

FAIRLINGTON MEADOWS  
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, May 3, 2023  
7:00–8:30 pm.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Charles Monfort  
Kristen K  
Michelle M.  
Claudia R.  
Kait S.  
Michelle B.  
Adrian H.  
Margaret R.  
Cynthia P.  
Shirin W.  
Gina M.  
Chuck E.  
Ed H.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Frona Adelson  
Joe Spytek

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Rosenberg, Minutes Services  
Antonio A.  
Carey L.  
JP  
Dave L.  
Kathryn D.  
Jarred S.  
Annette R.  
Rachel T.

CALL TO ORDER

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

AGENDA

MOTION: Michelle M. MOVED to add to the agenda the board's action in removing the holly tree from Court 10. SECONDED by Claudia R. This issue was added to the agenda.

## COURT 10 HOLLY TREE REMOVAL

Michelle M. spoke of processes and lack of transparency regarding the removal of the holly tree and questioned the efficacy of the B&G Committee considering the executive board action. Margaret R. stated that the board did not act as per the B&G Committee's input. No Court 10 input was given, and no notice was given of the board's action. She spoke of the need to define the role of the B&G Committee better.

Claudia R. spoke of the origin of the B&G Committee, and its responsibility to provide adequate notice to residents when building and grounds changes are forthcoming. She discussed the definition of guidelines and the lack of flexibility on buildings and grounds matters.

Ed H. questioned whether actions taken might be in violation of the Virginia Condominiums Act. He spoke of the relationship between the board and the committees, saying the board does not follow due process and does not value committee input.

Ms. Adelson reminded attendees that the removal of the holly was requested by an owner during a board meeting, owing to a squirrel infestation in an attic that was proving costly. Ms. Adelson underscored that the board voted unanimously on the three tree removals, and that the costs for removing one tree were the same as those for removing all three.

Mr. Spyttek reminded attendees that board members are also owners and that his presence here tonight is to answer questions as a board member and as a co-owner. Mr. Spyttek said the board has been balancing tree removal requests.

Margaret R. stated that there is no direct correlation between a tree and squirrels accessing buildings, adding she could cite instances of buildings invaded by squirrels where there were no trees providing easy access.

Annette R. stated that she has never gone on record as being in favor of the tree removal, and noted that she had only requested a trimming.

Shirin W. talked about having donated plants to the Meadows over the years, in addition to money. She also questioned the purpose of the committee if its input is ignored. Shirin W. asked how many trees have been removed and expressed her desire for a one-to-one tree replacement plan. Charles M. replied that he is unsure as to how many trees have been removed, but that in 2022 twice as many trees had been planted than were removed.

Claudia R. spoke of trees that had been planted in poor or crowded locations and the difficulty in replacing them on a one-to-one basis. She noted the lack of open areas in the Meadows for more tree planting.

Michelle M. talked about guidelines and arbitrarily removed trees. Charles M. underscored that such matters have been resolved in the past via discussion and consensus. J. P. stated that

transparency and documentation remain an issue. Charles M. stated that the B&G Committee lacks clarity in defining its leadership and processes. Charles M. underscored that minutes are taken at each B&G Committee meeting which are then shared with the board.

MOTION: Michelle M. MOVED to add a discussion on guidelines to the agenda of the next B&G Committee meeting. MOTION later withdrawn by Michelle M. as the issue was added to the next meeting agenda.

Cynthia P. talked about instances whereby topics go unresolved at B&G Committee meetings. She states that guidelines were never intended as rules; though, the board sometimes treats the guidelines as absolutes. Cynthia P. stressed that it is common practice for committees to follow Robert's Rules of Order and that the B&G Committee should do likewise. Cynthia P. asked if Lancaster is removing tree stumps, to which Charles M. replied yes, although there is one case in which a stump is situated near a building and its removal could damage the foundation.

Ed H. said the board needs to stop taking unilateral actions. Ed H. inquired as to the procedure for making additions to the agenda. Charles M. informed Ed. H about making a unanimous consent request.

Margaret R. said it would be advantageous to decide on agenda items in advance as it would allow the distribution of read-ahead material.

Ms. Adelson stated that a lot of good things came out of this evening's discussion. She noted themes such as a lack of documented processes, and no written mandates. She said the Master Deed contains two sentences about the B&G Committee. Ms. Adelson praised the dedication of the board members with whom she has served and pushed back on negative claims made against these individuals. She referenced a survey conducted several years ago in which the aging landscape emerged as a top priority.

Cynthia P. talked about the board not listening to the B&G Committee and those who have participated in the rejuvenation. She acknowledged the positive qualities of the board, but would like to see a greater understanding and appreciation of the committee.

### LANDSCAPING ISSUES

- Mosquito control. Chair Monfort discussed the mosquito control project for the installation of bluebird boxes near the storm drains. He announced the board's approval of mosquito dunks that will be placed in storm drains once a month for the next six months.
- Landscaping rejuvenation. Court 1 design has been completed and shared with the B&G Committee and Court 1 residents. A walk-around is scheduled for May 10 at 5:00 p.m.

- Native plant goals. Chair Monfort states that the 70 percent native plant goal has almost been achieved and should be the focus this year. Margaret R. noted a repetition in plants and is encouraged by the introduction of new species.
- Lesser Celandine. Claudia R. stated that celandine growth is three times what it was last year. She stressed that Lancaster needs to take it out of the mulch bed. This year's window of time to conduct extensive removal has already been missed. Chair Monfort reported that, according to his research, celadine is difficult to remove by hand and that the use of chemicals is recommended. Margaret R. underscored Claudia R.'s point regarding spread and that a chemical application may be needed next spring. Chair Monfort stated he prefers someone other than Lancaster to do this application. He stated that he will bring this matter up with the board. Margaret R. suggested asking the county for recommendations. Shirin W. also said that she believes a chemical application is the only established way to control the spread.
- Drain extensions and downspouts. Chair Monfort stated that no more of the big, round, plastic drain extensions will be installed. Instead, low-profile extensions will be used. Crushed and damaged drain extensions will be replaced where needed. Cynthia P. expressed satisfaction with using the low-profile extensions and noted the importance of making sure that the low-profile extensions do not constrict the capacity of the larger downspouts. Chair Monfort said that his research has shown that they will not inhibit the flow of rainwater. Margaret R. liked the consistent look of the extensions and recommended maintaining consistency as well with the drain pans. Margaret R. also spoke of high levels of mulch near window wells in addition to window wells that are cracked. Joe S. said to contact Ricky regarding any cracked window wells, and he will install a new one.
- Replacement plants. Chair Monfort announced that Lancaster would guarantee all new plants as long as they have the overall landscaping contract. He encouraged committee members to look at the list of plants and if there are any additional replacements need. The replacement guarantee does not include plants that were in place prior to the Lancaster contract, nor plants that were moved as part of the landscaping project.

### COURT 11 PLANTING PROPOSAL

Chair Monfort told the Committee that a Court 11 resident, Margaret R, has requested approval for planting two native evergreens, include a rhododendron. Chair Monfort said the proposed bushes would easily fit in this location.

MOTION: Chair Monfort MOVED to accept the Court 11 plantings proposal. SECONDED by Cynthia P. The motion PASSED without objection.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The April 22, 2023 minutes were approved as corrected by acclamation.

## OPEN FORUM

Ed H. talked about the decision-making style of the board and then referenced two open board positions this coming fall. The open board positions were reiterated by Ms. Adelson. Ed H. also noted that Fairlington Villages has added rain gardens.

Joe S. spoke of an Arlington County Storm Water Utility Credit Program in which Fairlington Meadows could receive a 35% tax credit by planting native plants and trees. He underscored the importance of ongoing native plantings and a possible \$5400 tax credit for doing so. Chair Monfort said he would place this matter on the agenda for the next meeting.

Margaret R. talked about an overabundance of signage and noted that the county has specific requirements on this matter. She spoke of signs being redundant and that a clean aesthetic is important to maintain for the Meadows.

Kait S. spoke of having read guidelines stating that residents affected by pruning or removals will be given prior notification.

## ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Respectfully Submitted by Minutes Services