

The Meadow Lark



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

Budget for 2017 Adopted

In their meeting on September 22, 2016, The Meadows Board of Directors adopted the 2017 budget. A copy of the budget can be found on our website (www.mymeadows.net) or in the Management Office. The Board understands that even the smallest increase in the condominium fee matters, which is why they work so hard every year to adopt a budget that makes certain The Meadows is financially sound without being a drain on the wallets of our Co-Owners. Projects common to older structures, such as waterproofing and asphalt replacement, are both costly and required. The adopted 2017 budget addresses the cost of maintaining and operating our aging community, while minimizing the financial impact on our Co-Owners.

Beginning January 1, 2017 the monthly assessment for a two bedroom condominium will be \$283 and for a three bedroom will be \$318. This increase of \$5 per month will ensure that the needs of our 45 year old community are met in the year ahead, as well as in the future through reserve funding.

You will receive new coupon books in the mail by early December. If you do not have them by December 15th, please contact SFMC at (703) 392-6006. Please note that your payment will be due on the 1st of the month even if you have not received your coupon book.

Election Time

It's that time of year again. In addition to a national election being held on November 8, The Meadows will have an election for members of the Board of Directors. Five seats are being contested this year.

We will hold the election at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 6. The package for the Annual Meeting will be mailed out shortly. This package will contain all the information about the election, including a proxy and a ballot. If you cannot attend the meeting, you need to send in the proxy, and you can then also cast your votes for members of the Board of Directors by returning the ballot. If you do not receive this package by mid-November, please contact the office so you can obtain one.

Return of the proxy form is very important. Our By-Laws require a certain percentage of Co-Owners either to be present at the meeting or to have signed a proxy form so they can be counted as present. Proxy forms, as well as the ballot if you wish, need to be returned by 4:30 PM Monday, December 5. They can be mailed, placed in the black Council mailbox located outside the Clubhouse or can be returned to The Meadows office in person.

**See Candidate Bios on Page 3
Candidates Night November 17
7:00 PM in the Clubhouse**

NOVEMBER



Adopt-a-Highway: Saturday, November 5, 9:00 AM. Meet at the Clubhouse.

Candidates Night: Thursday, November 17, 7:00 PM in the Clubhouse

Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, November 17, immediately following Candidates Night, 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 are available upon request at The Meadows office and online at mymeadows.net.

Looking forward to:

Annual Meeting: Tuesday, December 6, 7:30 PM, Centre Ridge Elementary School

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

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Closed Nov. 24 Thanksgiving and Nov. 25 Day after Thanksgiving

NO TRASH PICK-UP

on November 24, Thanksgiving
Please do not put trash out on Nov. 23



Sunday, November 6

"Fall Back" at 2 AM

Set your clocks back one hour and replace the batteries in your smoke alarms

President's Corner

Happy Fall! I hope everyone was able to enjoy some of the many fall festivals around our area. I highly recommend visiting one of the various apple orchards nearby. No matter how fresh an apple from a local grocery store is, nothing can beat a freshly picked apple right from the tree. My wife and I visit Marker Miller Orchards in Winchester, Virginia a few times during this season. Simply delicious.

As mentioned in last month's *Meadow Lark* newsletter, The Meadows monthly assessment increased slightly for each unit. The Board understands that any increase, no matter the amount, is never an easy pill to swallow. Simply put, our community is over 40 years old and many items are in need of repair/replacement. Unfortunately, addressing these items can be costly.

Happy early Thanksgiving, everyone! Take care, be safe, and have fun!

~ Eric Sokolowski

Board of Directors Motions

At the September 22 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to affirm staff approval for installing three air conditioners on the Common Elements.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm email votes which approved installing a dryer vent, a landscape installation, following our attorney's advice concerning a collection case and playground and concrete repairs.
- Passed a motion to withdraw previous approval of an agreement with PSI for seal coating and striping, and to instead accept a proposal for crack filling and striping costing \$14,443.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$1055.51 from National Antenna for antenna repairs.
- Passed a motion concerning changes to funds spent for the Halloween and Holiday Decorating Contests.
- Passed a motion to issue a third parking sticker due to special circumstances.
- Passed a motion to renew the insurance for staff agreement with United Healthcare with a premium decrease of 3.9%.
- Passed a motion to renew our Master Insurance policy with USI for one year.
- Passed a motion to approve a contract with Bright View for snow removal for the upcoming winter.

- Passed a motion to approve a budget for 2017.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$838.72 from American Pool Service for a protection plan for the swimming pools.

At the October 20 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to transfer any funds in excess of \$250,000 in any financial institution to the Washington First operating account.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm email votes which approved installing two sewer clean-outs and transfer of funds from playground reserves to replacement reserves.
- Passed a motion to approve a winterization plan for the lower pool pump motor with American Pool Service for \$397.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid from American Pool Service for whitecoating the lower pool for \$18,890 contingent on the work not being performed until next spring.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to install a camera on the common elements.

Meadows Website
www.mymeadows.net



Security Totals

September 15 – October 14, 2016

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

Avocado Court:	1
Cool Oak Lane:	1
Golden Oak Court/Road:	7
Rustling Leaves Lane:	1
Saguaro Place:	3
Saint Germain Drive:	4
Strasburg Drive:	4
Turin Lane:	3

Vehicles Ticketed: 73

Vehicles Towed: 11

Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD: 3

The Meadows



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.
- Charcoal grills only are prohibited on The Meadows property.
- 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.

2017 Board Candidates

There are four candidates for the five open seats on The Meadows Board of Directors. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 6 at 7:30 PM at Centre Ridge Elementary School. Here is a brief biography of each candidate and a statement concerning why they are running for the Board of Directors. Please plan to attend the Candidates Night on Thursday, November 17 at 7:00 PM in the Clubhouse. You can meet and ask questions of these candidates at that meeting.

Mike Auber

Mike is an engineer with a local company and has lived in The Meadows since 1988. He has served on the Board during two different periods. He is interested in running for the Board because he feels responsible individuals must put in time to do the work to keep The Meadows functioning and a fit place to live for all the residents. Mike is looking forward to retirement in a few years and plans to continue to live here for the foreseeable future.

Linda Lachapelle

Linda has lived in The Meadows for over 25 years and served on the Board for over 11 years and works for the county schools. She would like to be re-elected to the Board so she can continue to work hard to ensure that our community remains well-maintained, professionally managed and is financially sound. She says she is not afraid to raise difficult questions to ensure that all sides of an issue are looked at prior to making decisions that affect all 618 units. Linda volunteers at her son's school, at her church and with the Boy Scouts.

Bill Liedtke

Bill is a customer relationship manager for a local education firm. He is interested in being a part of the decision making process for the community he has lived in for 37 years. He wants to make sure the property is well taken care of to protect everyone's investment in their homes. He likes working with others with a similar interest in making decisions which are for the best of the community. Bill has served on The Meadows governing bodies since 1984 and worked with the swim team for many years.

Jason Spessard

Jason has been a resident of The Meadows for the past eight years and is the finance director for an area association. He has previously served on the Board, and is interested in continuing because he says he has a vested interest in our community. He says his main focus is working with other owners to find cost savings, and that any action by the association should be for the benefit of all homeowners.

Location of Annual Meeting

In order to make attendance at the Annual Meeting possible for all Co-owners, the meeting is held in a place that has no steps and will be more accessible. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 6 at 7:30 PM in the multipurpose room of Centre Ridge Elementary School** here in Centreville. The school is located at 14400 New Braddock Road.

Important Information on Trash

Just a reminder that there is no trash pick-up on Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, November 24). Avoid violation charges of \$50 by keeping your trash in your trash bin until the post-Thanksgiving pick up on Monday, November 28.

Don't Feed the Critters!

It has recently been noted in some areas around the community that people are putting out various types of food items to feed the birds, squirrels, etc. It should be noted that it is against Meadows rules to do this, in fact even dogs and cats must be fed inside your unit and no food for them left on the Common Elements.

In the past we have had a rodent problem in some areas of the community, which was either caused or made worse by having a food source available for the mice, and even worse, rats. The rat problem has been controlled, we have bait stations in several places within our development; however if food items are left out, the rats are more likely to feed on this rather than the bait which will control their population.

Our feathered and furry friends for the most part have food provided for them by nature, so we do not need to feed them. And we certainly don't want to attract rats into our community. If you do see any rodents, please let the office know so action can be taken to eradicate them.

Reminder for Pet Owners

The Meadows Rules and Regulations state that all pet feces must be bagged and removed from the Common Elements immediately. In addition, please be reminded that the Fairfax County Leash Law is in effect at The Meadows. This law requires dogs to be on a leash at all times when outside. For the health and safety of our residents, please immediately remove dog feces and keep dogs leashed at all times when on the Common Elements. It is important to remember that violations of these policies could result in the assessment of penalties in the amount of \$50 per occurrence.

In addition, please do not leave the baggies you use to scoop up your dog's waste anywhere on the Common Elements. These baggies should be placed in the proper pet waste stations that we have located throughout the community or should be taken to your unit for proper disposal.

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
 Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
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24-Hour EMERGENCY ONLY
Service First: 1-888-980-8958

Security
 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



Utilities Must Remain On!

ALL Co-Owners are required to keep the utilities on in their units. The heat must be set at or above 65°F in all units, vacant or occupied. This temperature may seem a little high, but one must consider that the furnace room where the pipes originate is unheated and may be affected by the wind chill factor. Another thing to consider is if the water is turned off, it remains in the pipes and is subject to even quicker freezing. Every year, major damage to several units has occurred as the result of pipes freezing and breaking in this manner.

Any damage resulting from broken pipes, etc., caused by improper heat being maintained in a unit will be the responsibility of the Co-Owner. A minimum of 65 degrees Fahrenheit must be maintained during the winter months. – Rules and Regulations.

In addition, to this regulation, The Meadows Rules also includes a Utility Maintenance Requirement for all units. It states:

In the event that a Co-Owner does not keep electric and/or gas utilities connected as required, the Council of Co-Owners shall take any and all measures reasonably necessary to protect the common elements of the condominium which shall include but are not limited to the appropriation of funds to reconnect and maintain electric and gas utilities. All costs and changes incurred by the Council shall be assessed against the unit owner.

You can help by reporting vacant units to the office as soon as you notice them. Send reports to the office via email, fax or phone. Make sure that you include the address. Report any evidence of possible broken pipes or water coming from a unit immediately!

What To Do If You Experience a Leak

If you experience a leak in your unit you must contact your own plumber to respond.

If your leak appears to be from a neighboring unit you should attempt to reach your neighbor and have them shut off the water to their unit to minimize damage. Most shut off valves are located in the utility closet behind the hot water heater; however, if there have been any plumbing changes in the unit by a current or previous Co-Owner, the valve may have been moved. If the neighbor is not reachable or unable to shut off the water, contact the Fire Department and they will report and turn the water off. In these cases, you may contact the Management Office on the next business day; however, since this is a neighbor-to-neighbor issue, The Meadows involvement is limited. You are encouraged to contact your neighbor directly or if that is not possible, file a claim through your homeowner’s insurance company.

The only exception to the procedures outlined above is if you are in an upper unit and inspection of your attic indicates the leak is coming from the roof. If this is the case, please contact the office to schedule an appointment for a maintenance technician to inspect the leak. In the meantime, simply place a bucket or pan under the leak to keep the water from penetrating into your living space. While this is not an after-hours emergency call, we do ask that you let us know as soon as possible so that we may see the attic while it is still wet. This helps us determine where the problem is.

Adopt-a-Highway: November 5

Volunteers are needed for the Adopt-a-Highway pickup at 9:00 AM on Saturday, November 5. Meet at the Clubhouse.

Please show your community spirit and come out to help for an hour or so. We will be picking up along St. Germain Drive.