



Autumn Lakes Gazette

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Happy Holidays

Autumn Lakes November Meeting 11/16/2022

Board of Trustees Shah Smith – President, Laura Farkas – Vice President, Dick Ornberg – Trustee, Retta Morcom – Trustee. Lisa Love from Smith Management was present. Norm Rhea, City Council Representative for Maryland Heights was also present. Jennifer Morgan – Secretary was absent.

Management Report

Lisa Love gave a brief report from Smith Management:

- Work Orders: As of 09/22/22 – 10/22/22 there were 77 work orders, 57 were closed. Work orders that remain open are siding and foundation.
- SMG is waiting on the building survey inspection report from the vendor for the Painting/Siding. Painting will be scheduled after the siding work is complete. No work will happen until 2023.
- SMG has requested the second gutter cleaning with Pride Master.
- LHR & Roofing Claim Update: Insurance company requested a 3rd party to inspect a select group of 8 to 10 roofs about 10/17/22 – 10/21/22. We are waiting on their report.
- Second leaf blowing will be done after the gutters are cleaned and most leaves are off the trees.

Financial Report

Laura reported on the financial year to date information.

ALC	Income - \$804,384 under budget by \$26,449
	Expenses - \$821,490 under budget by \$9,321
ALA	Income – \$212,048 over budget by \$14,828
	Expenses – \$146,832 under budget by \$56,049

Old Business

Upper Dam Report – The lakes are a part of Fee Fee Creek. A structural engineer looked at the hole in the dam. Next step is to get MSD to perform an inspection of the dam. We are on the MSD list and waiting to hear from them. After that it will go out to bid.

Structural Investigations (properties developing basement cracks) – In some cases where there are cracks in the basement walls, and leaking is present there is a need to have a structural engineer inspect the building because we need to know why that is happening. If the problem is in a finished basement owner will need to

remove the drywall before inspection. The cost is the responsibility of the owner. If there is a crack in the wall the Association will cover the repair to prevent leaking.

Retaining Wall at 3158 ASD – Bids were received from Crowder (\$6,675) and Wagner (\$8,255.) Wall must be rebuilt including pulling permits. The previous management company did not have a permit pulled for installation and it was not properly installed

Republic Trash Update – They are suffering from a labor shortage and are now using trucks that only pick up the larger totes. They have agreed to using a smaller truck in AL to pick up smaller residential type garbage cans and tubs until further notice. **Boxes must be broken down and placed inside either the trash or recycling containers. No bags or other trash should be put out for pickup** (see article).

Snow Removal – Due to a labor shortage we do not yet have a snow removal company, although SMG continues searching. We do have a back-up plan.

New Business

Pool Contract – Pro Pool Contract for 2023 for \$10,860 was approved as part of a 3-yr contract to open/close the pool and clean it 5 days a week. We have requested the vendor to have the cleaning of the pool completed by 11:00 am daily. Repairs on the pool will be done in the Spring 2023. Pool contractor has some ideas on the repairs that could save us money.

Landscaping Contract-Lawn Groomers bid for \$146,581 was approved for 2023. We are getting positive feedback from residents. LG said it would take approximately 3 years to get Autumn Lakes lawns looking good although most owners are seeing a difference already.

Asphalt/Paving Contract – Bids received from Asphalt Paving (\$34,680) and EMeier (\$75,433.) Tentative approval by Board on Asphalt Paving contract provided vendor uses 3" asphalt instead of 2-1/2" asphalt and includes the aprons. The driveway replacements and repairs won't be done until 2023. All driveways will be sealed in 2023 as well.

Tree Contract – Board approved the ArborCare tree contract for \$47,225 for work in 2022. Some highlights of the contract are: trim and shape trees building by building, remove 25 trees and grind stumps. Trees by the lake that need to be removed will happen in 2023. The plan is to begin work the first week of December 2022.

Lake Contract – Solitude was automatically renewable at \$13,590, with the 4% increase which was pre-planned.

Large holes on ASD and ATD – MSD after investigation and testing determined that they are not responsible for the underground erosion. These holes require regrading around the nearby storm drain, and rental equipment for our maintenance person to fill. All other holes must be investigated for the cause prior to filling. Some possible causes are old sprinklers, trees, washouts, or erosion from water. If you want to report a hole contact Laura Farkas, trustee, or Cheryl Eggert, Landscape Chair. Pink flags are being placed to identify holes so that they can be checked out/filled by Chris.

Maryland Heights/County Storm Water Control– The Board approached the city a number of years ago to address a drainage problem behind buildings 14 and 15 (12047-12075 ALD). Water run off west of I-270 was supposed to run down a culvert at the top of the rise and eventually go under Hwy 270. At some point the county controlled culvert was allowed to fill in, and the tunnel under 270 was filled with debris causing the water to collect at the southwest portion of Autumn Lakes. After investigating, the city agreed that it was a storm water issue and Autumn Lakes was put on their list to have the drainage addressed. Board Members attended a storm water session this summer and were told that the money had finally been put into the budget to work on the solution, but no timeline was determined. In mid-November we received a letter from Maryland Heights that a professional engineering firm would begin doing a field survey. The project will restore and improve storm water flow from two tributary drainages at the rear of the property to the upstream end of a 950-long culvert at Washington Court in Brookside.

Budget Increases – Laura first explained that the Autumn Lakes Association (ALA) is the overall homeowners association for all owners – single family and condo owners -- which has responsibility for the 'common' property including the grounds, clubhouse, pools, sports courts, lakes, maintenance garage and RV lot. The Autumn Lakes Condominium Association (ALC) is for the condominium owners and is responsible for the maintenance of the condos including siding, roofs, driveways, walkways, porches, and water and sewer costs. The same fee paid by the single family homeowners to ALA is taken from the condo fees paid by condo owners to ALC and transferred to ALA every month. All owners pay the same amount into ALA. The remainder of the condo fees paid to ALC is used to maintain the condos.

Budgets are almost complete, only a few things to finalize. There will be approximately an 8% increase in the condo fees. The single family home (ALA) fee will increase by \$5. Some of the reasons for the increases are: general cost of living increases across all items, insurance, utility increases, increase in time Chris (SMG) will be on site, additional lawn care tasks and price increases, and an increased amount allotted to reserves.

Committee Reports

Welcome Committee -- In Jennifer's absence, Laura Farkas reported that the Trustee Open house was a success. Some residents came to ask about work orders or to sign up on Town Square. Others came to socialize and meet their neighbors. Next open house will be in February 2023.

Amenities Committee -- Shah – Keys/access cards are being changed. A new form will be in the December packet mailed to residents. Owners will have to complete the 2023 Owner Information Form to have Access Cards or Sport Court keys assigned. At the last Amenities meeting discussions were held regarding clubhouse rental charges (the charge has returned to the pre-Covid price of \$200), establishing rules for the sports court and basketball court and brainstorming new amenities. Volunteers began recovering/cleaning chairs. Windows in the clubhouse will be cleaned within the next 2 weeks. **Anyone interested in the clubhouse rental monitor position, should contact Shah.**

Landscaping Committee – Cheryl -- Lawn Groomers will do a final mow for the season and will also be coming through for a final leaf removal. Houses should push leaves to the curb (not into the street) just before the second leaf pickup. SMG will send out an email notice when we have the date for the leaf removal. If house or condo owners choose to rake leaves at other times, please make sure they are bagged and placed at the curb for the Maryland Heights yard waste pickups on Monday.

The committee is available to work with owners who want to create their own planting plan. They will also help determine if Association bushes need replacement around the condos. **Reminder if you are planning to plant, you are required to get prior Landscaping approval.**

Architectural Committee – Dick -- 5 decks, 1 door and a privacy panel were approved. **Reminder to get an Architectural Request approval before having any work done.** We continue to have a few owners every quarter who begin work without Association approval or Maryland Heights permits. All work on the building, decks, windows or doors requires an Architectural request.

Social Committee – Madonna -- Everyone is invited to a **Tree Lighting and Ornament party on Saturday, December 3rd at 2pm – 5pm.** The clubhouse community tree will be for all religions. We will have supplies available to make your ornament or you can bring one from home. There will be refreshments as well.

There will also be a **Holiday Lighting/Decoration Contest** with prizes for (1) Best House (2) Best Condo (3) Best Deck. The committee needs 1 more judge for the contest. The judging of the decorations will happen on Saturday, December 17.

At the last meeting members brainstormed for future events including possible fund raisers to raise money for clubhouse improvements. The committee thought this would be a good way to improve the clubhouse and not affect homeowner dues.

Residents Questions & Comments

Open Forum: (Owners were provided question/comment forms to submit.)

Question: A resident asked does the committee review the driveways and retaining walls for replacements or repairs.

Answer: Trustees usually walk around in the fall and rate the driveways. We have a bid for the replacement, repairs and sealing identified this year. SMG has a list and the replacements/ repairs will begin in Spring 2023. Sealing of driveways will also be done in 2023.

Question: If your neighbors have 2 cars in driveway at all times and my car is in the garage will the vendor remove the snow on my side of the driveway?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What is the process to secure the clubhouse? Who makes the decision to withhold fees from the security deposit due to cancellations?

Answer: To find out about availability of the clubhouse call SMG or Shah Smith. The fee for the rental and a deposit is required to secure the date. The cancellation policy is listed in the rental guidelines. Cancellations without two months notice: \$100 if event was scheduled for a holiday period. \$75 for cancellations of all other days without 1 month notice. The remainder of the paid rental fee and the security deposit are returned.

Question: It would be nice to be notified when something is done around the outside of a resident's property.

Answer: Wherever possible SMG/Association tries to inform residents. Sometimes to get things started notification is not possible, and though we ask vendors to notify homeowners with door cards, they don't always do it.

Question: (1) How are condo fees calculated? (2) Are utilities (water/sewer) split based on number of people in the unit? Example: Does a family of 5 pay more than 1 person in a home?

Answer: Almost all of the units have a shared meter, so it is not possible to "assign" a individual portion of the cost to each unit. All residents are encouraged to be mindful of the water they are using, whether inside or outside. Remember, the sewer cost is based on the amount of water used (even if it is actually used for watering outside or washing cars).

(1) There is a maintenance code assigned for each unit based on a formula the builders determined. It was calculated on the square footage of the unit and the percentage the unit is of the building (may be 4-8 units in a building). This is a part of our indentures. Fees are determined by those maintenance codes. (2) Lisa (SMG) explained that for each unit to have its own meter, it had to be done when the condos were built. It would be very expensive to put in individual meters, and would require a vote by the owners. Most condo associations include the water and sewer in their fees.

Question: A new owner passed out a long list of questions.

Answer: Shah read each subject, referring to the information just given in the Board Meeting, or at prior meetings. The owner also wanted to know what Special Assessments were going to be charged for each subject. It was explained that no special assessments are being planned at this time. The owner wanted assurances that no special assessments would be levied for at least the next two years. No such promise could be made, but it was pointed out that in almost 40 years, only one special assessment was ever assigned, and this was for the dredging of the lower lake (with over half coming out of the reserves). We continue to add to our reserves so that large foreseeable projects can be covered in the budget. New owners should be reading indentures and newsletters that are readily available prior to purchasing in a condo community. One of the owner's complaints was that he did not feel that violations were equally applied to all owners. The Board reminded owners they have a responsibility in reporting violations. When they are reported, the Board either gives one friendly warning (depending on the gravity of the violation) or a violation letter is sent with fines if the violation is not corrected. Other owners would not normally be aware of who has received fines, or how many someone has received. Some matters that the owner brought up were actually Maryland Heights' violations.

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Maryland Heights clears our streets. Neighborhoods have a lower priority than feeder streets, but MH has done a pretty good job over the years. They will actually begin clearing prior to the snowfall ending. The condos have a private company that usually starts after the streets have been cleared, and after the snowfall has stopped if there is a minimum of 2" reported at the airport. We may not be the first on the list. Also recognize that prolonged or heavy snowstorms will result in longer than usual removal times.

Street parked cars can be a problem for the MH plows as they move fast and must make a wide berth around parked cars. Some of our streets can end up with very narrow cleared areas. Never park your car far out from the curb. Keep in mind that there should be enough room to allow emergency vehicles through.

When snow is expected this is the one time that MH asks residents to initially use off street parking as much as possible- even if the car is overhanging a sidewalk. If your neighbor parks in the garage and has driveway space, consider asking if you can temporarily park in their drive until the street has been cleared. Once MH has cleared the streets, move any driveway or lot parked vehicles out to the street so drives and lots can be cleared. If you have parked your cars in the driveway during the storm, and then move them, it will actually make the driveway snow removal quicker.

Due to liability, the snow plow service will not clear snow from behind a vehicle in a driveway, and they only go in sequence, so they will not return to clear your driveway once you move your vehicle. So yes, it is sometimes a dance as cars are moved from the street, to driveways/lots, to the street and back.

There are 43 steep driveways that are salted when ice or snow is predicted. This is a separate company from our snow plow service. The plowing company will use salt or a material better suited to heavy ice during below 0 degrees if needed on all driveways. Always be careful of melted areas refreezing when the temperature drops.

Driveways have the top priority. Plows will usually leave up to a 1 foot clearance in front of the garage door to avoid door damage. Cars can usually make it past the small amount of snow outside of the garage door. The "hump" is removed when the walkways are cleared. Second priority is the walkways up to the front door which are usually cleared by blower crews. With lighter snows the blower crews may be working in tandem with the driveway plows. Because we have so many walkers, when labor permits, we also try to clear the city sidewalks (which Maryland Heights does not do).

Do not call to find out when the snow removal will be done for your unit. We don't know beyond the parameters already given. The plows begin in a different section each snowfall, so that owners take turns being "first". However, if you see that your driveway or walkway has been missed while your neighbor's was cleared, call or text Shah. Do not leave messages with the management company. The Board can get in touch with the snow removal company much quicker. If you have snowplow damage to your garage door, or if you see the turf has been damaged, please report it right away to Smith Management. Please note that the snow removal company is not responsible for walkway lights or decorative materials on or along your walkway or driveway.

REPUBLIC TRASH

(636) 947-5959 or visit their [website https://www.republicservices.com/about-us](https://www.republicservices.com/about-us)

Republic contracts with Maryland Heights to only pick up the large trash or recycling totes throughout the city. This is a free service to residents. Obviously, the large containers are a problem in Autumn Lakes, as MH requires trash containers to be kept out of sight. Years ago, MH was able to get AL an exception with the trash providers that allowed us to use smaller garbage cans and recycling bins. They were never supposed to be picking up loose trash bags, boxes, or other types of trash, although for years their workers usually did.

The special dispensation trash pickup in AL required two large trucks (trash and recycling), a smaller recycling truck for the small bins and a smaller garbage truck for trash cans. Often these trucks required two workers because the totes were too close together or so that they could manually load the smaller containers. In recent years, more and more of our AL residents have begun leaving out loose trash bags, boxes (often with packing material or other waste inside) and other unwanted materials. This can be a major problem in our neighborhood when wind or animals wreak havoc with bags.

Because of Republic's severe labor shortages in the last two years some weeks the garbage runs are often delayed 1-2 days. (You can sign up for text alerts about delays.) Recently they began enforcing the terms of their contract to speed pickups with less labor. In October, they began using just their large, one-man trucks. City Hall went to bat for us and was able to get a third truck to continue to pick up the smaller cans and bins (although they no longer separate recycling on these smaller trucks). Watching a truck take 20 minutes to empty 10 driveways was an eye opener as the worker had to keep getting out of the truck to separate totes so the mechanical arms could be used, or to manually lift bags and boxes into the truck. Be warned, they will not keep doing so.

New or replacement large containers can be ordered through the local number. Their medium sizes are often on backorder, but you can get on their list. Make a point of telling them you are a Maryland Heights resident, or you will be charged for a new containers. You can continue to use smaller garbage cans (without screwed down lids) and the small recycling bins.

To ensure great service please make sure you are doing the following: Face totes toward the street with the wheels against the curb or gutter the night before (trucks come as early as 4 am). Allow at least 2 feet between totes and 5 feet between other objects so that the mechanical arms can easily reach out and lift each tote or garbage can. Make sure the large tote lids are securely shut or on smaller cans attach them with some type of chain or wire connector (otherwise the lid may be lost when the can is lifted into the truck). Materials should not extend beyond the container rim. Containers should not be overfilled with heavy materials. No loose bags, boxes or other types of trash. Many neighbors with small amounts of garbage have begun sharing their trash totes with one unit keeping the garbage and another keeping the recycling. You can go to Republic's website for a list of what can be recycled.

YARD WASTE PICKUP

Yard waste (no animal feces) and large natural debris is collected by Republic year-round. To dispose of yard waste, store it in bags (paper/biodegradable bags strongly recommended) and leave curbside on Mondays. Tree branches should be no longer than 4 feet and no wider in diameter than 6 inches. Bundle with twine. If branches are from the fronts or sides of condo areas, they can be left curbside to be picked up by Chris. Leaves are blown and disposed of by our lawncare company, once in the spring and twice in the fall/early winter.

ELECTRONIC DISPOSAL

Maryland Heights regularly schedules Electronic recycle events. Check their newsletters for dates.

REPUBLIC BULK WASTE

Items that are too large to fit in your trash container are considered Bulk Waste. Republic will remove bulk items such as furniture, appliances, mattresses, carpet or home furnishings. You can request Bulk Waste service by contacting them at calling or ordering at their website. Be sure to let them know you are a Maryland Heights resident. They say they will pickup up two items up to twice a month at no charge. Pickups are usually scheduled for Fridays. If your pickup is delayed, please do not leave items at the curb as it can sometimes be a full week before they can reschedule.

Upcoming AL Christmas Events

Tree Lighting and Ornament party on Saturday, December 3rd at 2pm – 5pm.

We will have supplies available to make your ornament or you can bring one from home.

There will be refreshments as well.

There will also be a **Holiday Lighting/Decoration Contest** with prizes for (1) Best House (2) Best Condo (3) Best Deck.

The judging will happen on Saturday, December 17.

February Trustees' Open House

In order to help improve communication with owners, the Board is hosting a quarterly Trustee Open House where trustees will help with your questions.

Do you have questions about the budgets? Have a question about the rules?

Need help with TownSq? Have a question for the trustees?

The next Open House will be mid-February.

The next Autumn Lakes Association meeting is scheduled for 1/18/23 at 7 pm.



"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is time for home."

- Edith Sitwell