

**COUNTRYSIDE PROPRIETARY**  
**GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
July 19, 2023

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

- a) Meeting Called to Order via remote attendance at 7:02 pm.
- b) Attendees: Penny Francke (Chair), Diane Blunt (Welbourne), Terri Hess (Foxfield), James Krips (Rokeby), Pamela McGraw (Oakridge), Ron McNulty (Morven), Barbara O'Connor (Belmont), Timothy Shamble (Oatlands), Jim White (PMP), Matt O'Donnell (Advantage Landscape)
- c) Guests: Hamzah Haleem, Sam Wilson, Gabbi Jones, John Geiger

**2) COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

- a) Pamela moved that the agenda be approved as written; Barb seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
- b) Barb moved that the revised Minutes from the June 2023 meeting be approved as written; Terri seconded. Approved unanimously.

**3) RESIDENT & GUEST PARTICIPATION (5-minute limit per speaker)**

- a) Hamzah Haleem is asking the Grounds Committee to issue a recommendation to the Board of Directors to allow him to continue to operate a car detailing business out of his family's two assigned parking spaces at 35 Southall. (Recommendations are required from DRC, NAC, and Grounds for use of common area requests before being brought to the Board of Directors.) Resident is a recent high school graduate who has run this business for a few years to raise money for college. A neighbor recently complained, shutting down the business. Penny referred the resident to Parking Resolution 233 and its prohibition against using assigned parking spaces for repair or extraordinary maintenance, saying that while detailing was not repairs, it was a closely related type of application. Also, Resolution 262 enjoins residents to protect the residential character of CountrySide. The HOA's liability was discussed, since the Proprietary actually owns the assigned parking spaces. Haleem then mentioned that he has business insurance; we suggested he make sure he mentions that in his application to the BOD. Ron asked if the temporary canopy that Haleem wants to erect over the parking spaces would be safe in a strong wind; Haleem assured the committee that he uses 50 lb sandbags on each leg of the canopy to anchor it. Ron moved to recommend approval of Haleem's request for use of common area and erection of a temporary canopy to conduct his car detailing business to the Board of Directors; Terri seconded the motion. Barb voted against, citing inadvisable precedent; all others voted Yes. Motion approved.
- b) Sam Wilson described his June 27 observation of a man in the shopping center parking lot along the back of Cromwell Pool; the man appeared to be observing young girls inside the pool enclosure, but left on his bike when he saw Sam watching him. Sam has confirmed that the man is on the sex offender registry. Sam says that VA State Trooper Bandish told Sam that because our Bylaws didn't specifically ban sex offenders from our pools, there was little he could do. Subsequent advice from the Proprietary's attorney clarified that it would be the Declaration of

Restrictive Covenants that would include such a ban; however, none of his clients had such a provision. Beyond that, Penny explained that CountrySide has had a letter on file with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office for many years granting the LCSO the right to enter CountrySide property for the purpose of enforcing any county or state laws; that letter is being updated to reflect current officers. Sam is asking the Grounds Committee to remove the current tree/bush that is there and to plant a line of bushes or trees against the back fence on the outside of the enclosure to block the view of anyone loitering in the shopping center parking lot. Sam has asked the Facilities Committee to install privacy plantings, both in 2021 (as Chair of FAC) and at last week's FAC meeting (via an email to several FAC members). Both requests failed to produce a motion from FAC. Gabbi Jones spoke in support of Sam's request, and added that her local group of moms also felt strongly about it. She commented that Cromwell Pool had the most exposure due to the proximity of the shopping center parking lot, but she thought Lindenwood should also deserve consideration. GC members suggested that webbing or screening products woven through the fencing would be a more immediate solution, rather than waiting for plantings to grow to sufficient height and fullness. Pamela asked if there had been other complaints filed with PMP, but Sam's is the only complaint reported to date. Barb commented that in the past, we HAD privacy fencing around the pools, but we had been asked to remove/replace it, at considerable expense, by the Sheriff's office because it limited their ability to monitor the pools for illegal activity. We discussed the recent pool break-ins, and whether reduced visibility into the pools would raise similar concerns with the LCSO. Sam further stated that he was also requesting that CountrySide engage the services of a security monitoring firm; Jim White is already investigating that at the request of FAC. Tim and Penny suggested that those discussions belonged in FAC meetings; the GC also suggested that the possibility of fence screening or webbing should be returned to the FAC. Penny reminded everyone that the BOD would solicit budget input in August, so the timing was right for submitting requests for 2024 funding of these solutions, where the ideas would be ranked by the NAC and the appropriate committee. Grounds can consider what types of plants would provide privacy and decide whether to include this in a future meeting agenda.

#### **4) ADVANTAGE ITEMS**

- a) Monthly Report was reviewed.
- b) Advantage has been using water from the pond to do watering without coordinating with Jim White to ensure that AEC has not applied herbicide treatment within 48 hours. Going forward, Advantage will coordinate with Jim W prior to watering. Jim White will require that AEC provide 48 hrs advance notice prior to treatment and pass it along to Advantage and John Geiger (who coordinates volunteer watering). Trees require deeper watering than other plantings, which is why Advantage was watering even after recent rains. Advantage will coordinate with Jim to pick a day a week to water and keep Jim advised if there is a change.
- c) The GC discussed herbicide treatments again. Penny reported that she'd attended an excellent webinar earlier that day sponsored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Pesticide Safety Education Program, which Pamela had recommended. The program was introduced with an explanation that they do not recommend for or against use of specific products, they just provide objective information. Pamela will follow up with her contacts within the Virginia Cooperative

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Extension to see whether the recording of the Cornell webinar can be made available for viewing by those who could not attend the live session. Matt explained that Advantage is contractually obligated to provide herbicide treatments, so if we want to stop any/all treatments, he will need a letter releasing them from the contractual obligation. Matt expressed his concerns that the aesthetics of the community would deteriorate the longer we delayed treatments. Matt did offer an alternative treatment for consideration—another synthetic product considered safer than Round-up. Finale is about as effective as Round-up but is three times as expensive. If we want Advantage to use Finale to treat weeds on the shoulders of the roads, it would mean a \$12,000 additional cost. Advantage is willing to use Finale for sidewalk cracks and curbs at no additional cost to CountrySide. If we continue to withhold treatment on the roadway shoulders, Advantage will mow those areas, but the weeds will grow faster and therefore higher than the surrounding grass. When asked whether there would be any credit available if we discontinued Round-up treatments, Matt said he thought any savings would be offset by the additional cost of Advantage having to mow larger areas, but he will check that.

- i) Pamela made a motion to have Advantage resume sidewalk crack and curb weed treatments, but using Finale (instead of Round-up) at no additional cost; Jim K seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
  - ii) Ron made a motion to have Advantage resume weed control treatments on roadway shoulders using Round-up; Barb seconded the motion. Motion failed, 4 No votes, 2 Yes (Terri was temporarily disconnected from the call).
  - iii) Research will continue on alternatives for turf treatments.
- d) Barb expressed concern that the recent Advantage bamboo removal hadn't been as effective as we'd hoped, because the bamboo in Belmont was returning. Barb and Matt will coordinate a visit to the site so Matt can evaluate.
- e) Requested Proposals:
- i) Oatlands Enhancement: Matt had revised the proposal to reduce scope to just the trees and stone. The GC discussed which stone to use, which is safer for children who might climb on it, etc. Matt was asked if we could choose just the stone work if the tree removal was contracted to another vendor, and if he could break out the bank shaping separately, but Matt said the work was too integrated, and it would require that he submit a revised proposal if the trees were done by another firm, as he'd have to evaluate a revised scope based on building on someone else's work. Note: in a subsequent discussion later in the meeting, the GC agreed that Advantage's proposal offered a unified approach best suited to the project, and that it wasn't worth saving a few dollars to split the work across multiple vendors and proposals. So, Tim moved that we approve Advantage Proposal #3590 for the "Oatlands Stream Bed Beautification Project" (Phase 1) at a cost of \$12,175; Terri seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
  - ii) Monument sign: Ron moved to approve Advantage Proposal #3586 in the amount of \$1,673 for enhancements to the CountrySide entry (monument) sign on Algonkian Parkway across from Foxfield; Pamela seconded. Approved unanimously.
  - iii) AP median bush replacement: Ron moved to accept Advantage Proposal #3703 to remediate the area where several burning bushes were damaged in a car accident in the spring; Terri seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

- iv) Pear treatment for fungus: These trees are suffering from “cedar apple rust”, a fungus. Some trees are already beyond repair, but the rest can be treated. However, since the pear trees are an invasive species, the committee questioned how much more effort we want to put into these trees. Ron moved that the Grounds Committee NOT approve the Advantage proposal for treating the 70 pear trees; Tim seconded the motion. The committee discussed letting the trees die out; Barb pointed out that planting those trees originally was done over four years when funding was more available, and it might be a challenge to replace them. Pamela volunteered to have the LC Extension tree stewards evaluate the trees for their recommendation. The motion on the proposal was withdrawn.
- v) Powell Walkway: Ron is against the solution proposed by Advantage in Proposal #3585, because he does not believe mulch will address the issue. He believes a retaining wall might be a better solution; he will coordinate a visit with interested GC members to discuss possible alternative solutions.
- vi) Pond Area enhancement: Advantage is proposing to donate the mulch for this enhancement and charge for labor only, in a collaborative effort to protect the relevant pond planting beds and allow easier definition for Advantage’s mowing and trimming work. Jim K moved to accept Advantage Proposal #3685 in the amount of \$800; Barb seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

## **5) Pond Report**

- a) AEC monthly report: Jim W was asked to tell AEC we want more detail in the monthly reports, similar to what they’d submitted in the past, with information on pond conditions, algae growth, status of aerators, any treatments performed, etc.
- b) Addition of a bench: Barb reported that one of the neighbors at the pond mentioned that when the existing bench near their property was occupied, other residents often set up lawn chairs on this resident’s private property; they thought the problem would be alleviated if another permanent bench were available. Barb moved that the GC authorize Jim W to procure and install a bench on common area behind 5 Awsley Ct at the pond, at an estimated cost of \$400; Jim K seconded the motion. Ron voted No; all others voted Yes; motion carried.
- c) Aerator motor issue: Jim W reported that Huntingdon Electric cannot repair the aerator repairs; AEC will look at the issue when they do their treatment (scheduled for 7/20). The GC asked Jim W to expedite the repair to get it done as soon as possible, to ensure the pond’s continued health.

## **6) PMP REPORT**

- a) Monthly Financial, Major Projects, Invoice Tracking reports: no questions from GC members. On the Expected Expenditures report, Pamela would like to see a clearer definition between what has been approved versus a report that lists all possible expenditures. Penny and Jim will work on reformatting the report to make those distinctions clearer—possibly a return to a two-sheet spreadsheet previously used, with one sheet containing just approved expenditures, and the other listing proposals under consideration. The purpose of the report is to allow GC members to

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evaluate proposals against funds remaining in the operating budget, so as to avoid a situation where more funds are committed than are available in the budget.

- b) Tree list: GC members were reminded that if a resident asks about a tree, they should either check the tree list or check with Jim W to make sure the tree is on the tree list.

**7) OLD BUSINESS**

- a) Bridge repairs: Jim W reported that the contractor provided an update on 7/19 that permits were finally approved; there had been delays in the permitting process because the bridge is in a flood plain. Work is scheduled to begin on the bridge mid-week next week (week of 24July). Completion expected 2-3 weeks after that, dependent on weather.

**8) NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Request for business on common ground – discussed above

**9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- a) None.

**10) ADJOURN**

- a) Diane moved to adjourn; Barb seconded the motion. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM.
- b) Next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held remotely at **7:00 PM on Wednesday, August 16, 2023.**