

**COUNTRYSIDE PROPRIETARY**  
**GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
June 21, 2023

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

- a) Meeting Called to Order via remote attendance at 7:04PM.
- b) Attendees: Penny Francke (Chair), Diane Blunt (Welbourne), Terri Hess (Foxfield), James Krips (Rokeby), Pamela McGraw (Oakridge), Barbara O'Connor (Belmont), Timothy Shamble (Oatlands), Jim White (PMP), Matt O'Donnell (Advantage Landscape)
- c) Absent: Ron McNulty
- d) Residents in attendance: Alys Jarvela, Sarah Mascara.

**2) COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

- a) Introduction of new Advantage account manager, Matt O'Donnell.
- b) Barb moved to approve the agenda as written; Pamela seconded. Approved unanimously by those present.
- c) Terri moved to approve the Minutes of the May 17, 2023 Grounds Meeting; Barb seconded. Approved unanimously by those present.

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

- a) Alys Jarvela, resident, and a professional environmental biologist working in Ashburn, spoke representing residents advocating for cessation of use of herbicide chemicals for our lawn care. Residents have signed a petition. Alys has provided links to her research material. The letter and links will be provided to the committee members for review. Penny will compile questions and send to Alys, who also attended the meeting last week with Advantage, Penny, Jim White, and Pamela. A link to the recording of that meeting has been provided to the committee. Related to Sarah Mascara's previous recommendation to the GC advocating lime treatments for soil health, we noted that we had already approved a lime application, to be scheduled when it will be most beneficial for the soil. The Grounds Committee will investigate alternative turf treatments, but asked Advantage to temporarily hold off on the planned turf applications until the GC could investigate further.

**4) ADVANTAGE ITEMS**

- a) Monthly Report

GC members called Matt's attention to the fact that the flower bed at 777 and Cromwell Rd was missing its annual flowers, as were planted at all other signs. Matt said he can plant the bed the next working day.

Fall flowers need to be ordered with the grower by July 15. Advantage is putting together a list of choices. Penny asked Advantage and Tim to put this on the calendar for next year at an earlier date because we should have been voting on that at this meeting. February 1 and July 15 will always be the date needed to order with the growers.

We need to identify what gaps exist between what is being watered and what is contracted to be watered. Advantage made a map of the locations of observations. Welbourne would like confirmation that the new Redbuds are being watered. The watering map needs to be distributed to the GC members.

Pond: They did 2 waterings of the plants around the pond, and they continue to water the trees. Matt met with John Geiger at the pond. Watering the flowers may require a separate contract.

Pamela initiated a conversation about the frequency of the waterings. Matt addressed normal rotation is once a week, but dependent on rain. Pamela requested a specific day of the week to allow coordination with the volunteers watering around the pond, but Matt is unable to commit to watering on the same specific day of the week. Matt provided watering guidelines. Discussion on additional care of the plantings at the pond (mulching, weeding, etc.).

Jim White and Penny plan to meet with Matt to discuss the details and understanding of the watering contract and the impact to the warranty, and a disconnect in expectations.

Jim Krips (Rokeby) has concerns about a Redbud planted in river rock that died and was replaced last Fall. Matt has it on his watch list and it looks good presently.

Liming and aeration were going to be coordinated with the herbicide but now the herbicide is being put on hold. Penny requested a schedule for the treatment. Matt would like to re-test the pH of certain common areas following the first treatment. Matt said some of the pH results indicated extreme shifts, and while that may be the case, he just wants to verify the data, so that the lime treatments are tailored to an accurate pH. Matt will provide his recommendations on the timing of the lime and aeration treatments.

b) Requested Proposals:

i) Oatlands Enhancement

The GC questioned Matt on the stone vendors used in the proposal. Who supplied the stone and how many places did we go to price the stone? Matt is concerned that a smaller round ornamental stone is subject to movement during heavy rains. Stone Center in Ashburn carries the appropriate stone, but it is pricey. The labor to bring it in and install it properly is also costly. The stone that is currently included in the proposal is better for erosion control, because it is blocky and interlocks. The round ornamental stone that is requested for aesthetics is not as good for erosion control and holding embankments because it does not interlock and will need to be larger.

Chipping equipment cannot be used at the site due to accessibility issues.

Stump grinding – could save some cost by changing what is ground. The roots are a stabilizer, but they are limiting the space available for the stone, and adding stone with the roots could narrow the stream and increase the flow, thereby increasing erosion. The suggested plants are tenacious ground covers that will help stabilize the area. A phased approach on this project may be best, depending on budget constraints.

ii) AP median bush replacement

No accident report has been available from the Sheriff's office, so we cannot file for insurance reimbursement.

Burning Bush (euonymus) is now considered invasive in Virginia and some of the beds are wet and declining in health. We asked Pamela to meet with Advantage to consider an alternate species that would blend with existing euonymus such as the native Diervilla used in Welbourne or grasses. The height of any plantings, and how they affect visibility, must be considered on such a busy highway. Proposal to be revised for next meeting.

iii) CountrySide Sign on AP

As discussed in the May meeting, the sedum is not a good choice and there was a list of alternates requested that need to be re-priced (3 shrubs). Matt to also consider removal of the mobilization charges on proposals, as his predecessor, Chris, had begun waiving the gas surcharge. We requested a better rendering of the proposed changes.

iv) Powell walkway

Deferred to July, due to absence of Ron, who requested the project.

**5) POND ISSUES**

a) Update on the pond.

AEC has performed monthly treatments per the contract. The timing of AEC's treatments will determine whether we can use the pond water for watering the new plantings around the pond. However, we are not getting the reports. Jim to request all back reports and distribute to GC; AEC reports to be included in GC Meeting packets going forward.

**6) PMP REPORT**

a) Monthly Financial, Major Projects, Invoice Tracking reports and future expenditures

Jim White to provide the "Expected Expenditures" spreadsheet to project remaining funds for next meeting. He will also move it up in the agenda, so that it can serve as a budget guide while we discuss proposals under consideration.

Grounds Invoice Tracking: proposal for an accident replacement cherry tree is not on this list because the Loudoun County Deputy will not return the phone call. Penny and Jim to take it offline.

Budget line item 6145 trash removal has a typo in the amount and will be corrected.

b) Tree list was supplied in the meeting packet; no questions from GC members.

**7) OLD BUSINESS**

a) Herbicide treatments; alternatives and timing.

GC to further investigate alternative treatments in light of residents' concerns. Penny suggested that the GC might want to conduct a survey of all CountrySide residents to get broader opinions on what residents want in terms of turf, common area, and median maintenance. GC members are encouraged to listen to the recording of the June 15<sup>th</sup> Herbicide discussion, which has been posted on the Google Drive.

## 8) NEW BUSINESS

### a) HOA Landscaping Committees Group Initiative on Invasive Species

Pamela moved that the CountrySide Grounds Committee recommend to the Board of Directors that CountrySide support the initiative by a coalition of Loudoun HOAs' Grounds and Landscaping committees to petition the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for funding to battle invasive species, and to have Penny, as President, sign a letter of support. Barb seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by those present.

## 9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### a) Six signs were painted by in-house PMP staff; locations were Belmont (2), Morven, Welbourne, Oatlands, and Foxfield.

### b) Dry wood hazard concern response from the Department of Forestry

Jeff Kretsch, OakRidge resident, had raised concerns about brush fire hazards posed by increased deadwood in our wooded areas, earlier in the year when the weather was so dry. Jeff researched the issue with the VA Department of Forestry, and he was assured by Dr. James McGlone of the DOF that the deadwood does not increase the fire danger (ref. Dr. McGlone's 21Apr2023 email to Jeff Kretsch, included in the June GC Meeting Packet.

### c) NVM completed the 2 asphalt punch list items (1 sidewalk repair remains).

Diane will follow up separately with Jim W on a damaged area of turf in Welbourne.

### d) The removal of 6 Oatlands trees (part of the proposed Oatlands enhancement project) can be bid out. Jim W and Timothy to meet on-site and Jim W to get bid from Riverside and/or others.

## 10) ADJOURN

### a) Tim moved to adjourn the meeting; Pamela seconded. Approved unanimously by all present. Meeting Adjourned at 9:11 PM.

### b) Next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held remotely at **7:00 PM on Wednesday, July 19, 2023.**