

RED CEDAR CANYON TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019

The purpose of this newsletter is to improve communications among our neighbors and the board. We look forward to your feedback and welcome suggestions for newsletter topics.

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UPDATE ON BOARD MEMBERSHIP

We continue to have a vacancy on the board. The association is still in need of a Treasurer. While Cities Management handles many of the financial tasks, the association is served by having someone serve in a monitoring and oversight role.

Looking to the future, there will likely be two openings on the board after the September annual meeting.

The board cannot operate with only two members. We are looking for several homeowners to step up and take a short term on the board. The current board is looking at ways to streamline the work that we do, make our work more efficient and address important work that needs to be done.

CONTACT CITIES MANAGEMENT FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

With spring arriving, you may notice damage to the exterior or have a request to replace dead shrubs. Please contact Cities for these requests.

You can do so by calling: **(612) 381-8600** or email info@citiesmanagement.com. You can also file a maintenance request online by logging into your homeowner account.

You do not need to ask for Nicole Battles to ask a question or request service. The team taking your call or responding to your email at Cities should be able to handle most of your questions and requests.

The board asks that you refrain from sending direct email to the board, including board members as a cc on emails or calling board members for these matters as this adds to the clog of in box communications and doesn't improve service.

Cities logs all maintenance requests so that no one has to go off of memory or a post-it-note. Please comply with this so that we can organize, streamline and document association needs.

RECORD BREAKING SNOW = HIGHER EXPENSES

What a winter! The unusual amount of snow resulted in some unique situations in the association.

In February and March, the board authorized work for salting lanes and driveways, shoveling roof vents and several visits to push back snow piles at the end of the lanes. This is work outside of the snow removal contract.

This additional service puts us at an estimated \$5,500 over the budget of \$5,000 for extra snow services or a total of \$9,500. We will be looking at ways to pull the cost overage from other budgets and reducing association cost in the future.

REMINDERS FOR SPRING PLANTING

Maintenance: Most landscaping needs are handled as a function of maintenance and are paid for by the association. If you see a tree, shrub or bush that needs to be addressed, please submit this as a maintenance request to Cities and your request will be prioritized with all landscape requests.

The request must include detail about the location of the item to be addressed. If you have a preference for potential replacements, include that in your request from the approved list of landscape planting. Requests made by **May 15** will be addressed this spring. Prioritization will include requests made through Cities last year.

Landscape Modification: The association currently allows homeowners to modify landscaping at their own risk and expense. All requests require advance approval from the board.

The location must be within the mulched area surrounding your home and does not include lawn or areas around trees.

To request a modification, complete the **Application for Architectural, Landscape or Irrigation Modification Request Form** available from your Cities online account or call Cities for this form. Only plantings from the approved list will be considered. Allow a minimum of 15 days to process your request.

HOMEOWNER DIRECT CONTACT WITH VENDORS Q&A

Q: When is it OK for association members to directly engage or call vendors? A: Simply put: Never. This is not proper process and can add to the cost of service provided for the association or homeowner.

The association hires vendors for a variety of work needed to maintain our property. The work is done through contracts and the specs define the work, at the direction of the board. It is critical that the association speak with one voice to vendors, not 112 voices.

Q: How important is it? A: Very. Some associations go so far as to fine members who do not comply with this requirement. We may need to implement a fine in the future to better manage future cost and maintain relationships with reliable vendors.

Q: Does this mean that you can never interact with a vendor? A: No. From time to time, a vendor may ask for your input or simply knock on your door to alert you to work being done in near your home.

NEW! POLICY FOR EMERGENCIES

If you feel that there is a problem in your home requiring immediate attention, contact Cities Management and your request will be given priority. The assumption in this policy is that you are in the best position to determine if there is an emergency.

The board will rely on facts and details provided by vendors after service is provided. If the service is not covered by the association, expenses will be charged back to homeowner through your account with Cities.

If you wish to hire a vendor directly, you may do so at your own expense. All exterior work must receive prior authorization from the board.

NOTE: This policy is not intended to cover medical emergencies or situations best served by calling 911.

This policy is effective immediately and has been posted to your homeowner website under Community Information -> Property Information and has also been added to the Rules, Regulations & Policies document.

HOMEOWNER DIRECTORY ONLINE

Long time residents remember a time when a printed directory booklet was sent to homeowners each year. Some wonder, why don't we do this anymore?

The answer is twofold. First, it's important to understand that Wisconsin statutes and case law recognize and protect an individual's right to privacy. This extends to a person's "personal identifying information". In order to share information with neighbors, the association has taken the advice of our lawyer and only allows for the sharing of information if a homeowner has opted to have information shared.

Second, after multiple attempts in to ask homeowners to elect to share their information, a large number of homeowners elected not to have personal information shared. Thus, continuing to print and mail an incomplete directory seemed like a waste of resources.

Online access to a directory is available through your Cities Management account. This is your best option as it will always reflect the most current contact information. The online directory only includes homeowners who have agreed to have their personal information shared. Just log in to your account with Cities, go to Community Information and click on Homeowner Directory. You can sort by name or address and have it printed if you prefer that option.

If you have an old directory, please toss it.

ATTENDING BOARD MEETINGS

Homeowners wishing to sit in on association board meetings may do so. This can be a good way to find out how your association works and learn about ways that you can serve the association. You may even decide to join the board or a committee after attending a meeting.

The board usually meets monthly on the fourth Monday of the month, at 2:00 at the County Market Community Room. Schedules sometimes change so owners are advised to go to their online Cities account and check the association calendar under Communication to confirm.

Note that monitoring meetings does not extend to voting rights as only the board can vote and your involvement in discussion may be limited to manage time and the agenda.

If you wish to attend a board meeting for reasons other than to monitor association business, please contact Cities Management at least one week prior to the meeting to be added to the agenda. You will typically be granted five minutes to express your question or concern.

A LOOK BACK AT ASSOCIATION DUES

Homeowners sometimes ask, “How much will the dues be in the future?”

It’s not possible to predict future dues with precision. The board takes its budgeting job seriously, using historical expenses, competitive bids and a reserve fund study to set annual dues.

Just as in your personal budget, each year we have surprises.

A look back at the historical monthly dues tells a story:

Year	Dues	% Increase
2014	\$230	2.68%
2015	\$253	10.00%
2016	\$265	4.74%
2017	\$280	5.66%
2018	\$285	1.79%
2019	\$293	2.80%

FACEBOOK RED CEDAR CANYON GROUP

Did you know that there is a Facebook group for Red Cedar Canyon? All residents of the surrounding Red Cedar Associations may join this group.

CURIOUS ABOUT ASSOCIATION FINANCES?

The monthly board minutes will include the most recent financials available at the time of publication. The current year’s budget as well as the most recent Reserve Study are posted on your homeowner website under Community Information -> Property Information.