

**COUNTRYSIDE PROPRIETARY**  
**GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
October 18, 2023

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

- Meeting Called to Order via remote attendance at 7:01PM.
- Attendees: Penny Francke (Chair), Pamela McGraw (Oakridge), Diane Blunt (Welbourne), Terri Hess (Foxfield), Barbara O'Connor (Belmont), James Krips (Rokeby), Ron McNulty (Morven), Timothy Shamble (Oatlands), Tim Pope (PMP), Matt O'Donnell (Advantage Landscape)

**2) COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

- Pamela moved to approve the agenda as written; Ron seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
- Tim S moved to approve the September 20, 2023, meeting minutes; Pamela seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

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

- None present.

**4) ADVANTAGE ITEMS**

Monthly Report. Advantage is on schedule to start replacement of the damaged burning bushes on Algonkian on 10/19/23, and to place the stones at the CountrySide monument sign on Algonkian (across from Foxfield) on Friday or Monday (10/20 or 10/23); the plant list is as approved by Pamela. Barb asked Advantage to pay close attention when the watering truck is working at the pond behind Awsley Ct, as there is a French drain in the unfenced yard that could be damaged if heavy machinery rolled over it.

- a) Liming and Aeration Update: The Committee discussed lime treatments; per Matt, we always knew we would need at least two, possibly three treatments based on the pH of the soil. Matt's recommendation is to get the second lime treatment done in December, then repeat the soil tests about 2 months later, then evaluate the need for a third treatment. Jim expressed concern that the first lime treatment may have been ineffective, based on his observations of minimal soil disturbance; Matt reminded the Committee that only 40 acres (of the total 60 acres available) were proposed for the lime treatment. Matt offered to meet Jim at locations of concern to review the area. Matt advised that if the lime treatments are effective in adjusting the soil pH, we may be able to do turf improvements in the Spring. Barb moved to approve the second lime treatment at a cost NTE \$20,500; Pamela seconded the motion. Jim (Rokeby) voted against the motion; all others voted to approve. Motion carried.

- b) Foxfield Estimate. Terri motioned to approve Advantage estimate #4101 NTE \$900 for turf improvements in Foxfield; Jim seconded. This area has been eroding over the years and Terri has asked for something to be done here for a while. The Committee asked whether this can be deferred and included with the next overseeding. Terri agreed and withdrew her motion.
- c) Barb and Pamela suggested that the plantings along the tunnel may need pruning. Matt suggested that winter pruning should take place between January and March; he will provide an estimate and a list of suggested locations for pruning. Matt was reminded NOT to prune back the forsythia.
- d) The Committee discussed Advantage's proposal for a retaining wall at Powell Ct in Morven. Matt believes a 14" retaining wall with no "dead man" timber for support would be sufficient; he could add a dead man, but he doesn't believe it's required and it would not affect the price he quoted. See later discussion on this retaining wall project.
- e) Diane commented that the Route 7 clean-up she requested last month looks better, and she asked that Advantage keep up with that maintenance.
- f) Jim offered to show Matt an area of clogged culverts that need attention. As discussed at the September meeting, we need for Advantage and Tim P to compare notes, and report back to the GC, on exactly what areas are covered by the "culvert cleaning" in the contract, and what areas outside that scope might need additional attention.
- g) Barb raised the subject of the bamboo treatments previously performed; Matt confirmed that all work for which Advantage was contracted had been performed. He warned that eradication of bamboo and other invasive species can be very difficult. Matt is advocating, next year, to treat heavily with an herbicide (Finale, not Round-Up) and heavy suffocation. He suggested that these treatments need to be done before April, when the bamboo shoots are tender. Pamela noted that there are many areas listed with invasives, including English Ivy. Tim P to provide Matt with the Invasives list; Advantage to provide an estimate for treatment.

## **5) Pond Report**

- The AEC monthly report was reviewed. No October readings were available.

## **6) PMP REPORT**

- Monthly Financial, Major Projects, Invoice Tracking reports and future expenditures
- Tree list
- Pond budget discussion: Penny reminded the group that \$5,000 was allocated for the pond grant "match"; the check received as the grant reimbursement will be applied against GL code 7100.
- Pamela asked for clarification on how we are using the various tree budgets and how it is used against the long tree list. "Dangerous Trees" is new category added last year for priority safety situations. 6100 Storm Damage/Removal has an associated reserve contingency fund. Tim P explained that he is working with PMP Finance and Accounting to reclassify some of the charges

against various “tree” GL codes to better distribute the costs. The Committee agreed that any unallocated funds left in this year’s Operating Budget should be put towards addressing the Tree List. Jim proposed assigning the remaining work to Advantage without bidding it out; however, the rest of the Committee agrees that we usually get a broader scope of tree work covered by the same funds if we bid the work out. Tim P will work on getting the tree list prepped for bids from additional vendors so that we can decide on options at the November meeting.

- Project list: See discussion of the Neighborhood Signs bids later in these Minutes.
- Tim P will update the Expected Expenditures spreadsheet for next meeting, so that we have a better idea of what remains in the Operating Budget for 2023.
- The Tree list has been posted on Google Drive and updated; it should now be sortable. The goal is to have Advantage complete Red High Priority (#1s) by end of year, and to bid out the remaining trees, of lower priority, to handle as many as possible with 2023 funds. 10 stumps are scheduled to be removed this week.

## **7) OLD BUSINESS**

- Oatlands Stream Enhancement/Loudoun County Contact, Chris Stone. Tim P and Tim S met with Chris Stone of Loudoun County Stormwater Management, who had offered to provide advice on this project. Chris suggested that we use native plantings at the location; he thought we did not need to do rip rap or to disturb the stream bed. Chris said he’d check with the County to see if there’s any assistance they can offer. Pamela asked if we should remove that \$18K from the expected expenditures list. Tim P to circle back to LC and to give feedback to the 3 bidders to provide bids using native plantings. We still would remove the trees that are dead but leave the roots and add plantings to hold the banks. Awaiting last bid from RES. Any work inside the stream beds will require permits, but if the enhancement project excludes work inside the stream beds, then no permits will be required. The Committee discussed the idea of removing the dead trees, then tackling any further enhancements as a separate/revised project, in a phased approach. If the tree removal is under \$5,000, it doesn’t require Board approval. Pamela suggested we might be able to bundle the removal of these trees in Oatlands at the stream with other tree removal bid packages; they could also be addressed during regular “tree days” with Advantage. Penny asked Tim P and Tim S to compare notes on whether a revised scope of the project is possible, as this might move the project forward.
- Neighborhood Signs – Signs By Tomorrow provided sample signs, which are available for examination in Tim P’s office; 5 out of 7 GC members have viewed the signs. While the PVC signs have the nicest appearance and are closer to the 3-D aspect of our current signs, there’s a concern (based on the vendor descriptions on the back of the sign samples) that the PVC may not have the same “useful life” expectancy as the other materials. Tim P to check with the vendor and provide any additional information to the Committee. Penny reported that depending on the sign options chosen, it might be possible to get all 23 signs done at once, if the Board approves using additional Reserve funds to cover the costs; that obviously depends on the total project cost. If all 23 signs are done at once, we would avoid problems with matching different “lots/batches” of the signs, or different aging schedules—i.e., all signs would have a uniform appearance and would presumably wear at a uniform rate. Jim asked if there was a “deadline” for decision, but Penny explained that it was a question of when the Reserve funds for this project would be needed, as well as a question of getting the project completed, since it has been

on the Project List as a “to do” for three years (since January 2021). If Tim P gets the necessary information from the vendors on sign durability for each option, it may be possible to get an e-vote from the Committee members.

- Remaining 2023 Budget/Year-End Approaching – Tim P to refine / update expected expenditures list. This committee had 100% participation in the scoring/rating exercise for budget suggestions (Congratulations!).

## **8) NEW BUSINESS**

- Welbourne Traffic Survey: Tim P to obtain pricing on Watch For Children signs, as a majority of survey respondents (roughly 2 out of 3) endorsed that option.
- Review of Trash Company bids: Pamela motioned to accept the bid for trash services from Elite Disposal, as they had the lowest price, and it would be nice to support a local business. Jim seconded the motion. The Committee discussed concerns that a smaller company with only 3-5 trucks may be challenged to service a large customer like CountrySide if they have any issues with their fleet of trucks. Elite has not yet filed the CountrySide forms required of a home-based business. After further discussion, Pamela withdrew her motion. Ron moved to accept Republic’s twice/week service NTE \$791,244 and Tim S seconded. The Committee recognized that we have had few complaints about Republic and we have been very pleased with their services. Jim is interested in looking at once/week trash pickup but the Committee agreed that we should not do that without a community survey; that could be done next year, but there’s not enough time in this budget year. (We have other subjects that could be included in a survey, such as treating center/VDOT areas vs. common areas further back in the community. Herbicide/chemical use throughout the community is another good candidate for a survey question. The goal is to conduct a survey on Grounds issues next year.) The motion to accept the Republic twice/week bid was approved unanimously. Side note: A big vote of thanks to Tim Pope who has been incredibly patient in doing follow-up and spreadsheet updates on this bid process!
- Review of Powell Retaining Wall Bids: The Committee had some specific questions related to the difference in scope between bids. Tim P will get additional information from the vendors and distribute that to the group; the Committee will try to pass an e-vote on the vendor selection for this project.

## **9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance (LIRA) Letter – Penny briefed the Committee on the actions of LIRA, a coalition of the Grounds/Landscaping committees of Loudoun County HOAs who have appealed to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for a funding program to combat invasive species. The letter garnered unanimous support from the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. The coalition is historic in that it includes 27 HOAs within Loudoun County, representing nearly 200,000 residents. If monies are made available at the County level,

the LIRA group envisions a grant program where successful HOA applicants would provide a partial match for funds under a grant. A vote of thanks to Pamela who first alerted us to this coalition and its work!

#### **10) ADJOURN**

- Diane moved for adjournment; Terri seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously; meeting adjourned at 9:27PM.
- Next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held remotely at  
**7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 15, 2023**