

The Meadow Lark



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

Planning a Home Improvement?

Are you planning on making improvements or upgrades to your unit? Perhaps you may be upgrading your bathroom, or modernizing your kitchen with new cabinets and/or new flooring. If you are making changes to your unit you need to be aware of The Meadows Rules and Regulations that need to be followed when making such improvements. There is a requirement that an Interior Alteration Request form must be submitted to the Meadows office and approved by the Board of Directors before any improvements or modifications can be started.

Rule 2 of Section I of Meadows Rules and Regs states that “No interior alterations or modifications involving penetration of the walls in a Unit or that impact the utilities may be initiated without the prior written approval of the Board of Directors and execution of the waivers and notices detailed in the Application for Interior Alteration Form”. This rule goes on to say that “The Units within The Meadows were constructed using asbestos-containing materials and all Co-Owners and Residents are responsible for ensuring that the state and federal laws governing the use of asbestos materials are adhered to prior to commencing any work in any Unit.”

If you are planning improvements to your home be sure you are aware of these requirements. If you have questions about a planned improvement you can stop by the Meadows office to discuss any questions you may have.

Please Bag Your Trash!



It is being noted that a lot of trash is being placed out without being in securely tied plastic trash bags. Please do not put loose items out for pick-up, or place your trash in small paper bags or plastic bags from a local store. Doing this leads to more work for our trash company. They have been doing a reasonable job of picking up our trash, but their job would be much easier with all items in large, securely tied plastic trash bags. Please see page 4 for more information about trash in our community.



Board of Directors Meeting:

Thursday March 14, 2023, 7:30 PM. 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 Board or committee meeting. Meetings are held in the Clubhouse. (Board meetings are also held via Zoom).



Kindergarten Registration



Centre Ridge Elementary School in Centreville will be conducting their Kindergarten Registration for school year 2024–2025 in the school office.

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

Minimize Your Risk of Fire: Clean Your Dryer Vent

Did you know that a common cause of household fire is a dirty dryer vent? Since your dryer vent accumulates a lot of lint it must be cleaned and inspected at least once per year. If the lint is allowed to accumulate it can create an airflow obstruction and the hot air pushed into the vent from your dryer can cause the extremely flammable lint to ignite. In some units, birds have made nests in the dryer vent which is even more hazardous.

At The Meadows many units have very long dryer vents and these can be obstructed much more quickly than those in most newer homes, this is especially true in upper units. Our Co-Owners must be vigilant in cleaning these vents to avoid a potential fire disaster that could affect not only your unit, but multiple other units.

Be a responsible Co-Owner and neighbor and take the time to have your dryer vents cleaned and inspected at least once per year. This is a quick and inexpensive task that will save you and your neighbors from potential danger.

President's Corner

Hello Meadows.

Just a reminder to Co-owners, the Master Insurance Policy NO LONGER covers SEWAGE BACK-UPS!!!!

Co-owners should contact their personal homeowner's insurance provider to make sure they have sewage back up coverage already. If a Co-owner's personal homeowner's insurance policy does not include sewage back-ups, Co-owners should ask their provider if they can add it to their policy.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Management Office during their business hours or attend the next Board meeting (the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM in the clubhouse or via Zoom).

Kristina Berry

Board of Directors Motions

At the January 11 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to replace a maturing CD with a new CD for two years at the best possible rate.
- Passed a motion to affirm an email vote for payment of mitigation invoices for two units.
- Passed a motion to approve a bid from Freedom Tree Services for removing a tree and stump grinding.
- Passed a motion to approve an Interior Alteration Request for a kitchen remodeling.



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.

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.



Meadows Website: www.mymeadows.net



Security Totals

December 15, 2022 - January 14, 2023

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

GO:	7
CO:	2
Stras.:	1
RLL:	4
Avo:	2
Tur.:	1
STG:	1
Sag.:	5
Tickets:	23
Tows:	11
Violation Letters Sent:	30
Referred to FCPD/FD:	9

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 either in-person or virtually, 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.

Important Safety Issue!

It has been noticed that the insulation covering the electric wiring and gas lines running from the meters into the utility closet at some units have deteriorated, which could eventually result in exposed wiring. Exposed electrical wiring may cause injury, so please check the wiring behind your unit as soon as possible.

These sections of wiring and gas lines belong to the Co-Owner and it is the Co-Owner's responsibility to maintain them; however, we have been made aware that the utility companies may perform this work at no cost. You can reach Washington Gas at (703) 750-1000 and NOVEC at (703) 335-0500.

Please take a moment to inspect your wiring and gas line and contact the utility company or a certified electrician to make necessary repairs as soon as possible.



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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24-Hour EMERGENCY ONLY

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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



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 regularly discusses trash and continues to try 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.

