

# The Meadow Lark



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

*At Centre Ridge Elementary*

## Annual Meeting on December 8

The Annual Meeting of the Council of Co-owners of The Meadows will be held on Tuesday, December 8 at 7:30 PM in the Multipurpose Room of the Centre Ridge Elementary School.

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. There will also be a presentation of information about what is going on in the community.

Centre Ridge Elementary is located at 14400 New Braddock Road, it is the school attended by elementary students from The Meadows. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

## 2016 Meadows Budget Passed

After careful consideration and review, the Board of Directors passed a budget for the coming year which will raise the monthly condominium fee by \$6/\$7 each month for all units. The new fees, effective January 1, 2016, are \$313 monthly for a three-bedroom unit and \$278 for a two-bedroom unit.

This is approximately a 3% increase which will ensure that the needs of our 44 year old community are met in the year ahead, as well as in the future through reserve funding. The Board understands that even the smallest increase in the condominium fee matters, which is why they work so hard every year to adopt a budget that makes certain The Meadows is financially sound without being a drain on the wallets of our Co-Owners.

You will receive new coupon books in the mail by early-December. If you do not have them by December 15th, please contact SFMC at (703) 392-6006. Please note that your payment will be due on the 1st of each month even if you have not received your coupon book.

## Two Decorating Contests

Congratulations to the winners of the Halloween Decorating Contest. The following addresses were awarded prizes as displaying the most original decorations: 1st Place - 14417 Golden Oak, 2nd Place - 6163 Strasburg and 3rd Place - 14427 Golden Oak. Thank you to all the others who also decorated for the October holiday.



There will be another decorating contest—the Holiday Decorating Contest will be held with judging from 7 PM until 8 PM on Saturday, December 19. Please have all of your lights on during this time, and good luck to all. Happy Holidays to everyone!

## 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 21, 2016, 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](http://mymeadows.net).

**Annual Meeting:** Tuesday, December 8, 7:30 PM at Centre Ridge Elementary School.

**Holiday Decorating Contest:** Saturday, December 19, 7–8 PM.

**Office Closed:** December 24, 25, at noon on December 31 & closed January 1.

**Christmas Tree Pickup:** December 28–January 7.

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



## HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Closed December 24, 25. Closed at noon on December 31. Closed January 1.

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*2016 Budget*

## President's Corner

Hello all! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday!

December is here all too soon. The cold weather is back (thankfully!), the Holiday season is in full swing, and another year of me being The Meadows Board President is coming to a close. My term will end in a few weeks so I would like to summarize the 2015 calendar year for our community..."Progress".

We all hit bumps in the road of life every now and then. We all experience situations which may make us fall and want to give up. As many may know, this year, our community took a few hits. However, we all stuck together, bounced back, and are standing tall. Our community is moving forward, adapting, learning, etc. All these things signify progress. The more we all work together, the stronger our community will be.

With 2016 right around the corner, remember..."Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future, but today is a gift. That's why it is called the present."

Happy Holidays and have a safe and happy New Year.

~ Eric Sokolowski



## 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 28– January 7.

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

## Board of Directors Motions

### At the November 19 Meeting:

- Passed motions to approve Architectural Review Forms for two dryer vent installations and plants behind a unit and an Interior Alteration request for a bathroom remodel.
- Passed a motion to write off outstanding balances of \$500 or less for Co-Owners who no longer own the unit.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm previous email votes to approve denying waiving two violation fees, repairs to the electrical system in the office, installing an HVAC unit on the common elements and two waterproofing jobs.
- Passed a motion to reimburse a towing fee due to extenuating circumstances.
- Passed a motion to approve use of a car cover.
- Passed a motion to allow the snow contractor to use rock salt only on asphalt surfaces.
- Passed a motion to have our snow contractor use a brine solution if warranted before a predicted snowfall.
- Passed a motion to deny a request for reimbursement of violation fees.
- Passed a motion to follow our attorney's recommendation concerning a request for banning an individual.
- Passed a motion to approve performance evaluations for our staff members.
- Passed a motion to not award additional merit bonuses for staff members.
- Passed a motion to approve renewal of the contract for the Property Manager.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS  
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

## Security Totals

October 15– November 14, 2015

Vehicles Ticketed: 55

Vehicles Towed: 19

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

Avocado Court: 5

Cool Oak Lane: 3

Golden Oak Court/Road: 4

Rustling Leaves Lane: 2

Saguaro Place: 0

Saint Germain Drive: 0

Strasburg Drive: 3

Turin Lane: 1

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.

Meadows Website [www.mymeadows.net](http://www.mymeadows.net)



## 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.

## 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.

## Parking in The Meadows

A reminder: any vehicle parked on Meadows property must display a valid parking permit. The acceptable forms of a permit can be a Meadows parking sticker, a green Visitor hang tag, or a red Extended Visitor Hang tag. Residents may not use Visitor tags. For details on our parking rules and regulations, please contact The Meadows office, or refer to the *2015 Meadows Rules and Regulations, Section X: Rules Governing Motor Vehicles.*

## Don't Feed the Critters!

Occasionally residents are putting out various 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, but 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 rodents into our community. If you do see any rodents, please let the office know so action can be taken to eradicate them.

## 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!

## Ice & Snow and Our Trash Service

In the interest of safety, drivers will make a judgement call as to whether they can make it up and down our streets in inclement weather. If your vehicle skids five feet in the snow, a large trash truck will slide at least thirty feet. The rule of thumb on snow/ice days should be to put your trash out. If the trucks can't get there that day, they will not

return for it until the next scheduled pickup day. (If your trash is not picked up, remove it until the next scheduled pickup.)



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 8½x 11-inch paper. Include your name, Meadows address, and telephone number. They must be renewed each month. The Meadows does not endorse any advertisers.

EDITORS: Bill Liedtke and Joan Orvis

**Meadows Office**  
Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 703-830-4464  
Fax: 703-815-0755  
E-Mail: meadowsoffice@verizon.net  
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



## Turn the Water Off!

Everyone is reminded that all outside water spigots are required to be turned off by December 1st. In order to prevent pipes freezing and damage to your unit or those of your neighbors, please turn off both the front and rear faucets located in all lower units.

## Safety Reminders

### ■ Keep Your Porch Lights On!

In order to promote safety in our neighborhood, everyone is reminded to keep 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.

### ■ Regular Furnace Maintenance

It is critical to ensure safe and efficient operation of your furnace regardless of the age of the unit. Many heating and air conditioning companies offer discounted specials this time of year.

### ■ 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.

## 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.

## 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.



# APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET (January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016)

2BR Fee = \$278 / 3BR Fee = \$313

	Adopted 2015	Projected 2015	Approved 2016
<b>INCOME</b>			
Assessment Income	\$2,164,059	\$2,162,808	\$2,211,945
Late Fee Income	9,000	9,045	9,000
Interest Income	6,083	3,239	3,500
Owner Interest Income	3,000	2,574	2,500
Owner Admin. Fees Income	105	70	70
Miscellaneous Owner Income	3,000	2,885	3,000
ARC Violation Income	5,000	6,530	5,000
Miscellaneous Income	4,000	3,985	4,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2,194,247</b>	<b>\$2,191,136</b>	<b>\$2,239,015</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Electricity	\$32,500	\$29,393	\$30,000
Telephone	5,600	5,898	5,900
Gas - Clubhouse	3,000	2,483	2,500
Water & Sewer	410,000	428,420	433,000
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>\$451,100</b>	<b>\$466,194</b>	<b>\$471,400</b>
<b>GENERAL &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>			
Education & Training	\$635	\$694	\$700
Newsletter	3,500	3,168	3,400
Office Equipment & Repairs	1,000	750	1,000
Office Supplies	3,000	2,984	3,000
Lease Exp.- Office Equipment	5,600	3,207	5,600
Uncollectible Charges	20,000	9,174	10,000
Legal - General	20,000	23,908	25,000
Legal - Collections	40,000	21,000	25,000
Legal Fee Reimbursements	(5,000)	(4,690)	(4,500)
Legal Fees Other	9,000	1,538	5,000
Uniforms	600	911	600
Insurance Loss/Deductible	10,000	10,000	10,000
Social & Rec	2,300	2,547	2,300
Postage & Mail	3,500	3,574	4,000
Printing & Reproduction	800	1,660	1,000
Realized Loss on Sale	268,800	268,526	268,526
Website	500	719	500
Miscellaneous Expense	2,500	3,780	4,000
<b>Total General &amp; Administrative</b>	<b>\$386,735</b>	<b>\$353,450</b>	<b>\$365,126</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE &amp; REPAIRS</b>			
General Maintenance & Repairs	\$5,000	\$10,292	\$6,000
Plumbing Repairs	14,000	10,955	8,000
Painting - Supplies	250	0	250
Exterminator Services	7,500	7,353	7,500
General Supplies	5,000	3,444	4,000
Welding	1,000	950	1,000
Antenna Repairs	1,000	1,540	1,500
Roofing Repairs	0	0	0
Gutter Repairs & Cleaning	8,000	8,000	8,000

	<b>Adopted 2015</b>	<b>Projected 2015</b>	<b>Approved 2016</b>
Vehicle Expense	1,000	750	500
Pool Repairs, Supplies, Maint	2,000	613	2,000
Playground Repairs	500	0	500
Landscaping Improvements	2,500	1,485	2,500
Tree Planting	2,500	2,500	5,000
Tree Maintenance	18,500	23,220	20,000
<b>Total Maintenance &amp; Repairs</b>	<b>\$68,750</b>	<b>\$71,101</b>	<b>\$66,750</b>
<b>CONTRACT SERVICES</b>			
Pool Contract	\$60,650	\$60,650	\$56,700
Management Contract	86,343	86,343	91,130
Auditor	6,000	6,000	6,100
Architect & Engineering Services	3,000	2,377	1,000
Insurance Master Policy	183,770	181,148	184,656
Painting - Exterior	88,000	87,000	83,000
Grounds Maintenance Contract	87,024	87,024	87,024
Security Contract	166,832	164,698	174,895
Snow Removal	20,000	45,965	30,000
Trash Removal	79,368	79,304	79,304
Pet Waste	5,500	4,851	5,000
<b>Total Contract Services</b>	<b>\$786,488</b>	<b>\$805,360</b>	<b>\$798,809</b>
<b>PAYROLL</b>			
FICA Payroll Taxes	\$18,067	\$18,785	\$18,608
Unemployment Taxes	418	418	418
Group Health Insurance	25,056	30,959	34,984
Life Insurance	2,875	3,922	2,986
Pension Contribution	9,447	8,993	9,729
Staff payroll	236,172	236,237	243,236
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>\$292,035</b>	<b>\$299,314</b>	<b>\$309,961</b>
<b>TAXES &amp; LICENSES</b>			
Income Taxes	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Personal Property Tax	100	750	950
Licenses, Fees & Permits	655	630	650
<b>Total Taxes &amp; Licenses</b>	<b>\$1,755</b>	<b>\$2,380</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,986,863</b>	<b>\$1,997,800</b>	<b>\$2,014,646</b>
<b>RESERVE EXPENDITURES</b>			
Expected Reserve Expenditures	\$280,160	\$252,000	\$145,600
<b>Total Reserve Expenditures</b>	<b>\$280,160</b>	<b>\$252,000</b>	<b>\$145,600</b>
<b>RESERVES CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			
Replacement Reserve	\$156,000	\$156,000	\$216,400
Reserve Interest	\$6,914	\$6,914	\$7,969
Operating Reserve	\$44,470	\$30,422	\$0
Transfer from Reserves	(280,160)	(252,000)	(145,600)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>(\$72,776)</b>	<b>(\$58,664)</b>	<b>\$78,769</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,194,247</b>	<b>\$2,191,136</b>	<b>\$2,239,015</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>