

The Meadow Lark



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

Roofers Still Working

Despite some cold weather and one large snow, our roofing contractor, Katchmark Construction, is continuing with their work on many days. When completed in a few months, the roofs on all of the buildings here in The Meadows will have been replaced.

As you can imagine there can be a great deal of noise associated with roof replacement which will occur on Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 AM until 6:00 PM (or until dark). Some work on Saturdays may be necessary depending on weather delays.

There will also be some parking restrictions with this project. For instance, the area at the end of Golden Oak Court is being used as the staging area for Katchmark for the duration of the project. In addition, the project may require use of a few spaces in front of each building as they work in that location. You will be notified in advance of the spaces that will need to be cleared in front of your building.

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience a project of this size and scope may bring. Thank you for your cooperation as we work to improve the appearance of your home at The Meadows.

The Meadows Website Update

The Meadows Tech Committee is proud to announce that the new Meadows website is ready for the public! The site is still updated on a daily basis, but it is ready for use by our residents. In order to gain full access to our site, please go to www.mymeadows.net and select "Request Login" under the Login menu at the top. You will receive a login username and temporary password shortly afterwards via email. Once you log in, you will be able to traverse the many menus and options available. Keep in mind, the site is still growing and being updated, so please be patient.

Violations

Some people feel we have too many rules, and others feel we have too few. As a condominium association, we have to maintain a level of uniformity and compliance. The "small" issues, things on stairs, patios, balconies, etc., are just as serious as trash being put out early, wiring hanging from walls and windows, unkempt gardens, etc. For instance, if there are three units side-by-side, each having three "small" violations, that means in one small area there are *nine* violations. Nine violations, even small violations, in one grouping create a big problem in the overall appearance of that area.

We can't pick and choose which violations to pursue or alter the covenants procedures based on the inspector's interpretation of the seriousness of the violation.

Please review your *Rules and Regulations*—many of the items in question are covered there. If there are rules and regulations you feel are unfair or unnecessary, then please contact the office and ask that your concern be placed on a Board meeting agenda.

MARCH



Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, March 20, 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.

Don't Feed the Critters!

It has recently been noted in many areas around the community that people are putting out various types of food items, apparently in an attempt 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. 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, we do not need to feed them. And we certainly don't want to attract more rats into our community. If you do see any rodents, please let the office know so action can be taken to eradicate them.

President's Corner

Earlier this month, when Punxsutawney Phil predicted a few more weeks of winter, he wasn't kidding! Luckily, we all made it through our latest snow storm with no major issues, other than maybe a sore back and wet shoes.

I would like to personally thank the residents of The Meadows for helping each other out during this past storm. While walking around our neighborhood, I saw many people shoveling sidewalks around their units and others as well. I saw proof of the word "Community" and it's something we all should be proud of. Thank you!

Spring weather should be here soon enough which in turn brings new life to our Community. Children playing outside, residents planting around their unit, and cars being washed are some of the many activities that will become more prevalent once the weather warms up. Additionally, our roofing project is still underway and progress will continue to grow once the weather begins to cooperate. As always, safety is of utmost importance so please be aware of your surroundings as you move through our community, both on foot and in a vehicle.

Once again, if you see me out there around the neighborhood, please don't hesitate to stop and say hello!

~ Eric Sokolowski

Keep the Lights On!

Although we are blessed to have street lights, they cannot provide full light everywhere. 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.

Satellite Dishes in The Meadows



Board of Directors Motions

At the February 20 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to accept a bid of \$500 per window from Katchmark for replacement of deteriorated wood around windows associated with Mansard roofs.
- Passed a motion to approve a bid of \$1547 from National Antenna for replacement of two television antennas.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm two email votes which approved the swim team for 2014 and a waterproofing project.
- Passed a motion to base our inclement weather closing policy on the Federal government.
- Passed a motion to deny a request for a third parking sticker.
- Passed a motion to waive violation fees except for \$200 for one Co-Owner and \$50 each for two other Co-Owners.
- Passed a motion to accept our attorney's recommendation concerning a violation enforcement case.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

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.

Security Totals

January 15 – February 14, 2014

Vehicles Ticketed: 31

Vehicles Towed: 8

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

Avocado Court: 0

Cool Oak Lane: 4

Golden Oak Court/Road: 3

Rustling Leaves Lane: 0

Saguaro Place: 3

Saint Germain Drive: 2

Strasburg Drive: 3

Turin Lane: 2

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.
- 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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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.

COMMUNITY ADS

FOR SALE – Tall glass shelves; Color white and glass; Price \$350.00; Call (703) 786-5314; Ask for Ricardo.

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.