

## NOTICE OF PENDING ACTION BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

TO: Meadows-Ferndale Homeowners and Residents

FROM: Meadows-Ferndale Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Landscaping Common Areas

As summer approaches, our common area landscaping is going to need some help. By this we mean principally irrigation of the common areas adjacent to the streets. These areas are mostly between the sidewalks and the streets, but sometimes between the streets and the wetlands. This message does not address wetland landscaping or maintenance, which is covered separately by a specific contract with a wetland-certified ecological restoration company.

You may have noticed that the grass in the areas of concern is deeply stressed or already dying and is losing the competition for survival with the weeds. Our street trees and shrubs will shortly follow as the summer dry season arrives. The initial Meadows development included irrigation (sprinklers) only in parts of Phase I areas, but none in Phases II and III. Consequently, the Phase II and III areas are looking a bit shoddy – and summer will only make this worse. The Board of Directors (Board) has considered the following options for rectifying this situation. Our preliminary decision follows the discussion of the options.

1. **Homeowners.** This option would require homeowners to water the areas in front of their homes. Since the responsibility for these areas now rests with the HOA, we would need to pass a Board resolution that transfers the requirement to homeowners and provides means of enforcement. The Board feels that this is not a viable option. The physical and financial burden for maintaining these areas should not be transferred to homeowners since this would be a significant deviation from the conditions of purchase and would likely cause hardship for some owners. There are other problems with this option also: such as an uneven distribution of responsibility and the fact that not all areas would be covered.
2. **Water truck.** Contract to have the “un-sprinkled” areas regularly hand-watered from a truck. This is a very expensive option as it would create a large recurring cost for the truck, the driver, and the water. Specifically, it would cost \$1,900 per week for watering twice a week. Considering a 25 week span of needing irrigation this results in a financial burden of \$47,500 per year (1900x25). This is only for the grass. The tree watering would be an additional one-time cost of \$17/tree for the water bags (installation, use, and removal). Then there is \$5.00 per tree for watering. Assuming 30 waterings through the dry season, this amounts to  $(17 + (5 \times 30)) \times 160 = \$26,720$  for our 160 trees. The tree watering is deemed to be a one-time cost because the trees should be rooted well enough after this year to enable us to forego further watering, except on a case by case basis.
3. **Sprinklers.** Install a sprinkler system in all areas that require regular watering and are not already serviced by a sprinkler system. This option has a large one-time installation cost estimated at around \$100,000, which includes routing some of the water pipes under the streets and sidewalks (the extent of this requirement is not known). The HOA does not yet have this much in the reserve fund, so funding this option would require either borrowing the money or levying a special assessment for all or part of the cost. Our water bill would increase to about \$4,000/year. There would be recurring cost for maintaining the sprinkler

system, estimated at \$500/year. There would also be an additional one-time (this year only) cost for watering the trees. This is estimated at \$26,720 per above (Option 2).

4. **Bark or Rock.** Replace existing grass with either bark or decorative rocks such as crushed gravel or creek/river stones. Bark would cost about \$25,000 for one-time installation and an estimated recurring cost of \$1,000 per year to replenish the bark. The estimated cost of a decent looking rock filler would be about \$50,000 for one-time installation. There would be very little recurring cost for replenishment since rocks do not blow or float away. In either case (bark or rocks), the one-time cost for watering the trees is as estimated above: \$26,720.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Board has tentatively arrived at the following conclusions concerning these options (a five-year cost is shown to give better visibility into the effect of the recurring costs):

1. **Homeowners.** Not viable for the reasons given above.
2. **Water Truck.** Five-year cost: \$264K  $\{= (47.5 \times 5) + 26.7\}$ . Too costly.
3. **Sprinklers.** Five-year cost: \$149K  $\{= 100 + (4.5 \times 5) + 26.7\}$ . Affordable, but more expensive than either bark or gravel and requires maintenance – sometimes immediate (e.g., if a line breaks or a sprinkler head blows).
4. **Bark or Rock.**
  - a. Bark. Five-year cost: \$57K  $\{= 25 + (1 \times 5) + 26.7\}$
  - b. Rock. Five-year cost: \$82K  $\{= 50 + (1 \times 5) + 26.7\}$

Of these two, the Board believes rocks are the better option, since rocks tend to avoid “spreading out” onto the sidewalks and streets due to wind and rain -- and they do not fade as much as bark. These problems are not non-existent with rocks, but certainly less than for bark.

## BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DECORATIVE ROCK

This option is affordable and requires the least maintenance or human intervention. By “rocks”, we mean some sort of decorative landscape rock mix: crushed gravel, creek/river stones, cobble style rocks, etc. If this option is chosen, the Board will examine the available types of rock fillers and choose the best balance of appearance, durability, and cost.

## BOARD REQUEST

But before going final with our decision, the Board would like your input. If you have an idea or a preference for an option not covered by the Board’s preliminary consideration, please let us know. If you choose to submit a reply, please do so on or before May 15, 2020 (Friday) and include as much detail and justification as possible: the “who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much” stuff. As always, the best means of submitting a reply is through the “SEND US A MESSAGE” portal at the bottom of the home page on our web site ([www.meadows-ferndale-hoa.org](http://www.meadows-ferndale-hoa.org)).

Thanks in advance for participating in this decision.

Stay well.

/Meadows-Ferndale HOA Board of Directors/