

The Meadow Lark



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

Budget Adjustment

In order for home buyers to use FHA funding to purchase a home, the home/community must meet certain criteria set forth by FHA. While there is no obligation to be FHA approved, The Meadows has been an FHA-approved community for many decades.

This year there was a slight miscalculation in our budget that may have made it difficult for some buyers to qualify for FHA financing to buy a unit here. This could also affect current co-owner's ability to refinance. The Board recognizes that many of our current and potential co-owners use FHA financing, so in order to regain compliance with FHA standards, a slight adjustment to the 2017 budget was approved on February 8, 2017. The Board approved moving \$3,000 from the snow removal line item into reserve contributions, making The Meadows once again FHA compliant.

Please be assured that the movement of \$3,000 from snow removal to reserve contributions was the only change to the budget; there was no change to your monthly assessments. Assessments for two bedroom units remain at \$283 per month and three bedroom units remain \$318 per month. The adjusted budget is available in the Documents page of The Meadows website (www.mymeadows.net) or in the Management Office.

Kindergarten Registration

Do you have a child who is scheduled to begin school this coming fall? Centre Ridge Elementary School in Centreville will conduct their Kindergarten Registration for the school year 2017-18 on Friday, March 24th from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM and on Wednesday evening, April 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM in the school office.

Forms and other information are available on line at: <http://www.fcps.edu/it/forms/bundles.shtml>. They are also available in the front office for your convenience. Students are not required at the time of registration. If you have any questions please call the school at 703-227-2600.

2017 Rules and Regulations Available on Our Website

In their February 16, 2017 meeting, the Board of Directors approved updates to The Meadows Rules and Regulations. The updated Rules and Regulations can be found on our website at www.mymeadows.net. Please take some time to review the document with your household and/or tenants. If you would like to receive a paper copy of the Rules and Regulations you can email, fax, or drop a note in the office and we will print a copy for you. We hope the information contained in the Rules and Regulations will be helpful to you and enhance your experience at The Meadows. More details about changes for 2017 will appear in the April issue.



Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, March 16, 2017, 7:30 PM in the Clubhouse. Note: 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.

Adopt-a-Highway: Saturday, March 18, 9:00 AM at the Clubhouse.

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

Adopt-a-Highway March 18

Volunteers are needed for the Adopt-a-Highway pickup at 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 18. 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.

Meadows Website
www.mymeadows.net



President's Corner

Hello everyone!

Talk about crazy weather. I'm writing this in late February with my windows open in my condo because it's beautiful outside. Seems like we won't be getting much of a winter in our area this year. More time to spend outdoors enjoying the cool temperatures before the summer heat and humidity kick in!

I wanted to personally thank the residents who I've seen picking up trash in our community lately. Although your efforts may seem futile at times, please know that they do not go unnoticed. Thank you! I can't overemphasize the impact we all can make in our community if we take a few moments out of our busy schedules to do something as simple as picking up some debris around our areas. A little effort can absolutely go a long way.

Lastly, the Board made a minor adjustment to the 2017 Meadows Budget in order to meet an FHA loan requirement. This adjustment has no impact to our monthly assessment fees, but helps all those in our community and new residents with securing an FHA loan. For more information, feel free to contact the Office or visit our website at www.mymeadows.net.

~ Eric Sokolowski

Vacant Seat on the Board of Directors

We currently have an open seat on the Board of Directors. If you are interested in investing your skills, talents and time into your community, then the Board would like to talk with you! To be considered for appointment to this seat you must be a co-owner and your account must be in good standing. The Board meets on the third Thursday evening of every month with a few work sessions or special meetings/events throughout the year. If you meet these requirements and are interested in serving, please drop an email to brooke.themeadows@verizon.net or stop by the Management Office to complete an application.

Board of Directors Motions

At the February 16 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to deny placing planters on a front balcony.
- Passed a motion to approve a new dryer connection and location.
- Passed a motion to approve a bathroom renovation but deny a kitchen renovation pending submission of more information.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm email votes which approved removal of two trees, a railing repair, replacing batteries in one golf cart, adjusting a parking space, an antenna repair, a waterproofing job, alterations to a kitchen and bathroom, denying a towing reimbursement request and approved adjusting the budget.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$525 from Meadows Farms for repair of a portion of a stone wall.
- Passed a motion to deny a request for a parking sticker for a vehicle registered at a non-Meadows address.
- Passed motions to approve changes to the Rules and Regulations.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE



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.

Security Totals

January 15 – February 14, 2017

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

Avocado Court:	1
Cool Oak Lane:	3
Golden Oak Court/Road:	7
Rustling Leaves Lane:	2
Saguaro Place:	3
Saint Germain Drive:	2
Strasburg Drive:	3
Turin Lane:	3
Vehicles Ticketed:	44
Vehicles Towed:	8
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 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.

Getting 'Face Time' with the Board of Directors

In the past some Co-Owners and Residents expressed a desire to discuss issues or concerns and were frustrated with only being given three minutes during a meeting of the Board to do so. We would like to share with you a simple way to engage the Board of Directors beyond the three minute time limit, but first we feel it is important for all residents to understand the meeting format, reasons for time limits and why the Board can not immediately act on issues brought before them in guest time.

Time Limit to Speak

During each Board meeting there is time set aside for guests to speak, but because this is a business meeting with specific items that require consideration, there is a three minute time limit for unscheduled speakers. This common method of limiting time and interaction for guest speakers is used by many governing bodies, such as Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, associations and like organizations. There is a necessity for time limits because every meeting carries an agenda of items, each of which requires the Board to consider, discuss and attempt to render a decision. You may not be aware that there is a time limit in the By-Laws stating meetings should not go beyond 10:00pm. This gives the Board a very finite amount of time to get their work done, so unfortunately lengthy dialog between unscheduled speakers and the Board is not possible. In addition, the Board wants to be sure that they make the right decisions and offer correct information to Co-Owners, which is not possible when an issue is brought before them for the first time at a meeting. To provide Co-Owners with solid and factual information they need to be able to thoroughly research all matters before acting.

Contact Management Staff

If you have questions or concerns about operations we suggest that you contact our Management staff, as they are very knowledgeable on accounts, violations, issues facing our community, as well as the actions of the Board, limitations of the Association and the legal obligations we must fulfill. If you would like to have a specific issue discussed by the Board or a specific action considered by the Board, we welcome you to add your concerns or questions to a meeting agenda. This allows the Board of Directors the opportunity to review your concerns or issues and requested action in advance then come to the meeting prepared to discuss the matters, offer suggestions and take action, if needed. It also allows you the opportunity to directly interact with the Board in a more meaningful way.

To Be Put onto the Agenda

The process to be added to an agenda is quite simple; first, you must submit to the Management Office in writing the issue you would like to be added to the agenda. Please include any action you wish the Board to take regarding your concern, any specific considerations or accommodations you are requesting, any documentation you have to support your request, your name, address and telephone number. The Property Manager will then gather

any additional information regarding your request that the Board will need and will include that documentation, along with all of the information you have provided, in the Board packet that is delivered to BOD members in advance of the Board meeting. Board members will then review all of the information prior to the meeting. You will still have three minutes during the guest portion to make any additional statements or advise the Board of anything that may have changed since your request was received. When your item is called from the agenda, the Board will discuss the matter and if necessary, will ask you direct questions about the matter and allow you time to reply. Typically the Board is able to render their decision or offer their position at that meeting; however, for some matters it takes additional research or thought and the matter will be continued (or deferred) to a future meeting.

Attend the Meetings

We are always happy to have residents attend our meetings, whether to simply observe what is happening in our community or to offer their thoughts and concerns. If you are unable to regularly attend Board meetings, please go to our website, www.mymeadows.net, or the Management Office to view full meeting minutes. Abbreviated minutes are also published in each issue of *The Meadow Lark*. Meeting agendas are posted in the Management Office and online on the Tuesday before each Board Meeting. If you see an issue that the Board is currently considering and you would like to weigh in, please contact the Management Office and make arrangements to have your thoughts brought before the Board. If you can not attend the meeting, your written statement can be presented on your behalf. Knowing the issues currently before the Board of Directors is the best way for residents to stay informed and allows Co-Owners the opportunity to make their wishes known prior to Board action.

We hope that the guidelines above will help to facilitate open lines of communication and help residents make the most of their meeting attendance.

Bits & Pieces

- **Security Note:** Be sure to be extra vigilant when securing your home. Statistically, homes are more likely to be broken into this time of year than during any other time. Also, protect your vehicles by removing your GPS units and other valuables after you park in The Meadows.
- **Curfew Reminder:** The Meadows has a curfew in effect for minors under the age of 18. Please refer to The Meadows Rules and Regulations.
- **Announcements:** Submit your announcement to The Meadow Lark. The deadline is 20th of the month. Please include your name, address and contact information. This information will not appear in The Meadow Lark. See the back page for fax or email information.

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
Phone: 703-830-4464
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Website: mymeadows.net

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



Parking in The Meadows

Vehicles parked on Meadows property must display a valid parking permit. The acceptable forms of a permit can either be a Meadows parking sticker, a green Visitor hang tag, or a red Extended Visitor Hang tag. For details on our parking rules and regulations, please feel free to contact The Meadows office, or refer to the 2017 Meadows Rules and Regulations, Section X: Rules Governing Motor Vehicles.

War on Trash!

For people who live in a community like ours, one of the biggest problems faced is that contained in a very simple word—trash! The subject of trash seems to be the number one complaint of residents of condominium communities, The Meadows is no different.

Our Board of Directors has been discussing trash at recent meetings, and has been trying to come up with a way to solve the trash problem here within the community. Although we may never completely solve the problem, it is our goal to improve our living conditions. Our residents should not have to put up with so much trash, both loose small pieces of trash that just litter the ground and blow around at all times, as well as piles of trash bags and stacks of furniture that are put out on a regular basis well before the allowable time.

To achieve a cleaner community, we have to declare a war on all trash. Our maintenance staff picks up trash on a daily basis, but it seems that some of our residents just throw more litter around the community right behind them. This is unacceptable behavior. Everyone has the responsibility to help clean up our community. No one should be littering, and as a good citizen if you find litter laying around pick it up and dispose of it. Become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. More importantly, tell those who are littering to stop it, and if necessary report their behavior to the office.

The biggest eyesore we face is created by those who put their trash out many hours and sometime even days before the mandated hour of 5 PM on Sundays and Wednesdays. We will be trying very hard to determine where trash put out early has come from, and violators will be subject to \$50 charges which we are allowed to levy for violations of our Rules and Regulations.

Catching the scofflaws who put trash out early is not generally an easy thing to do, so we need everyone's help in doing this. If you see someone putting out their trash early, report this to the office. We need the address of these people so appropriate action can be taken against them.

Do you enjoy living with piles of trash, which draw insects, rats, etc., for days at a time? The only way to prevent this is to take action against those who choose not to follow the rules, and it takes all of us to fight this menace. Again, become part of the solution and report these violations, rather than being part of the problem and just letting it happen. Unless the people causing the problem are pointed out and fined, they will most likely just continue to put trash out early. Hitting them in the pocketbook may help in getting our community cleaned up, but it will take everyone's cooperation in this effort.