

# The Meadow Lark



A Monthly Publication by and for the Residents of The Meadows, a Family Condominium Community

## Budget for 2014 Passed

After much careful thought and detailed study, The Meadows Board of Directors passed a budget for next year. Our community is now more than 40 years old, and a lot of work is required to properly maintain the property in order to keep it looking attractive and desirable for our residents who live here and also for others who are considering moving into The Meadows as units go through the normal turn-over process.

Accordingly, there was a need to increase the budget to absorb the cost of this maintenance, among other increased costs. Initially the first draft of the budget contained a substantial increase, but with much hard work this year's increase was cut to a \$10 monthly increase to \$266 per month for two bedroom units and a \$12 per month increase to \$300 monthly for three bedroom units. The new fees will take effect on January 1, 2014.

## Financing Secured for Roof Replacements

Recently there has been an increase in problems related to our roofs. There have been more leaks, as well as many instances of squirrels and bats getting inside of our units. Repairs are being made to correct these deficiencies, but it has been recognized by an engineering firm that because of the age of our roofs (most have not been replaced in 20 years), major work is needed. It was determined that the most cost effective way to handle the problem was to replace all of the roofs at one time, rather than stagger their replacement over a period of several years.

In order to fund the replacement of all of our roofs at one time, the study conducted by the Board and our engineering firm found that we need to take out a loan totaling approximately \$2.2 million, which will be paid back over a ten-year period. It is beneficial that interest rates are now low, this will help minimize the cost. Our budget had to be adjusted to include this expense, but the cost will be offset because there will now be less money needed to be put into our reserve fund since we will not be replacing the roofs over the next five to six years.

The project to replace all of the roofs will begin later this month, and continue as long as the weather will allow. It will then begin again in the spring and will take another six to eight months to complete.

**Meadows Website**  
[www.mymeadows.net](http://www.mymeadows.net)

**OCTOBER**



**Board of Directors Meeting:** Thursday, October 17, 2013, 7:30 PM in the Clubhouse. Residents and Co-Owners are encouraged to attend. Agendas are posted online and at the Clubhouse on the Tuesday before the meeting. Minutes available upon request at The Meadows office and online at [mymeadows.net](http://mymeadows.net).

**Deadline to Run for Board:** October 15

*Residents and Co-Owners are welcomed and encouraged to attend any committee meeting. Meetings are held in the Clubhouse.*

## Election Pending, Candidates Wanted

Fall is here, and so is the time of elections. Not only is there an election for Governor this year, The Meadows Co-Owners will be voting at the Annual Meeting in December for four members to serve on the Board of Directors for the next two years. So far, only four candidates have declared their intention to run for one of these seats. Those candidates are Joan Orvis, Lynn Piercey, Kelton Reynolds and Eric Sokolowski.

If anyone else is interested in running, please make your intentions known to The Meadows office as soon as you can. There is an application form that needs to be filled out, this must be done by October 15 so your name can be included on the ballot for the election and your biography can be published in the November *Meadow Lark*. In order to be eligible to run for the Board you must be a Co-Owner of a Meadows unit with your condominium dues not in arrears.

## Board of Directors Motions

At the August 29 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to finance the re-roofing project with a loan from Access Bank (please see separate article).
- Passed a motion to reaffirm previous email votes approving a waterproofing repair and two roof repairs.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive a fee for replacement parking stickers.
- Passed a motion to allow a utility room door to remain in place.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to allow a children's playset to remain on the Common Elements.
- Passed a motion to approve a bid of \$10,415 from Valley Crest for landscape improvements on Golden Oak and to not approve a similar request on Strasburg.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$4963 from Valley Crest for landscaping in front of the clubhouse.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$12,356 from Valley Crest for landscape work in the rear of units throughout the property.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$2059 from Valley Crest for landscaping the Strasburg and Cool Oak entrances to the community.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$19,350 from Valley Crest for tree maintenance throughout the property.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid from Valley Crest of \$6754 for planting three trees on Golden Oak and shrubs around the pool.
- Passed a motion to modify our grounds maintenance contract for 2014 with Valley Crest to add \$23,521 to perform landscape work in the rear of all units throughout the year.
- Passed motions related to Architectural Review Forms to allow a patio improvement project, wind chimes to be hung on a patio and garden ornaments to remain.

- Passed a motion to waive violation fees for four Co-owners with the exception of a \$50 administrative fee for each.

At the September 19 Meeting:

- Passed motions to approve an Architectural Review Form for a fence around a patio and two Interior Alteration Requests for new flooring.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm email votes for approval of two waterproofing jobs and denying approval of a request for patio replacement.
- Passed a motion to approve a budget for 2014 which will set the condominium fees at \$266 per month for two bedroom units and \$300 per month for three bedroom units.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to remove a tree, it will instead be pruned.
- Passed a motion to not remove benches throughout the community but to relocate one of them.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$162,336 from USI for renewal of the master insurance policy.
- Passed a motion to accept a contact with Collins Septic for snow removal at the same rates as were paid last year.
- Passed a motion to accept a contract with US Security Solutions for \$166,857 for the next year.
- Passed a motion adopt the policy on bed bugs recommended by our attorney and add it to the Personnel Manual.
- Passed a motion to accept the recommendation of the attorney regarding two collection cases.
- Passed motions concerning violation fees to waive one and waive two others except a \$50 administrative fee.
- Passed a motion to deny waiving a trash fee.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS  
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

**Meadows Website**  
[www.mymeadows.net](http://www.mymeadows.net)

## President's Corner

Fall is one of my favorite seasons. I love the cool, crisp mornings and the changing colors of the leaves. It's also a great time to enjoy the wide variety of fall festivals around the area. One great one to check out is Northern Virginia's largest fall festival, "Fall for Fairfax". Held annually at the Fairfax County Government Center, this year's festival will take place on October 5 and 6. Admission and most activities are FREE! Go to [www.fallforfairfax.com](http://www.fallforfairfax.com) for information on scheduled activities and entertainment.

As we head into the colder months, you may want to test your furnace and make sure it is working. Nobody wants to be surprised to find out their furnace is "on the fritz" on that first really chilly night! In addition, consider scheduling a professional to perform a check of your unit's heating system to ensure it is operating safely and efficiently.

~ Linda Lachapelle

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## Fire Regulations

- Kerosene, or any fuel heaters, are forbidden by Meadows regulations.
- Residents should not store combustibles in furnace rooms. It is a serious fire hazard and is against County and Meadows regulations.
- Smoke detectors are required on *each level* of homes in The Meadows.
- Residents should maintain a fire extinguisher in their units. It should be rated at least 2A:10BC.



### Carbon Monoxide Detectors

The furnaces and most hot water heaters in The Meadows use gas. It is imperative that all homes have a working carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas which can cause death.

# Community Improvement: Good Neighbor Top Ten

by Jason Spessard

Being on bad terms with your neighbor can make your life frustrating, day after day. But taking the time to establish good terms with your neighbors has numerous benefits. The community will be friendlier, the neighborhood safer, and the area a nicer and more comfortable place to live.

1. **Introduce Yourself – Whether you're new to the neighborhood or have not got around to the task of meeting your neighbor after years of living next door, introduce yourself.** Say hello, offer a welcome gift, or just give a helpful hint about the area: "The garbage truck comes on Mondays and Thursdays. We usually see them on our street around 7 AM." An unfamiliar neighbor is not a good neighbor.
  2. **Consider Your Neighbor's Lifestyle – Get to know your neighbors, what they do for a living, what their schedules might be like, and so on.** Sometimes, you can remedy problems before they even start; for example, if they work nights, quiet mornings will be important for them. If they have young children, quiet evenings will be very important to them. Similarly, give them information that'll help them be more considerate of your lifestyle. If you do a lot of yard work, or if your teenage son plays the drums, let them know in advance and mention that if it's getting too loud, they shouldn't hesitate to let you know.
  3. **Be Aware of Shared Walls – Position noisy household appliances, especially TVs and speakers, away from shared walls.** If you live above someone consider the time of day you do that aerobic workout you love so much. If you live below someone consider the strong scent of your cooking or preferred candles. A neighbor coming through your ceiling is not a good neighbor.
  4. **Control Your Dog – Keep your dogs on a leash and pick up after them.** Respect planting areas that your neighbors spend countless hours on. It is all fun petting and friendly licks until that poorly timed lift of the leg. Also, it is neighborly to be aware of others who would rather steer clear of your lovable "Rex." Dander allergies and dog fears are real, so crossing the street with your pet in certain areas can go a long way. A frightened neighbor is not a good neighbor. **BONUS:** Dog Barking – I know I am guilty of having my dog annoy my neighbors with the ill-timed barking fits. Whether you have a "yippee" dog or a "woof-er" dog, most others don't care to hear it. This is not the easiest fix, but talking to your neighbors about it can smooth things over before annoyances boil over.
  5. **Practice Parking Etiquette – When you park your vehicle, be sure not to block anyone's access, or make them have to pull out of a very tight spot.** Don't over-rev the engine of your car or motorcycle early in the morning or late at night. Avoid slamming your doors or shining your headlights into your neighbor's windows late at night. A trapped neighbor is not a good neighbor.
  6. **Slow Down, You're Driving Too Fast – An injured neighbor is not a good neighbor.**
  7. **Take Your Garbage Out – Pretty simple, really.** The dead animal stench coming from your rotting garbage makes everyone feel sick, particularly those of us down wind. We have specific garbage times for a reason. If you accidentally miss the collection, bring it back in immediately and try to contain it well. Garbage can attract vermin, insects, and other pests, and is also unsightly. A smelly neighbor is not a good neighbor.
  8. **Invite Me to the Party, Or Give Me Fair Warning – If you're going to fill up the street with cars and have that deejay blasting his tunes out into the universe through speakers bigger than a cow, then at least give me a bit of warning first.** A sleepless neighbor is not a good neighbor. Ok, so your neighbor would never do this, right? If you're planning a party, be sure to give your neighbors plenty of warning, letting them know when it's going to start and how long you expect it to go on. Leave them a telephone number to contact if they need to ask you to turn it down. If you get on well with your neighbors, why not invite them too?
  9. **Be Aware of Your Surroundings – Keep your eyes on anyone you don't know acting suspiciously around your neighbor's home.** When in doubt, call security or the police so they can quickly curtail any criminal activity. A robbed neighbor is not a good neighbor.
  10. **Be Adults – We are bound to have disagreements.** If an issue arises, talk to your neighbor directly and try to work out a solution that is agreeable. If you hear about things second-hand then disagreements can easily grow. It is best to give your reasons for a request to your neighbor yourself. A gossipy neighbor is not a good neighbor. Having said that, sometimes conflicts are not easily resolved. In these cases the best thing may be simple avoidance to circumvent an escalating conflict.
- So there you go. Ten easy-to-follow rules that will help make our neighborhood a better place; the Ten Commandments of the Good Neighbors, as it were. I'm sure there are other items that you can think of that might take the place of one or another of these on my list. Living by these might seem a matter of simple courtesy for some of us, but some people live in a bubble or else they just don't give a hoot. I am going to channel Robert Frost when I say, "Good fences make good neighbors."

*This article first appeared in October, 2011*

Council of Co-Owners  
**The Meadows**  
 6100 Strasburg Drive  
 Centreville, VA 20121

The Meadow Lark is published each month exclusively for the benefit of the residents and owners of The Meadows. It is the official publication of the Council of Co-Owners and is under the purview of the Board of Directors. News items, personal ads, and such are welcomed and should be placed in the large mailbox in front of the Clubhouse, emailed to meadowsoffice@verizon.net or faxed to 703-815-0755. The deadline is the 20th of each month. Personal ads must be 25 words or less, on 8½x11-inch paper. Include your name, Meadows address, and telephone number. They must be renewed each month. The Meadows does not endorse any advertisers.

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**Meadows Office**

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 703-628-9481

**Towing**  
 Battlefield Towing: 703-378-0059

**AAA/Republic Services**  
 703-818-8222  
 Call for special pick up, Thursdays only

## Remodeling?

Any desired changes to the exterior or interior of your unit must be submitted on an ARF or Request for Interior Alteration form to the Board of Directors for approval **PRIOR** to the change being done.

## A/C UNITS

If you replace your air conditioning unit, you may install it inside your utility room or submit an ARF for proposed exterior installation.

### Satellite Dishes in The Meadows



### The Meadows



## Security Totals

**August 15 – September 14, 2013**

Vehicles Ticketed: 51

Vehicles Towed: 7

Calls for service and/or situations involving or requiring security assistance, by street:

Avocado Court: 1

Cool Oak Lane: 5

Golden Oak Court/Road: 5

Rustling Leaves Lane: 6

Saguaro Place: 3

Saint Germain Drive: 3

Strasburg Drive: 4

Turin Lane: 2

Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD: 3

## Keep the Lights On!

In order to promote safety in our neighborhood, everyone is reminded to leave your porch lights on, both front and rear.

Generally, criminals like to operate in the dark, so the more light that is present, the less likely they will be to strike in that area.

Although we are blessed to have street lights, they cannot provide full light everywhere. If all units keep their porch lights on, the level of light in the community will be much more of a crime deterrent.

### ■ Regular Furnace Maintenance

It is critical to ensure safe and efficient operation of your furnace regardless of the age of the unit. Many heating and air conditioning companies offer discounted specials this time of year.

### ■ Carbon Monoxide Detectors

The furnaces and most hot water heaters in The Meadows use gas. It is imperative that all homes have a working carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas which can cause death.