**FAIRLINGTON MEADOWS**

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

*7:00–9:09 pm.*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT** **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Charles Monfort     Frona Adelson

Kristen K   Donald Spamer

Claudia R.

Evan B.

Ed H.

Adrian H.

Michelle B.

Adrian H.

Margaret R.

Cynthia P.

Gina M.

Chuck E.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

John Rosenberg, Minutes Services

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Monfort called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

**AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**LANDSCAPING**

**Updates**

Kristen K. updated on the Tree Canopy Project, saying she requested a holly for Court 3.

Chair Monfort talked about lesser celandine, saying that Margaret R. is taking the lead on this issue. He reiterated early spring is the only timeframe to act against its spread, so the issue will be revisited in the fall.

Chair Monfort provided a briefing on the B&G charter committee. A meeting occurred last night. Donald S. is heading the effort, Margaret R., Michelle B., Charles E., and Charles M. are also on the committee.

**Planting Proposals**

1. Chair Monfort addressed an azalea transplant request at 3473B S. Stafford, Court 6, stating it would be good to save the plant, but the size of the bush that will grow is unknown.

**MOTION:** Charles M. made a motion to approve, by unanimous consent, the azalea transplant request at 3473B S. Stafford. The motion carried.

1. Chair Monfort addressed an azalea planting request for 3427 S. Utah St., Court 11. The resident removed, without approval, two yew densa and five creeping phlox planted in November 2022 at a cost to the Meadows of $490. The resident apologized and offered to reimburse the Meadows. It was the sentiment of the committee that the resident should reimburse. Donald S. inquired if a reimbursement issue of this nature would go through the board. Charles M. said it would be referred to them

**MOTION:** Chair Monfort made a motion to approve, by unanimous consent, the proposal to plant two azaleas at 3427 S. Utah and require the resident to reimburse the cost of the plants that were removed without permission. The motion carried.

1. Chair Monfort addressed an egress window installation request at 3421 S. Utah, Court 11, that entails the swapping out of two plants. Margaret R. spoke of placing additional plants in front of the egress window as it would be unsightly without this added cover.

**MOTION:** Chair Monfort made a motion to approve, by unanimous consent, the planting request associated with an egress window installation at 3421 S. Utah, Court 2, provided additional landscape screening plants are placed in front of the window. The motion was carried by a roll call vote of 9-1.

1. Chair Monfort addressed a landscaping request at 4310 S. 34th Street, Court 13, in which the resident felt the landscaping installed last year was too sparse, and the resident went ahead with their plantings. Margaret R. stated that the resident's plantings fit the landscape.

**MOTION:** Charles M. made a motion to approve, by unanimous consent, 4310 S. 34th Street, Court 13 plantings proposal. The motion carried.

**Court One Landscaping Plan**

Chair Monfort reminded the committee that everyone should have reviewed the Court 1 landscaping plan and its budget, stating that there were quite a few changes between the final and original drafts. Chair Monfort, Frona Adelson, and Margaret R. conducted a walk-around in Court 1 and came up with numerous landscaping recommendations.

Chair Monfort spoke of places that needed additional plantings and noted a discernable downslope between 4108 and 4104, necessitating a swale to divert rainwater.

Margaret R. addressed tree removals and additions, singling out, as well, what she viewed as the inordinate costs associated with plant removal. Frona Adelson noted the labor costs involved in removing old plants accounts for the high costs. Margaret R. stated that this is another reason to retain healthy, mature shrubs and have them adequately pruned instead of taking them out at great expense.

Frona Adelson stated that she is pleased that pruning is becoming less of a necessity. Cynthia P. said that the quality of the pruning is the issue, along with Lancaster not knowing how to attend to the new plantings. Charles M. stated that pruning will be placed on next month's agenda.

Chair Monfort read various planting and removal suggestions. He noted that with the current plan and the discussed modifications, the Meadows would install over 70% native plants for the first time. Court Chair Evan B. expressed his satisfaction with the plan.

Chair Monfort stated that the most contentious part of the plan might be the removal of a Foster's holly in favor of a sourwood tree.

**MOTION:** Chair Monfort. made a motion to approve the Court 1 landscaping plan with the changes discussed. The motion passed 8-1.

**Yard Ornaments**

Chair Monfort spoke of the proliferation of yard signs, flags, plastic flowers, lights, lawn decorations, etc., and expressed dissatisfaction with the bylaws not being enforced. He stated that changing the bylaws entails a great deal of effort. Chair Monfort talked about bylaws being enforced uniformly and equitably and that he would like the committee to urge the board to resume enforcement of the by-laws in this regard.

Claudia R. said the bylaws might prohibit things people can legally do, saying there are more important matters to address. Cynthia P. stated that she supports enforcing existing requirements. Ed H. said some things in the bylaws are dated, the ornamentation's value is in the eye of the beholder, and the motion under consideration is overreach.

Donald S. clarified that these are provisions of the rules of conduct, provided for in the bylaws, and are amendable by a board vote. He cautioned against a no-decorations-type of policy.

Michelle B. put forth the idea of residents being allowed to display one personal item in their yard. Discussion ensued regarding the issue of enforcement. Margaret R. talked about people deriving pleasure from these signs and ornaments yet noted that subjectivity comes into play. She suggested increasing the number of days the American flag could be displayed and placing time limits on holiday decorations.

Cynthia P. offered to go through the website and see what is stated. Ed H. said that the way things are currently written is confusing. The Committee agreed that Cynthia P would conduct additional research and report back to the Committee.

**Issues for Discussion**

Watering

* Chair Monfort. spoke of the access to watering infrastructure as being spotty. Plants are being lost. Volunteers are needed, but so far, few have stepped forward. He noted that some courts are better at stepping forward to water.
* Cynthia P. singled out plantings along Quaker Lane as being especially problematic from a watering standpoint, especially given the presence of a screen. Margaret R. underscored that volunteers would never come forward to water along Quaker Lane. She said that allocating funds to care for these watering needs would be an acceptable expenditure.
* Ed H. talked about approaching the county about using water bags on Quaker Lane. Chair Monfort stated that he would ask the county.
* Cynthia P. suggested finding someone with a truck who could manually go around and water plants in hard-to-reach areas.
* Frona Adelson said the committee could propose the board hire someone to water.
* Margaret R. suggested installing sprinklers with timers.

Tree Guidelines

* Chair Monfort said that he believes there will be general agreement on most of the points surrounding the tree removal guidelines. He called for removing the word "rejuvenation" from the guideline's introductory sentence.
* Charles M. read through the five conditions:

1. *damaged, dying, or unhealthy;*
2. *listed on the Virginia invasive species list;*
3. *causing damage to buildings, including foundations and roofs, or to residential units;*
4. *directly blocking the view out of residents' windows, or*
5. *planted too close to residential buildings and thus likely to cause damage to buildings or porch foundations.  (Any tree within four feet of buildings will be assumed to represent a threat to foundations unless proven otherwise by a certified arborist.)*

* Cynthia P. asked if condition number two might eventually lead to a requirement to remove all invasive species. Chair Monfort stated that he did not believe this would occur but should be considered.
* Margaret R. said condition three should include a clause specifying where pruning can mitigate such damage.
* Margaret R. said condition number four would lead to the removal of many trees, stating that some of these issues could be resolved by pruning. Cynthia P. suggested that the residents must indicate their desire to have a tree removed.
* Gina M. spoke of safety being added as a condition.
* Kristen K. volunteered to update the language of the tree removal draft document and the Committee agreed to consider revised language at its next meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The May 2023 minutes were approved as amended by acclamation.

**OPEN FORUM**

* Margaret R. spoke of erratic pruning.
* Cynthia P. talked about being more specific with landscapers about what is wanted. Chair Monfort said that he would welcome drafting pruning guidelines. Margaret R. suggested putting together photos showing examples of proper, naturalistic pruning versus improper pruning to distribute to the landscapers. Chair Monfort said to send such photos to him directly.
* Ed H. inquired about the chain of command regarding landscaping messaging.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:09.

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Respectfully Submitted by Minutes Services