

ReView

Golf Course View Cluster Association

August-September 2016



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Next Board Meeting

Oct. 11, 2016
7:30 pm. at 2159

New 5-Year Landscape Plan Ready Cluster Documents Updated

The Landscape/Tree Committee met three times in July and August and produced a new strategic plan that will guide our landscape improvement efforts from January 2017 through December 2021. **Many Thanks!** to the volunteers who took on the job: Patty Williamson, Tracy Kirschner, Karen Alpers, Nanette Miller, Gordon Simonett, Darya Vilhauer, John Pinkman, Jim Michael, Josh and Christi Klick and Sandy Dresser.

The committee members walked the entire cluster making notes of areas that could use more than routine maintenance attention. They turned these observations into a list of proposed projects and then prioritized them so that they could be scheduled over the five-year period included in the plan.

Their highest priority was the ongoing development of the entrance to our neighborhood around the cluster sign and on the opposite side of the street. This has turned out to be a very difficult area to landscape successfully because of the steep slope, the lack of sun and the difficulty in keeping the plants properly watered.

The second priority focused on our valuable trees. Over the next five years, we plan to install mulched areas around our mature trees to protect the roots from lawnmowers and the trunks from weed whips. We will also be planting ornamental trees along the street to replace the many dogwoods, redbuds and plum trees we've lost over the past decade. The plan also includes planting new shade trees in areas where we have lost large old oaks, tulip trees and maples, or where existing trees are beginning to decline. It's worth noting that the cluster can't afford to plant new trees unless one or more residents actually commit to watering the new trees regularly for at least the first two years.

Other areas that are scheduled for improvement under the plan include the area near the lower playground, the river garden and natural area along the pathway behind Courtyards E and F, and the streetscape at the lower end of the neighborhood near the entrances to Courtyards A and E. As has been true during each of the past 10 years, the committee will invite residents who live nearby to have input to the final design of each improvement project.

Finally, the plan includes cluster support of small projects around the parking lots in a number of courtyards. Identified as Community Projects these are efforts in which the work and expenses are shared by the cluster and the residents of the affected courtyard.

In addition to developing the cluster 5-year plan, the committee also spent considerable time discussing the issue of homeowners who do not properly maintain their townhomes and yards. This echoed similar concerns raised at the Annual Meeting in June. The board will continue to discuss its options and act to resolve this problem in the coming months.

Over the summer the board has been busy updating some of the cluster's most useful documents. In August we distributed the most recent edition of the **Cluster Directory**. While the directory is never completely up to date, the new little blue book includes all but the most recent arrivals.

We have also updated the resident-recommended **Contractors List**. While the Board of Directors does not endorse any of the contractors on the list, we have been assured by homeowners that the services they received from the companies on the list were good and fairly priced.

We also reviewed and updated the **Cluster Handbook for Homeowners and Residents**. In addition to correcting out of date phone numbers etc., we revised the wording of many of the design standards to simplify and clarify them. If you are a new resident or you haven't actually read the Handbook in the last year or so, this would be a good time to do so. There is a lot of very useful information about cluster governance, the services the cluster provides and homeowner and resident responsibilities.

Finally, we took a close look at the publication called **Working with the GCVCA Color Palettes** which presents, in detail, the rules regarding the color of your wood trim, windows, doors, decks and fences. If you are thinking about changing the color of your trim or replacing doors or windows, this is a must read.

The revised Handbook, Contractor List and Working with the GCVCA Color Palettes documents will be uploaded to the cluster website this month.

Budget Planning for 2017

The board of directors will start planning next year's budget at its October meeting. **Now is the time** to get in touch with the appropriate committee chairperson(s) to discuss any drainage issues arising on common grounds that may need to be addressed and any desired improvements to the cluster's playground areas. Proposed work in these areas require us to obtain proposals and cost estimates from contractors that we can then factor into the 2017 budget.

Drought-Stressed Landscape

This summer has been very hard on our trees and shrubs. Concerted efforts to identify courtyard teams who are willing and able to provide a source of water or man the hoses have been generally unsuccessful. We hope more of you will step up and help us keep our neighborhood beautiful. The board can provide lengths of hose if needed and will reimburse residents who provide water for their extra expense.