income	19,450
Grinder Pump Fund - Expense	
Pump Install/Repair/Replace	19,450
Total Grinder Pump Expense	19,450

Fire Protection Fund - Income

Amended Budget
07/01/25-06/30/26

Interest Earned	450
Transfer from Fire Protection Fund Reserve	4,056
Special Tax Levy	28,994
Total Fire Protection Fund Income	33,500
Fire Protection Fund - Expense	
Snow Removal	8,500
Fire Protection	15,000
Fire Protection Operations	10,000
Total Fire Protection Fund Expense	33,500

Road Fund - Income

Amended Budget
07/01/25-06/30/26

Interest Earned	30
Parkville Road District	2,800
Transportation Sales Tax (Project)	17,500
MODOR Vehicle Tax Rebates	12,000
Total Road Fund Income	32,330
Road Fund - Expense	
Street Lighting	3,500
Street Maintenance	11,330
Total Road Fund Expense	14,830

HOA Public Meeting 9/15/25



Call to order 6:30 pm

Present

Don Miller

Mary Head

Pam Freese

Monica Beshears via Zoom

Frank Wilson via Zoom

Pam limited the meeting to 1 hour as a board member was traveling in the early hours of the morning.

Meeting minutes from 8/18/25 passed unanimously.

Don provided HOA ytd financials.

Don led discussion on why a dues increase is necessary and provided spreadsheets to show the increase of lake remediation funding with current dues, \$100 annual increase and \$200 annual increase. There are around 8 members who are consistently behind in dues.

Katherine Stockbauer had many questions, comments and opinions regarding the dues increase. She opined a dues increase should only be used for dredging. Dues increases should be optioned in \$50 increments, and biopods are a waste of money and time. Pam responded dredging as our community's only avenue of lake remediation hasn't kept up with the silt and muck deposits. Using it as the only remediation will most likely mean the end of the lake. Houston Lake is over 90 years old and the average life span of a lake is 75 years.

Katherine stated the whistle needs to be cleaned out twice a year.

Pam stated that the Missouri Department of Conservation stated as long as water is still going through the whistle, the added organic matter helps slow down the water to allow the silt to fall into the silt pond.

Katherine suggested finding grants for our lake. Don welcomed her to look into grants and write them if she finds some that our lake qualifies for. Lisa Shepard recommended starting a committee for grant research and writing.

Katherine stated in her opinion, the only way to fix the lake was to drain and scoop out the silt. Jewel Head stated that had been tried and the equipment was stuck and wouldn't work in our lake.

Sarah Schofield mentioned MODOC stated walnut trees are really detrimental to the health of our lake. Pam replied that removing the walnut trees is on the board's radar, but felt there were more important expenses to focus on currently.

Jennifer Heese recommended rephrasing the dues increase to smaller numbers or equating it to a purchase. She recognized the need for the increase.

Frank brought up the quorum requirements for passing votes.

The board will take all the comments from the members present and online into consideration before making the final determinations for next year's budget.

Annual Meeting set for 10/25 at 1:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 7:47 pm



Working Meeting of the VGHA 9/28/25

Meeting called to order at 12:49

The board discussed and approved a \$120,000 budget for lake remediation projects, including dredging, bio-pod installation, and native plantings at inlets, while addressing concerns about separate voting requirements for major expenses. They reviewed specific budget allocations for each project and debated the effectiveness of bio-pods and native plantings based on expert recommendations from the Missouri Department of Conservation. The board concluded by approving a two-part budget and temporary secretary appointment, with discussions centered on lake management and conservation efforts focused on natural solutions.

Next steps

- Don to draft a two-piece budget with revenue at \$450 and distribute it to the board after the meeting.
- Don to prepare absentee ballot forms and work with Mary to finalize them.
- Don to look for the proxy book and determine how proxy votes should be handled.
- Pamela to reach out to Sarah for the recommended native plants list.
- Pamela to get three estimates for the dredging project.
- Pamela to send her Laker article to Frank.
- Pamela to arrange for Rigaro to install bio-pods on a weekend so people can learn how they go together.
- Pamela to arrange for Rigaro to fix the hardware issues with the bio-pods in the cove behind City Hall.
- Pamela to measure silt reduction in the spring and fall to create a data spreadsheet showing effectiveness over time.
- Board to send out absentee ballots next week for anyone who needs them.

Summary

Lake Remediation Budget Discussion

The board discussed approving a \$120,000 budget for lake remediation projects, including dredging, bio-pod installation, and waterborne/native plants at inlets. Don expressed concern about whether separate votes would be needed for each project, as their bylaws require community approval for major expenses over \$500 or \$1,000 in total. Pamela suggested deciding this ahead of time to handle absentee ballots, and Frank agreed to review the bylaws for clarification.

Lake Remediation Budget Discussion

The group discussed a \$120,000 lake remediation budget, with Pamela proposing to allocate \$99,000 for dredging, \$20,000 for new bio-pods, and \$1,000 for native planting. Frank suggested voting on the three items separately to avoid losing the entire budget if one item is opposed. Pamela emphasized the importance of starting with a small amount for native planting, as the Department of Conservation indicated these plants would spread quickly. The group agreed to review the native planting budget next year based on the season's results. Vote:

Don - Aye

Frank - Aye

Monica - Aye

Mary - Nay

Pam - Aye

Native Plantings and Bio-Pod Concerns

The board discussed concerns about bio-pods and native plantings in the lake. The speaker expressed opposition to both, citing lack of evidence for bio-pods' effectiveness and past problems with native plants, which led to the introduction of grass carp. Pamela and Don presented recommendations from the Missouri Department of Conservation, including planting specific native plants at inlets and removing walnut trees. The group agreed to trust expert guidance and proceed with native plantings, further monitoring is needed on bio-pods.

Lake Conservation and Bio-Pod Implementation

The group discussed lake management and conservation efforts, focusing on controlling duckweed and implementing natural solutions rather than chemicals. They agreed to follow the recommendations of the Department of Conservation, including planting native plants and installing bio-pods, with Frank supporting continued testing of biopods despite the cost. Pamela reported positive results from the bio-pods, noting a 3-foot reduction in silt in one area, though she emphasized this was an exceptional outcome. The group also discussed plans for installing new bio-pods on a weekend to allow for community learning and improving the hardware to make maintenance easier.

Budget

The board discussed and approved a two-part budget, with \$450, \$500, and \$550 amounts for lake remediation, though Mary and others advocated for lower amounts to gain approval. They agreed to keep the lake remediation, bio-pods, and native plants proposals together as one vote, despite Mary's objection to separate voting.

Vote:

Don - Aye

Frank - Aye

Monica - Aye

Mary - Aye

Pam - Nay

Secretary Approval

The board also approved Shelly Broll as temporary secretary while Monica takes a step back to focus on her health, with confirmation that Shelly would have no voting rights as an acting secretary.

Vote:

Don - Aye

Frank - Aye

Monica - Aye

Mary - Aye

Pam - Aye

Meeting adjourned at 1:28 pm

Houston Lake City Officials

City Hall – (816) 741-0644

Mayor – Sarah Schofied
mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk – Lisa A. Shepard
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

City Collector – Kathryn Kreider
citycollector@houstonlake.gov

City Treasurer – Kay Honeycutt
khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov

Custodian of Records –
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

Board of Aldermen

Sarah Loring
sloring@houstonlake.gov

Jesse Beshears
jbeshears@houstonlake.gov

Teresa Olson
tolson@houstonlake.gov

As most of the City Officials and HOA Officers have full-time jobs, phone calls may not be answered/returned as quickly as a text or email.

City Hall is open during meetings, events and by appointment.

Venetian Gardens Homes

Association Officers

President – Pam Freese
(816) 726-4455
venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com

Secretary – Monica Beshears
(573) 356-4118
weety30@gmail.com

Treasurer/Lake Tags – Don Miller
(918) 633-4109
drmiller5@icloud.com

Board Member at Large – Mary Head
(816) 741-5639
maryjewel40@gmail.com

Board Member at Large - Josh Williams

**In case of a Police, Fire, or Medical
Emergency – Dial 911**

**Police Non-Emergency & Animal
Control Platte County Sheriff
(816) 858-3521**

**Fire Non-Emergency Riverside Fire
Department (816) 372-9024**

**Grinder Pump Haynes Equipment
Services (913) 782-5013**