

RED CEDAR CANYON TOWNHOUSE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Summer 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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CONTINUED VACANCY ON THE BOARD

We continue to have a vacancy on the board. Association members cannot expect to be represented in decisions affecting the association without people serving in on the board. We have not had a Treasurer since last October. If not resolved soon, the association may need to look at hiring board members or other alternatives for 2020. This will have a direct affect on association dues.

CHANGING LANDSCAPING PROCESSES & NEEDS

All homeowners benefit from improved property values when landscaping and architectural standards are maintained.

Throughout the almost 20-year history of the association, many of the shrubs planted that are original to the home have exceeded their lifespan. This is especially true of junipers and spirea.

The Architecture and Landscaping Committee have identified shrubs to be removed and replaced. The board is honoring the recommendations of this committee. We are obtaining quotes from at least one vendor and, budget allowing, expect to have work done

this spring / summer. Expenses associated with this work will be paid for out of the association operating budget.

Tree maintenance will be addressed later this year.

If we are unable to address your requested maintenance as a result of budgeting or other prioritization, you will be informed prior to work in 2019.

As we look to the future, we will look at establishing some clear expectations and a larger plan for the association to manage both the landscaping needs and costs associated with those needs as we budget for 2020.

ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

Membership in this committee has expanded to include Audrey Ichel, Keri Kennedy, Judy Franck, Patty Solem, Marg Staebell and Barb Starr. Bob Staebell serves as board liaison. Cheryl Coots, long time committee member, has resigned from the committee.

Thank you to the committee volunteers and Cheryl, for your many years of service.

LANDSCAPE MODIFICATIONS

Some homeowners choose to do their own shrub, bush and perennial plants. To choose this option, please check out the **Guide for Modifying Landscape within the Mulch Area** posted on the association website. All modifications are done at homeowner expense and require an application and approval process prior to planting.

Many owners incorrectly assume that because they paid for the modification plantings, they are assuming all of the cost of modifications. This is not entirely true.

- Homes with numerous landscaping modifications are sold. New owners assume a standard level of service.
- Many owners with custom plantings find that the existing irrigation is insufficient to water their new plants and request more irrigation services.
- Some homeowners with modifications do not maintain their plantings.
- Homeowners fail to comply with city and garbage requirements to properly dispose of plant trimming

refuse (this material does not belong in trash bins and requires a separate pickup process).

- The association does not have a map of modified plantings. Thus, all association members pay for maintenance of customized plantings and tree treatment when needed. For example, many pine trees required treatment last year and this year, which will be paid for by all association members. Many of the trees were modified plantings. All association members paid for the treatment.

Responding to homeowner requests for modifications while also managing the emerging financial realities will be an ongoing topic for the board.

MANAGING LAWCARE

This spring, many questions arose from homeowners around the topic of lawn care. The board asks that homeowners concerned about lawncare quality contact Cities Management first.

Cities is positioned to coordinate with our lawncare vendor. If you have specific complaints, sending in a photo may help to move the conversation along.

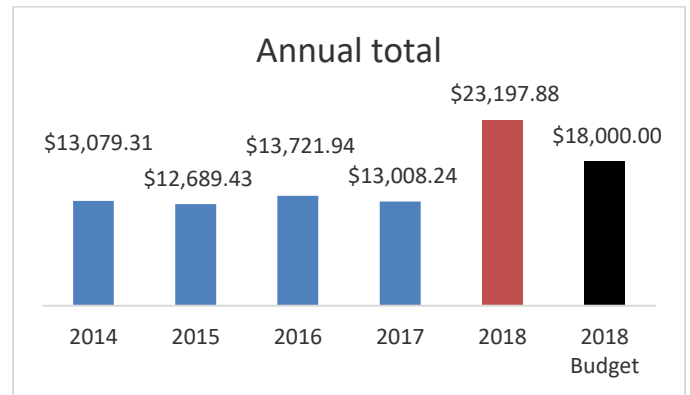
The contract with our vendor is posted on the website and details the services to expect. Please keep in mind that we have a new vendor and a new Board guiding the process. This requires extra patience from all.

We ask for homeowners to have patience and recognize that when you live in an association, you will receive an average level of service. This service process and maintenance of 20 plus acres of property and 112 units cannot be the same as when you own a single home outside an association.

MANAGING IRRIGATION EXPENSES

At the annual meeting last year, information was shared regarding the increasing cost of providing water for irrigation.

Three factors are at work here. First, the City of Hudson has increased the cost of water. Here is a chart representing the historical cost of water to the association:



To put this in context, the expense in 2018 was almost 10% of the association budget.

The second is the weather. Our irrigation provider, Nature's Touch, increases the watering time on very hot days. The hotter the summer, the more water we use.

The third is an aging irrigation system.

In consultation with Nature's Touch, the Board recently approved two improvements to our irrigation system. All irrigation heads will be replaced with more effective MP rotator sprinkler heads. We expect that this will result in less water wastage as they use a slower application rate, allowing water to gently soak in at rates that the soil can absorb.

In addition, 40 sprinkler heads will be capped off in landscaping areas between homes where irrigation is no longer needed.

Additional improvements are under consideration for 2020, including the use of so-called "smart" irrigation systems which use WiFi weather monitors. If you wish to help the association to address irrigation issues for 2020, contact a board member to raise your hand as we evaluate options going forward.

One additional note. Water pressure has been a problem for irrigation in the past. In 2018, the city completed the construction of Well 10, located just south of the movie theater. This should help to alleviate water pressure problems in irrigation.

HOT DAYS = EXPECT SOME BROWN GRASS

With improvements in irrigation, you might wonder ... does that mean that I won't have any brown grass this year?

The ability of our irrigation system to keep up with excessive heat, plus poor soil quality (sand/rock) in some areas can result in periods of time where there will be parts of the association with brown grass.

Last year was a case in point. As the following chart shows, the number of days with temperatures greater than or equal to 90 degrees can vary widely.

Year	Temp ≥ 90°
2011	17
2012	31
2013	19
2014	2
2015	4
2016	13
2017	14
2018	20

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Twin Cities area.

DISCOVERY ON FIRE HYDRANTS

When the association was built by Hans Hagen, 13 fire hydrants were installed and are considered **private hydrants** by the city. There appear to be no records as to why or how the decision was made. The origin of this decision was probably rooted in adding fire protection to the townhouses.

The association pays \$120 / quarter for each private hydrant, resulting in an annual cost to the association of \$6,240 or a monthly charge to homeowners of \$4.64. The \$120 quarterly rate is set by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

Thank you to association member Paul Larson for helping us to have a better understanding of the reasons for the fire hydrant charges.

POTENTIAL CHANGE FOR EXTERIOR ITEMS

The board is currently considering changing the policy around hanging of exterior items, including items historically approved and / or grandfathered.

With the assistance of our Architectural & Landscaping Committee, we identified many homes with mounted items on the exterior brick. The association has a responsibility to maintain our exteriors and any mounting on brick (by drilling into the brick or hanging by wires) can cause water damage.

If your home has any exterior item mounted on the brick exterior, note that we may be addressing this going forward.

ASPHALT PATCHING THIS SUMMER

Patching of lanes will occur later this summer.

In the past, we have had problems with owners getting cars out of lanes timely and with owners removing cones and driving on lanes before patching has cured.

The cost to the association this year is over \$7,000. Driving on the lanes before the patching has cured properly results in patching seal that is weak or subject to easier break up and leads to more cost.

We all need to observe the requirements of lane clearing and parking on the street to get the best bang for the buck. **Please be aware that violators will be fined \$300.**

John Maas, member at large, will supervise the patching process and unit owners will be assess fines for violating timely parking on the street instructions or entering the lane before removal of cones or tape.

You will be notified in advance of vendor’s dates of service times when lanes must be cleared by email. At times the date of service may change due to weather so please stay attentive to the schedule.

We take this course of action only because it has been a recurring problem for the past three years.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AT ALL TIMES

We all have bad days from time to time. It’s human nature to feel frustrated, especially if hearing unwelcome news.

In all of our interactions with each other and with service providers, please observe respect and courtesy. This includes phone and especially email communications.

All of us share in creating a kind culture. One of the surest ways to sink your property value is to foster a culture of discord.

REMINDERS

- **All garbage cans** must be stored inside the garage when not out for pick up. This is spelled out in the association covenants. It helps in managing pests throughout the association.
- **Please drive slowly** ... on the lanes and within the association. This has been a source of increasing complaints.
- **Property modifications:** Thinking about making a modification to your home such as invisible fencing, replacing landscaping, or replacing your patio? All of these require homeowners to **complete an application for modification form and approval by the board prior to installation.** Forms are available on the association website or by contacting Cities Management.
- **Do not instruct vendors on lawn mowing.** In an association, homeowners are not to direct the work provided by vendors. If you have concerns about mowing, go through Cities Management. Be precise in your feedback and pictures can help to document expectations and standards.
- **Dog waste removal:** Owners must remove waste. Failure to do so is subject to a violation penalty. This is an ongoing problem in the association.