

The Meadow Lark



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

2024 Budget Approved

The Meadows Board of Directors adopted a budget for 2024. A copy of the budget can be found on our website (www.mymeadows.net) or picked up in the Management Office. The adopted 2024 budget addresses the cost of maintaining and operating our aging community in the post-COVID era, while minimizing the financial impact as much as possible for our Co-Owners. Beginning January 1, 2024 the monthly assessment for a three bedroom condominium will be \$389 and for a two bedroom will be \$346. Because of major changes in the insurance industry, our insurance premium had a 95% increase (\$235K to \$459K) which is the primary reason for a large increase this year. These new fees will ensure that the needs of our over 50 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 in early December. If you do not have them by December 15th, please contact Cardinal Management at (703) 565-5259. Please note that your payment will be due on the 1st of the month even if you have not received your coupon book.

Annual Meeting for 2023

The Annual Meeting of the Council of Co-Owners of The Meadows will be held Tuesday, December 12 at 7:30 PM on Zoom to allow more to attend. The link to the meeting was in the Annual Meeting package and will be posted on the community website the day before the meeting. Attendees must register in advance in order to attend, registration opens at 7:00 PM the night of the meeting.

The election of new Board members to the Board of Directors will be held at this meeting. Four two-year terms on the Board are up for election this year. If you cannot attend the meeting, it is very important that you send in the proxy you received in the mail, and you can also cast your votes for members of the Board of Directors by returning the ballot. The proxy and ballot need to be returned by 4:30 PM Monday, December 11. They can be mailed or placed in the black Council mailbox located outside the Clubhouse

Turn the Water Off!



With December having arrived, all Meadows residents who live in a downstairs (lpwr) unit are required to turn off the water spigots in both the front and back of their units. The control valve for the front water bib is located under the kitchen sink, and the valve controlling the rear water bib is located in the utility room off the back patio.

The purpose of this procedure is to prevent the freezing of hose bibs and associated plumbing during the winter months. It is important to note that any damage that occurs, caused by the non-winterization of a hose bib, is the responsibility of the Co-owner, and not the Association. Co-owners and tenants needing assistance with this process should contact The Meadows office to schedule an appointment with a maintenance technician.

DECEMBER

Board of Directors Meeting: Because of the holiday season, the Board of Directors will not meet in December. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, 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.

Annual Meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 7:30 PM via Zoom.

Holiday Decorating Contest: Wednesday, December 13, 7-9 PM.

Christmas Tree Pickup: December 26–January 11.

Residents and Co-Owners are welcomed and encouraged to attend any Board or committee meeting. Meetings are held in the Clubhouse. Board meetings also held on Zoom.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT 2024 CONDO FEES

Please be advised of the new Condo fees for 2024. The new fees for a **TWO bedroom unit will be \$346 and the fee for a THREE bedroom unit will be \$389**. If you have not received your new coupons for 2024 by December 15 please call Cardinal Management at (703) 565-5259. Please note that your payment will be due on the 1st of each month even if you have not received your coupon book. Copies of the 2024 budget may be obtained from The Meadows Office or online at www.mymeadows.net.

President's Corner

Hello Meadows, the Board would like to address the adopted 2024 budget and explain the hard decisions we faced to keep monthly assessments from rising drastically. Because of the unprecedented increase in the Master Policy insurance expenses, the Board worked hard to reduce line-item expenses where possible while still funding critical projects/plumbing repairs and considering community requests for cleaner common elements and security presence.

When the Board realized that adopting a budget **without** any changes would lead to monthly assessments **increasing \$52 (\$369/Month) for two-bedrooms and \$58 (\$415/Month) for three-bedrooms**, we knew **major adjustments** were needed to ensure Co-owners would not suffer financially.

The Board reviewed the 2023 Summer Pool usage numbers and found that only **68 Co-owners** visited the pool, the pool was primarily used by **renters NOT Co-owners** in 2023. The 3½ month pool contract alone totaled \$69,000, the water usage cost largely increases during those months, and pool equipment malfunctions could cost thousands to repair.

For the 2024 budget, the Board considered the pool information and the community's feedback and needs, and elected to:

Reduce the groundskeeping contract to three days per week.

Close the Pool for the 2024 Season.

Keep Security the same.

The pool closure is not permanent, and the Board hopes to be financially able to open it for the 2025 season. This was not an easy decision to make, and we know that this is upsetting news, but we needed to look at the needs of the entire community and make a decision that would benefit the majority of the Co-owners who pay the dues.

Due to the changes above, beginning in January, the monthly assessment will be **\$346 (\$29 increase) for two-bedrooms and \$389 (\$32 increase) for three-bedrooms.**

~ Kristina Berry

Board of Directors Motions

At the October 12 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to reaffirm an email vote for Michael and Son for jetting a sewer line.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm an email vote for removal of asbestos materials to be paid from reserves.
- Passed a motion to change payment for the asbestos removal to the operating budget instead of reserves.
- Passed a motion to adjust the spending limits for the Board President and Treasurer and the Property and Community Managers.
- Passed a motion to modify the length of time a visitor can use a hang tag from 14 days to 10.
- Passed a motion to approve installation of a safety handrail on St. Germain Dr.
- Passed a motion to approve an Interior Alteration Request pending contractor and licensing information.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE



Meadows Website
www.mymeadows.net

Security Totals

October 15 – November 14, 2023

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

Avocado Court:	3
Cool Oak Lane:	4
Golden Oak Court/Road:	11
Rustling Leaves Lane:	2
Saguaro Place:	7
Saint Germain Drive:	5
Strasburg Drive:	6
Turin Lane:	3
Vehicles Ticketed:	14
Vehicles Towed:	15
Violation Letters Sent:	41
Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD:	12

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.



Decorating Contest

There will be a Holiday Decorating Contest which will be judged on Wednesday, December 13 between 7:00 and 9:00 PM. Please be sure to have your lights turned on during this time for the judges to see. Happy Holidays to all residents of The Meadows!



**NO TRASH PICK-UP
DEC. 25 AND JAN. 1**

**DO NOT PUT TRASH OUT ON
DEC. 24/25
DEC. 31/JAN. 1**

Frozen Pipes = Big Trouble!

Our Management is trying to make sure that the utilities remain on and the thermostats are set to the proper temperature in all units to prevent pipes from freezing and breaking. This is done to prevent water damage to the affected home as well as the possibility of water damage to surrounding homes.

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! See the back page for office and emergency after hour phone numbers.

Holiday Tip From Security

We are in the holiday season, and many people are receiving more packages at this time of year than is usual. Thieves are smart enough to know this, and can take packages from people's front porches or steps. If you are expecting a package, be on the lookout for the mailman or delivery driver so you can receive the merchandise you ordered without someone else getting it first. Help your neighbors out as well, if they have a package sitting on their front porch take it in and give it to them once they are at home.

Report suspicious activities to Meadows Security at 703-628-9481 from 4:00 PM until 12:00 AM (midnight) daily and to Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131 at all other times. For any emergency call 911 first and then Meadows Security if during their scheduled onsite hours.

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.

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.

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 meadowsoffice72@gmail.com 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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Website: mymeadows.net

24-Hour EMERGENCY ONLY
Service First: 1-888-980-8958

Security
703-628-9481

Towing
Battlefield Towing: 703-378-0059

Trash
Champion Waste: 703-239-8540

Bulk Trash
Kramer Enterprises: 804-221-1743

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

Balconies
Patios
YES



Roofs
Fronts of Buildings
Common Grounds
NO

Christmas Tree Pick-Up



According to Fairfax County regulations, Christmas trees must be recycled—they cannot be put out with your trash. For your convenience, a drop off area will be located next to the Clubhouse on Strasburg Drive, December 26 – January 11.

All decorations, including tinsel and garlands, must be removed. If you use a carry plastic bag, this must also be removed.

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!

Holiday Office Hours

Closed on December 26, January 2