

The Meadow Lark

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

This article originally appeared in February 2015. Sorry it wasn't in last month's issue!

Please Shovel the Sidewalks!

Now that winter is in full force, please do yourself a favor and shovel the snow off the sidewalks (and steps) in front of and adjacent to your unit. Did you know the The Meadows rules require that that this be done? It is only common sense to remove the snow and ice from in front of your residence. Why take a chance on having someone slip and



fall on the ice/snow—that someone is most likely to be you! Most people leave their unit several times a day to go to work, go to the store, run errands, etc. Each time you go out you will have to walk on the steps and sidewalk outside *your* unit, and if these areas have not been shoveled you increase your chances of being the victim of a fall. Please be

reminded that salt products are prohibited because they damage concrete.

Fairfax County, unlike many other local jurisdictions, does not have a law that requires homeowners to shovel the snow off of their sidewalks. The County does, however, heavily encourage all residents to keep their sidewalks clear and safe. Be a good neighbor, help prevent your neighbors (as well as yourself) from falling and hurting themselves in front of your unit.

Work together with your neighbors to ensure the sidewalks on your street are shoveled. If one of your neighbors is elderly or unable to get out and shovel perhaps for medical reasons, pitch in and make sure their steps and sidewalk are shoveled. There are three units in each of our buildings, work out a plan with your two neighbors so that each time it does snow the sidewalks in your area are not hazardous.

Required Action to Avoid Pipe Freeze and Water Damage

To safeguard against costly frozen/broken pipes it is required that ALL units, to include those that are vacant and/or bank owned, maintain a *minimum* temperature of **65° Fahrenheit** during the winter months. To this end, all utilities must remain connected and all machinery (i.e. furnace, hot water heater, thermostat, etc.) must be in proper working order.

As you may be aware the plumbing and shut off valve for the outdoor spigots are inside of the lower units. To avoid pipe damage, we ask all lower unit residents to shut off the valve that supplies

water to this spigot by **November 15**. If you have not yet done so, please close and drain these spigots as soon as possible. Our maintenance technicians are happy to assist you with the winterizing process; however, we need to access your unit to do so. Our maintenance department is available by appointment Monday–Friday from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. Please contact the Management Office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these important matters.

February

Board Work Session: February 8, 7 PM.

Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, February 18, 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.

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

Another Snow Item!

One problem that surfaced during last month's huge storm—people shoveled out their vehicles and threw the snow into the already plowed street or into another's parking space or, in some instances, all over a sidewalk or neighbor's car.

If you are out early and the plow has not been down your street yet, it is okay to throw the snow from your parking place into the street. But if your street has already been plowed this practice is not allowed. Please place the snow in already established piles and not in the street or in your neighbors' parking place or on the sidewalk.

President's Corner

I'm writing this article on the weekend of the Blizzard of 2016. For me, this is the largest snow storm that I can recall our area has ever been hit with. There is snow everywhere! My back is sore, my feet hurt, and I no longer have any more clean socks because they're all wet! Each time I went out to shovel, I kept thinking to myself, "This is unreal!"

However, each time I stepped outside, carrying my shovel, wearing my soggy snow boots and gloves, I would look around at the winter tundra that is our neighborhood, and I was reminded why The Meadows is a great community. I saw almost every neighbor out, shoveling their areas and helping others. I saw parents pulling their kids in sleds. I saw dog owners walking around while their pups hopped around in the white fluff. I saw people walking around, eager to help a stranded car, or someone who lost their footing.

What I saw was all of us helping each other out and making the best of a very difficult situation.

So when the snow melts, our clothes dry, and our back pain goes away, remember that we are all residents of this community, and when we all stick together, great things can happen.

Take care and be safe.

~ Eric Sokolowski



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.

Board of Directors Motions

At the January 21 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to approve an Interior Alteration Request for new flooring.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm email votes which approved a change in the snow contractor's use of brine, an antenna repair, gutter cleaning and replacing one golf cart.
- Passed a motion to deny a towing reimbursement request.
- Passed motions to advise a Co-Owner that they need to make repairs to their patio before grade improvements can be made, and also approve that work to be done by KGS Construction at a cost of \$4,100 once the patio is fixed.
- Passed a motion to have a tree on Turin removed by Valley Crest at a cost of \$1,190 and have the sidewalk in the vicinity repaired by KGS at a cost not to exceed \$500.
- Passed a motion to charge a Co-Owner a trash removal fee as the result of a Covenants hearing.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive a violation charge.
- Passed a motion to waive all except \$50 of a violation charge.
- Passed a motion to halt action and close a collections case and write off the debt.
- Passed a motion regarding the pool contract.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

Rules Review

February is the month in which the Board reviews our Rules and Regulations each year. If you have any recommendations for changes to our rules, please submit them in writing to the Board for consideration. You can email your comments to meadowsoffice@verizon.net or drop them in the black mailbox in front of the Clubhouse.

Security Totals

December 15, 2015–January 14, 2016

Vehicles Ticketed: 26
Vehicles Towed: 5

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

Avocado Court: 5
Cool Oak Lane: 2
Golden Oak Court/Road: 4
Rustling Leaves Lane: 2
Saguaro Place: 0
Saint Germain Drive: 2
Strasburg Drive: 2
Turin Lane: 1

Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD: 4

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.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for all of the standing committees of The Meadows. These committees are: Landscape and Grounds, Social and Recreation, Pool and Technology. The committees will welcome new members with any new ideas they would like to present for consideration. Please let the office know if you are interested in joining a committee.

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.



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!

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.

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 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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Meadows Office

Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

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**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



Trash: They Don't Take It All

Did you know that the Fairfax County Landfill is unable to accept certain items for disposal? And other items can only be accepted at certain landfill locations, only under certain conditions and at additional cost.

Also, large items such as furniture, remodeling debris or certain appliances must be called into The Meadows waste management contractor *prior* to being put out for collection.

Recently some Co-Owners have placed prohibited or large items out for trash collection. If an item is not picked up by our waste management contractor due to County restrictions or unscheduled large pick ups, The Meadows staff often has to collect these items and take them to the appropriate facility. The Association then incurs the added disposal costs, such as mileage, wear on the company truck, lost maintenance time, dump fees, etc. When possible, these costs are billed back to the offending Co-Owner for reimbursement.

Below you will find an abbreviated list of items that the waste management company *can not pick up* from The Meadows:

Paint cans (even those with very little paint left)

Refrigerators

Tires

Large items not called in to the company in advance
(special pick ups are on Thursdays)

Recycling that has not been properly sorted

Chemicals

Lawn debris

It is also important to note that special recycling trucks are used to pick up your recycling at The Meadows. These trucks only come through our community on Mondays, so no recycling should be left out on Thursdays.

Again, these are just a few of the restricted or prohibited items for trash collection. If you have a question about whether or not a particular item can be collected or need to schedule a special pick up please contact The Meadows waste management contractor, AAA/Republic Services, directly at 703-818-8222. They are more than happy to assist you with questions and/or scheduling.

Meadows Website www.mymeadows.net