**FAIRLINGTON MEADOWS**

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

*7:00–8:52 pm*

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Charles Monfort, Chair

Claudia R

Kristen K

Cynthia P

Chuck E

Michele M

Margaret R

Kathleen S

Shirin W

Sarah C

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Dolly Sharma, Minutes Services

Zainab Bukhari, Minutes Services

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Monfort called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda and it was adopted by unanimous consent.

**LANDSCAPING ISSUES**

1. **Stormwater Program Activities**

Margaret R provided updates for the Stormwater Program Activities, where we are trying to get a 35% credit on the new stormwater tax. She has supplies for one of the three volunteer projects, labeling storm drains into Four Mile Run. The target area is in and around the Meadows. Around 24 additional volunteer hours are still needed to complete the 30 hours of volunteer work needed for the credit. The deadline is November 2023. Margaret R mentioned she will send out an email to the committee asking for volunteers.

The second activity is for people to pick up litter along Quaker Lane. Margaret R encouraged everyone to volunteer. She explained that they have to pick up litter for 30 hours and can ask friends and family to help. She also proposed organizing an activity day and targeting the broader Meadows population. Chair Monfort suggested she place an announcement on Town Square, through one of the Board Members.

The third activity is for 30 people to attend an educational seminar on stormwater, rain gardens, etc. She mentioned that she was working with staff to coordinate a date and time and would keep everyone informed.

Chair Monfort mentioned we can apply for credit for trees planted this year. Margaret R. will coordinate the photos and receipts for the trees.

1. **Quaker Lane Cleanup**

Chair Monfort provided an update to the committee on Quaker Lane. We have received complaints about poison ivy, English ivy, and dead hanging branches, but these are not included in our contract with Lancaster. Lancaster had given us a proposal to take care of these issues, at $2,100, which he has forwarded to the Board for discussion at their next board meeting.

1. **Court 3 Landscaping Plan**

Chair Monfort outlined many changes made in the draft plan, including focusing only on the front of building, removal of proposed plantings at 3371 due to a storm drain, replacing some hydrangeas with rhododendron, etc. Of the 18 holly trees, the plan would retain half of them in place, transplant one, and remove the others for a variety of reasons. This project is very expensive, costing $68,000. However, Court 3 is our largest court, and given its size the cost is in line with other courts.

Margaret R mentioned that there was still a lot of spirea on the planting list, which are not doing very well. Furthermore, she explained that the winter heath is another plant of concern, as it may end up looking like mulch and is not thriving.

Cynthia P mentioned that people in her courtyard have complained that every time it rains, all the mulch goes to the sidewalks. She mentioned that she had taken pictures to share with the committee.

Claudia R asked if they would do another round of planting replacement plants. Chair Monfort confirmed and stated that this would be done by fall. He also mentioned the work will start after Labor Day and should be finished by Thanksgiving.

**MOTION:** Chair Monfort made a motion to recommend approval of the landscaping plan and budget. The motion was seconded by Claudia R and **passed** by unanimous consent.

1. **Watering Issues**

Chair Monfort explained there was an issue with watering on the traffic islands, which Ed Hilz is looking into for the Committee.

The other topic of discussion was watering along Quaker Lane. Chair Monfort expressed concerns about county trucks not watering every week, as we had been told. Several of the recently planted trees are dead. He suggested we consider hiring Davey Tree Service to hire new plants for the first two months after they are installed.

**MOTION:** Chair Monfort made a motion to recommend to the Board that we contract with Davey Tree Service for up to $1,000 for watering services. The motion was **passed** with unanimous consent.

1. **Sustainable Landscaping Practices**

Chair Monfort went through the list of sustainable landscaping practices distributed to the Committee. He highlighted the following:

* *Use of electric-powered equipment*. A provision in our current contract with Lancaster requires them to continuously review all available electric lawns landscaping equipment to consider using here. He explained that the issue is with the batteries, as they last only 20-30 minutes, which his not practical for a neighborhood of our size.
* *Erosion control*. We could get tax credits for rain gardens in the stormwater management program, and the Board has identified potential rain gardens between Courts 8 and 10 and Courts 8 and 15. We can look at this option next year if funding allows it.
* *Reduction of turf lawn areas*. Broader mulch circles under trees would allow leaf cycling, instead of trucking excess mulch away. Cynthia P and Margaret R highlighted concerns about the compaction of the soils. Shirin W asked about not using even organize herbicides and fertilizer, but Chair Monfort noted that in our resident survey 2/3 of residents wanted herbicides to be used.
* *Implementing a low-mow or no-mow area.* There was extensive discussion about identifying areas for reduced mowing, including selected areas to the rear of residential buildings. There was no consensus for changing current mowing practices, but enough interest for more discussion at a future meeting.
* *Reduction of light pollution*. Chair Monfort noted he had sent a few articles last month on how lights in gardens affect the reproduction cycles of insects, such as fireflies. Cynthia P suggested an article for the Messenger on this topic; Chair Monfort said he would draft an article accordingly and talk to the board.
1. **Landscaping Renewal Guidelines**
* Chair Monfort began the discussion by noting the renewal guidelines say certain things “should” be done, instead of “shall” be done, reflecting the fact the Committee wanted some flexibility when they were first adopted. We also noted these guidelines should still be relevant next year, as he has asked the Board to put $50,000 in the budget for next year to fix some of the past wrong plantings.
* Cynthia P suggested we stop removing small and narrow grass areas, and there was further discussion on this and other issues. Chair Monfort said he would amend the guidelines along the lines discussed in the meeting and bring them back for review at a future meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No previous minutes were presented for approval, as the committee needed more time to review them.

**OPEN FORUM**

Kathleen S talked about a specific unit that had some vines growing. Chair Monfort stated he would check the bylaws in this regard.

Chuck E talked about some of the nandina roots returning and asked if they could be removed.

Kristen K suggested we delay the September meeting to the 13th, given that the first Monday is so close to the Labor Day holiday. The Committee agreed to the suggestion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2023**

**7:00–8:30 pm**

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Respectfully submitted by Minutes Services.