

The Meadow Lark



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

Pools Will Not Open Due to COVID-19

It is with great sadness that we announce that for the first time ever, The Meadows swimming pools will not open this season. The decision was not easy and we hated to do it, but there is simply no way to safely staff or operate the pools while we are still under threat of the virus and operating under relatively strict prevention measures.

Everything from closed borders to halted Red Cross certification/training programs pose serious problems in getting qualified lifeguards and pool operators. In addition, the social distancing requirements that will be in place for the foreseeable future don't lend themselves to the swimming pool environment. Masks and gloves can't be worn by lifeguards while monitoring the pool or performing a rescue, sanitizing the bathrooms and check-in station after each patron passes through would be difficult even if we paid for an additional full-time pool employee, and keeping a 6 foot distance between patrons in the pool, most of whom are children, just isn't reasonable. At the time of this writing, many other private pools have already made the same decision and we are told that an announcement that Fairfax and Prince William County operated pools will also be closed for the season is expected to come in the next few days.

We will be getting a significant rebate from our pool contractor since they will not be staffing the pools. The Board will make a decision how those funds will be used when they begin budget discussions in August/September.

We share in your disappointment of not having the pools available this summer and deeply appreciate your understanding as we work to do our part in keeping the community safe and healthy.



Slow Down, Summer is Here!

With the arrival of the summer season, many children will be out and about throughout our community. More people in general will be crossing the streets in all parts of the community while out enjoying the warm weather.

School is of course out, so the children of the community will be at play throughout the entire day, which is another good reason to be aware as you are driving within The Meadows. Please be reminded that the speed limit on all of the streets within The Meadows is 15 miles per hour.

The safety of our children, as well as all of our residents, is of the utmost importance. Be a responsible driver and look out for pedestrians and other vehicles when driving here in The Meadows. Parents are also cautioned to make sure their children are playing in safe areas, and not impeding the passage of vehicles when at play.



Board of Directors Meeting: Tentatively set for Thursday, June 18, 2020, 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.

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

Lock Your Car!

Last month there were several vehicles broken into in the overnight hours, and some items stolen from inside them. Whenever you park your vehicle, no matter what time, please remember to lock it for your own protection. Also never leave valuables or items you want to keep where thieves can see them, remove them from the vehicle or from sight.

Be Safe in Your Home

It seems that frequently you hear or read about crime that has affected an area near where you live or even in your own community. While you cannot stop a criminal from doing things that are hurtful or illegal, there are many actions that you can take in advance to protect your property and your family. To protect your property at night, leaving your porch lights on, front and rear, is an excellent deterrent to criminals. The bad guys prefer to work under the cloak of darkness so no one sees them. Lighting up the area around your unit will make your area less susceptible to their actions.

If you see anything that is suspicious, always call the Police immediately. Another important safety item is to always lock all of your doors and windows. A large percentage of break-ins, etc. are at homes where the criminal entered through an unlocked door or window. Also keep your car doors locked and all valuables out of sight. In addition, make sure your children are properly supervised and you know where they are at all times.

President's Corner

Welcome to summer. The weirdest summer ever. It's definitely going to be a different summer. The pool water will remain calm, and the smell of sunscreen will not be wafting through the air at our clubhouse. Summer camps have all been cancelled. This COVID-19 pandemic has really turned our lives upside down. About all we can do is stay abreast of the ever-changing guidelines, rules and restrictions and take things one day at a time. Flexibility seems to be extremely key nowadays. It remains incumbent upon residents to continue to take this situation seriously and do their part to minimize the spread of this deadly disease. The association highly encourages you to review safety guidelines and stay current on updates from the CDC, the local health department, and the World Health Organization.

Please continue to abide by the social distancing guidelines and refrain from gathering in groups around playgrounds and other common element areas. Parents, please continue to keep an eye on your children to ensure they aren't gathering in groups as well. We all need to continue to do our part to try to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Many people are struggling. Struggling with so many different areas of their lives. The Fairfax County Department of Family Services offers guidance on how to access their services remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their "Assistance from a Distance" flyer is available online in 7 different languages (English, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese) and provides information and phone numbers for a wide range of available services. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/assistance-from-a-distance

In addition, the multilingual call center staff at Fairfax County's Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) can assist callers from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to help connect residents to county and community-based services to help with needs such as food, emergency shelter, clothing, financial assistance, etc. CSP can be reached by calling 703-222-0080.

Continue to try to stay positive, reach out to others to keep from feeling isolated or if you need help, and we'll get through this!!

~ Linda Lachapelle

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.

Board of Directors Motions

At the May Board Meeting:

Due to COVID-19 these motions were passed through an email vote.

- Passed a motion to approve not opening the pools this summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Passed a motion to approve the draft 2019 audit.
- Passed a motion to authorize purchase of two new front entrance signs for \$4981.
- Passed a motion to require reimbursement by a Co-owner for the expense of replacing a roof section.
- Passed a motion to approve a bid of \$83,130 from Middeldorf for power-washing and painting of 165 units plus the clubhouse.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

Security Totals

April 15 – May 14, 2020

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

Avocado Court:	0
Cool Oak Lane:	1
Golden Oak Court/Road:	2
Rustling Leaves Lane:	3
Saguaro Place:	2
Saint Germain Drive:	0
Strasburg Drive:	0
Turin Lane:	2
Vehicles Ticketed:	38
Vehicles Towed:	4
Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD:	1

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.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors Recommended

Natural gas supplied to a heater, stove, water heater, or other gas-supplied appliances can result in the release of unsafe levels of Carbon Monoxide. The Meadows, along with our insurance carrier, strongly recommends every unit to have one or more carbon monoxide detectors installed within 15 feet of all sleeping areas.

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas which can be deadly! Carbon Monoxide can only be detected with Carbon Monoxide detectors, so it is important that each unit be equipped with a working CO detector. These detectors are inexpensive (\$20-\$50) and can be purchased at any home improvement or box store. Acceptable detectors must be UL listed and may be one of the following:

1. Battery powered
2. Plug-in with battery backup
3. Directly wired with battery backup

Combination smoke and CO detectors are acceptable as long as they have different alarm tones. Detectors must be installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. The combination battery/sensor must be changed approximately every two years.

Noise Reminder

In the summer months we all like to spend time outside to enjoy the warm weather and socialize with our friends and neighbors. It is important to remember that we need to minimize disturbances to others even when we are outdoors. Loud music and boisterous conversations can create a lot of unwanted noise for others. Residents of upper units need to be especially careful of heavy walking and running in their units in the late and overnight hours.

Please remind children to be respectful of others while playing. Avoid rowdy horseplay and loud games near windows and patios, never use items from neighbor's porches or patios and do not bounce balls on the exterior of the buildings.

Have You Checked Your Balcony or Patio Recently?

Did you know that the care and maintenance of rear balconies and patios belongs to each individual Co-Owner? This means that you should conduct routine inspections of these areas to ensure your safety as well as that of others. Loose railings can create an obvious hazard and cracked and spalling concrete creates a trip hazard. Upper units should also regularly inspect the metal column that supports their balcony slab. Any signs of rust or deterioration should be immediately repaired by a professional as failure of this support column could have devastating results. Even simple problems like insufficient caulking along the perimeter of the balcony slab can cause leaks into the unit below. Proper caulking of sliding door thresholds is also very important to prevent potential water damage. Co-Owner's are responsible for paying for any damages or injury resulting from improper maintenance.

It is important to note that if the caulk around the balcony slab or sliding door threshold is jointed, cracked or missing it must be cut out and completely replaced. Unfortunately, the caulk used for these areas is a specialty product not easily found in local hardware stores. Standard caulk will NOT keep the moisture out of the joints or the lower unit. To facilitate the repair of these caulk joints The Meadows has purchased the specialty caulk in bulk and will make the product available to residents at cost. The cost of the product is \$4.50 per tube and each balcony will require approximately two tubes of caulk. If you need this product please contact the Management Office to make purchase arrangements. If you would like to locate the product yourself the details are as follows:

- Brand: Tremco
- Color: Limestone
- Amount needed: approximately two tubes per balcony

A simple monthly inspection and timely repairs can save you a lot of money in the long run and will prevent damage to your unit and those around you.

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.

Council of Co-Owners
The Meadows
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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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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

As a reminder, any vehicle 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 Frequent Visitor hang tag. For details on our parking rules and regulations, please feel free to contact The Meadows office, or refer to the 2019 Meadows Rules and Regulations, Section X: Rules Governing Motor Vehicles.

Requirements for Installing Exterior HVAC Units

Recent EPA changes in air conditioning and heating standards have made future maintenance and availability of interior HVAC units much more difficult. While there should be no problem maintaining an existing interior unit for the rest of its useful life, units installed in the near future will have difficulty finding a machine that will fit into the utility closet and obtaining the refrigerant for these units will become pricey. Eventually, the refrigerant currently used will no longer be available and these units will not be able to be recharged.

As a result of these changes, The Meadows Board of Directors has reconsidered allowing HVAC units to be installed on the Common Elements. Going forward, Co-Owner's who would like to install an HVAC unit on the grounds will need to follow the steps below:

- Any Co-Owner wishing to install an HVAC unit on the Common Elements must submit their request in writing to the Management Office.
- Once a request is received an appointment will be made for The Meadows Maintenance Supervisor to meet with the Co-Owner and/or the Co-Owner's HVAC contractor to review the specifications and provide detailed requirements for the installation.
- After this meeting the Co-Owner must submit a completed Architectural Review Form (ARF) outlining the agreed upon details of the proposed installation, an Installation Agreement and a copy of the contractor's license. The Board of Directors will then review the documents and make a determination on whether or not to approve the installation.

REMEMBER:

**ANY HVAC UNIT INSTALLED ON THE COMMON ELEMENTS
WITHOUT WRITTEN BOARD APPROVAL
MAY BE REQUIRED TO BE REMOVED AT THE CO-OWNER'S EXPENSE.**

