

**COUNTRYSIDE PROPRIETARY**  
**GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
September 20, 2023

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

- Meeting Called to Order via remote attendance at 7:02PM.
- 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), Tim Pope (PMP), Matt O'Donnell (Advantage Landscape)

**2) COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

- Terri moved to approve the agenda as written; Ron seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Pamela moved to approve the Minutes of the August 16, 2023 Grounds Committee meeting; Barb seconded. Diane abstained; all others approved. Motion carried 6 to 1. Penny reminded the committee members that for an e-vote to be valid, a motion must be made and seconded; emails saying "Approve" are not sufficient without a motion being made.

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

- None.

**4) ADVANTAGE ITEMS**

- Monthly Report
  - a) Liming and Aeration is scheduled to begin week of 9/25; will probably start Wednesday with aeration followed by liming. Matt thinks it's unlikely that we'll be able to get in an additional treatment this year, as timing and weather will affect this.
  - b) Matt to evaluate dead plant material at pond for warranty replacements. Pamela flagged two items under warranty: Morven #2 Skip Laurel and Parkway Pool Buddleias  
Pamela moved to accept Advantage Estimate # 3943 in an amount NTE \$3,500 for replacement plantings throughout the community; Barb seconded the motion. Pamela asked Matt to be cognizant of the height requirements for the plantings; Matt will coordinate species selection with Pamela. Terri asked Matt if he was confident that seed would take root for the turf restoration at Spotswood and Bentwood; Matt explained that sod is more expensive, and doesn't survive well in shady areas. Terri will meet with Matt to point out the areas of concern so that Matt can prepare a proposal. Committee voted unanimously to approve Estimate #3943.
  - c) Bamboo treatments/update – Barb met with Tim P, and Matt and Tim P looked at the area where Advantage previously treated for removal, but the bamboo has grown back. Matt needs to see if the past proposals were to "eradicate" or just remove; he'll get back to us. Matt mentioned a different approach to bamboo removal, in which the bamboo is cut, flipped and left in place to allow it to suffocate itself; this approach has had some success in Reston. Otherwise, chemical treatment will be required. The bamboo could be chemically "burned" with a broad-leaf herbicide; Finale works on tender/young bamboo but is less effective on

mature plants. Disposal of cut bamboo may be difficult as some landfills are not accepting it. Penny noted we have money in this year's budget to address invasives and asked for the committee to identify additional locations. Diane has a location in Welbourne and will follow up with email/photos. Tim S. sent some bamboo location to Tim Pope. Jim Krips met with Chris Codino last Spring and pointed out an area along Algonkian Pkwy 1000 ft South of CS Blvd towards Spotswood to the left, 30 yds long. Tim Pope to check invasives list. Jim K to send Tim P an email. Penny asked to make a push to address as much as we can this year.

- d) Drainage Ditch Treatments: Herbicide vs Manual Winter Cleaning – Penny asked Tim Pope and Matt to dig through the contract bid from Aug 2021 for a separate scope of work priced at approx. \$15K for “cleaning out of culverts”, and to report back to the committee to a) explain the scope of that \$15K work versus the ongoing clearing of drainage ditches as specified in the annual contract, as directed by the map that's included in the contract, and b) to confirm that the culvert cleaning work HAS been done (it was delayed in 2022 due to an oversight). The committee discussed whether the ongoing drainage ditch cleaning should involve herbicide. Matt advised that it's difficult to keep the drainage ditches clear without using herbicide. Herbicide was used this year, but the drainage ditch work has been completed for 2023. However, Matt suggested that we could reduce the use of herbicides in the drainage ditches if we opted to have one cleaning done in winter; the winter cleaning could be a manual clean-out, as the foliage and weed growth will have mostly died back. Matt will consult with Advantage management to evaluate whether one of the included drainage ditch services could be converted to a winter manual clean-out, and he will get back to us on the impact such a change would have (if any) on the contract. Penny also asked Matt to identify any discrepancies he has observed on the actual locations of drainage ditches versus the map in the contract, so we can correct any gaps.
- e) Pamela noted that the road shoulders look good, and suggested that we continue to refrain from herbicide use on the shoulders.
- f) The committee reviewed the tree list. Matt warned that we seem to be losing ground, in that new items for attention are added to the tree list faster than trees are pruned or cut down and removed from the list. We recognize the challenge in an aging tree population is to balance the growing demand for services against the budget that we have. We depend on Advantage's expertise to advise on which trees need priority attention. Matt and Tim P are to make a concentrated effort to revise and prioritize the tree list to make sure it includes all reported trees needing attention. The committee will then need to decide how much of the list should be addressed by Advantage “tree days”; but since Advantage's rates for tree days are higher than competitors, we may need to bid out “bundles” of work from the tree list. Matt will also investigate whether Advantage can quote better pricing for larger “bundles” of tree days, or give better pricing for “winter work” as some competitors do.
- g) Diane asked Matt to (1) clean up pile of tree branches at CS and Rt 7 exit to the right outside of fence next to Sunrise and (2) clean up fence line along Rt 7 behind Rokeby this Fall as required.
- h) Ron noted that as you enter Algonkian from Dulles Town Center, the center median approaching Spotswood has large wash-out. Matt was aware of the wash-out, but advised that it's a VDOT issue. Tim P to follow up with VDOT.

## 5) Pond Report

- AEC monthly report was reviewed.
- Penny and Pamela reported on the lengthy discussion at the 9/6/23 Board meeting concerning the proposed addition of a bench at the pond, and the appeal filed by the residents of 5 Awsley Ct to ask the BOD to prevent placement of the bench on the common area outside their fence. Another resident (not present at the BOD meeting) had suggested an alternative location for the bench at the north end of the pond; however, a bench at that location might impede periodic work on the dam. The Board of Directors voted to return the question of bench placement to the Grounds Committee for further consideration of alternative locations. Given the considerable care and effort already expended by the Grounds Committee on this bench project, alternative locations could not be easily chosen or agreed upon; a future community survey could help suggest alternatives. Diane moved to defer further discussion on adding a bench to the pond until next year; Tim S seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the motion.
- Pond Grant Update: A check for the full grant amount of \$5,000 has been received from the VA DOF. The committee thanks Pamela for her tireless efforts on this project, from identifying the opportunity for the grant, to planning and selecting the plantings, to shepherding the application through the approval process (and incorporating revisions required by the DOF, to working with suppliers and vendors, to organizing volunteers, to meticulously keeping records in accordance with the grant guidelines, to assembling and submitting all the documentation that resulted in full payment of the grant monies applied for. Much appreciated, Pamela!
  - a) Supplemental Watering: Some of the pond plantings required supplemental watering beyond what was covered by Advantage or by volunteers, and Pamela hired a teen to perform this supplemental watering. Pamela moved to approve paid supplemental watering NTE \$400; Jim seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
- The committee discussed the pros and cons of asking to have the pond evaluated as a Reserve item. Penny explained the purpose of the Reserve Study and its role in funding long-term maintenance of CountrySide assets, with funds being accrued and accounted for separate from operating budgets. Jim asked if there would be an impact on dues; Penny explained that all expenditures, operating budget or Reserve funds were funded by assessments. Tim S moved to have the committee spend \$5,000 to have the pond evaluated by the Reserve Analysts for eligibility as a Reserve item, to be added to the Reserve Study; Barb seconded the motion. Barb and Diane voted to approve; Pamela, Tim S, Jim, Terri, and Ron voted against. Motion failed. Tim P to investigate whether other HOAs have a pond-like asset, and if so, if it's part of their Reserve Study.

## 6) PMP REPORT

- A revision of the Major Project List earlier in the year resulted in some 2023 items (mostly asphalt repairs) being inadvertently dropped from the list; as a consequence, the asphalt repairs

were not sent out for bid. Those asphalt repairs will be carried over into 2024 and combined with additional planned asphalt repairs as suggested by the Reserve Study.

- Monthly Financial, Major Projects, Invoice Tracking reports and
- Future expenditures lists were reviewed. Pamela asked Tim P to check that all entries for line item 7100 (pond grant) had been correctly entered and to provide an update on this. Penny asked Tim P to add Pet Station Waste Bags (YTD expenditures approx. \$15,900) back in to the report to the committee.
- Tree list: See above discussion. Tim P and Matt to update and prioritize list. Tim P will post an Excel version of the list to the Google Drive.
- Expected Expenditures report was discussed and corrections/additions suggested. Tim P to get bids on Ron's suggested Powell/Ludwell retaining wall and add that as an expected/possible expenditure.

## **7) OLD BUSINESS**

- Ron moved to approve the minor revisions to Parking Resolutions 233 and 234; Terri seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.
- Oatland Enhancement Project: Catherine and Tim P are working on procuring additional bids. Penny reported that she had worked with Juli Briskman's office to contact Loudoun County experts in stream management and Restoration; as a result, Chris Stone of LoCo has agreed to meet with CSide to review our proposed project and offer advice. Tim S and Tim P to meet with Chris Stone.
- Neighborhood Signs: Tim P is working on refining quotes and revising spreadsheet to include all costs (signs, delivery, installation, etc.). Tim P to request that vendors supply samples of proposed materials or locations of installed work so that we can evaluate the various materials for suitability for our replacement signs.

## **8) NEW BUSINESS**

- Grounds Budget Timeline and Scoring: Committee to assign ratings to each budget request submitted by residents and identified as a Grounds item. A rating of "4" should be reserved for only those items that are required by law or required to remedy a serious safety issue. Ratings to be submitted to Tim P for compilation of results and subsequent submission to NAC for ratings. Ultimate compilation of ratings will be submitted to the Board as input for the upcoming budget meetings.

- Review of Trash Company bids: Penny asked the committee members to review the spreadsheet as compiled so far, but with the warning that Tim P will be working with vendors to get clarification on several issues to make bids more comparable (“apples to apples”). The Trash contract is the single biggest line item in the CountrySide budget, so we must choose carefully. Republic submitted bids for both once/week and twice/week pickups. Committee discussed pros and cons of a reduction in pickup frequency; Penny suggested that any such proposed change should be run by the community in a survey. Ron suggested getting a bid from KMG Hauling. Bids to be finalized for review at next meeting.

## **9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- None at this time.

## **10) ADJOURN**

- Ron motioned to adjourn; Terri seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:44 PM.
- Next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held remotely at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, October 18, 2023.