

Landscape Committee Report

I am writing this report as the sole remaining member of the PPHOA Landscape Committee (LC) which was formed last year. Since then all other members have resigned for personal reasons. I myself have only been able to provide periodic spurts of support to the previous committee members due to health problems which are now behind me. So now I stand alone. This is not the role I envisioned for myself when I first volunteered for this position. This report will try to highlight some of what was accomplished and some of the major pitfalls.

On the positive side the LC accomplished the following:

- Got an approved Landscape plan in place
- Published a newsletter
- Tested & Evaluated the irrigation system
- Got a better understanding of Landscape budget
- Gained a better understanding of Landscaping bylaws
- Reviewed, monitored, and responded to Landscaping MR's
- Got several bids for Landscaping services that could mean potential savings for homeowners
- Corrected pool entrance safety problem
- Removed dead palms, dead oleanders, and stumps
- Identified and corrected white fly problem
- Planted new sod

On the downside:

- Could not convince PPHOA Board of Directors (BOD) to enforce PPHOA Landscaping bylaws which made them virtually useless, and a waste of LC time to try and implement.
- New sod was planted all at once, straining all irrigation resources and manpower. In hindsight it should have been done piecemeal in smaller sections. As a result some of the newly laid sod will eventually have to be dug up and replanted. Some of the problems encountered:
 - Not enough water in some areas
 - No significant rainfall for last 4 weeks
 - Too much shade and water in other areas resulting in fungus
 - Lack of quality workmanship when laying sod
- Cannot envision a solution to the Oak Tree root system problem. This will have to be resolved by the BOD.

Here is my current assessment of what where we are now and where we need to move in order to keep our grounds green and flourishing:

- The biggest problem we face is accountability for dead, dying grass and foliage, and other landscaping problems: Right now landscaping, controlled by Ground Tech (GT), irrigation, controlled by Dependable, and bug & fungus, controlled by someone else, are three separate entities. They need to be under the same grounds-keeping umbrella. There can be no room for finger-pointing or evading responsibility. There will be no accountability until this issue is resolved. Whoever is responsible for the grounds has to be totally responsible. Whatever property management company PPHOA decides to choose next year, the irrigation, landscaping, and pest packages need to be combined. Both GT and others are capable of doing this and we need to let them bid for that all

inclusive package. For example, if we had this package in place now our newly planted sod would be thriving.

- We lack a proactive posture: Neither Dependable or GT currently walk the property and resolve problem areas ahead of time. It is easy enough to see brown and dying areas, yet no action is taken until a homeowner writes a Maintenance Request (MR). That is too late in the process. Someone from a landscaping company should be walking our grounds and identifying landscape problems on a weekly/monthly basis. The lawn mowers and maintenance crews should be identifying problems to their team leaders and those team leaders should be fixing the problem. Someone should be running systematic checks on our irrigation system. Someone should be running systematic checks on our end of line units on a regular basis. None of these things are currently being done. We are not seeing the problem until the MR is written and that is too late in the process. There should be no need for 80-90% of the landscaping MR's that are currently written. This bullet would go away if we fixed the first bullet above.
- We do not understand our irrigation problems: An assessment made earlier in the year verified we have a good irrigation system. When testing is done manually our systems seem to run fine and all the sprinklers work. All the irrigation problems we have seem to come from the automatic mode. I have seen a redundancy of MR's that state that water dribbles or never comes on in the automatic mode which primarily works at night. But if you test that same system manually the next day, everything works fine. And this is happening on various pieces of property, different wells, and different zones. This bullet would also go away if we fixed the first and second bullets above.
- MR system process is in need of revision. The homeowner needs to verify that the MR is complete and fixed, not the management company. Each MR needs to remain open until homeowner signs off. If there is a dispute the BOD can decide.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend the BOD start taking bids now for an all-inclusive landscaping and irrigation company to handle our problems when our current landscaping contract runs out. Dependable needs to relinquish their role and investment in irrigation and pest problems at year's end. We need total accountability from one company. Our grounds have lapsed into a state of neglect over time. We have a multitude of problems to monitor and overcome. It will take time, dedication, and a proactive posture on a scale that we are currently lacking. And it will take money up front for the first year to resolve all those problems. After that first year's initial expenditure, we can expect a potential savings of \$20,000 per year with all services inclusive. That based on several bids I have seen within the last year. The sooner the BOD takes this stance, the sooner the healing and eventual savings can begin.

Also, because of the lack of other LC volunteers, I am relinquishing some of the LC responsibilities back to the BOD and Dependable. I do not have the time required to devote to MR problems and resulting emails. If the recommendations I outlined above are accepted and acted upon by the BOD, landscaping MR's should become a thing of the past by this time next year. I will be recommending a new tracking mechanism for landscaping MR's but will not be involved in their resolution unless it becomes a LC budget impact.

I will continue to monitor and make recommendations to the budget. I will continue with our landscape beautification project. And at one point I again hope to resume mapping out our sprinkler system.

Bob Fleury, Landscaping Committee

8/27/2013