

HICKORY CLUSTER ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October 16, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Virtual (Board hosted Zoom)

FINAL

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Jennifer Rekas, Silvia Merrill, Kathryn Fay, Fred Swartzendruber

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Lauri Swift, Stan Peabody, Daniel Cassidy

TWC STAFF: Amanda Smith

I. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

- **CALL TO ORDER:** President Silvia Merrill called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and established that a quorum of the Board was present.
- **OPENING REMARKS:** None
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The Board approved HCA September 2024 Meeting minutes.

II. MEMBER FORUM

11508 Maple Ridge - Bamboo removal has left bamboo scraps and previous downed tree.

11504 Maple Ridge - There are several old dead trees and previously cut bamboo from other efforts, may be a fire hazard. Request that what is now exposed be cleaned up.

11522 Hickory Cluster - Raise concern about a trip hazard on sidewalk in front of 11518 Hickory Cluster. There are slab height differences. This is a high traffic area. Not sure if this is a new problem.

11502 Maple Ridge - Backyard now looks like a wasteland. Not sure if it's safe for dogs to traverse the treated area.

11557 Maple Ridge - Some corrections to meeting minutes. Some mailboxes are grandfathered in. Member can provide list of grandfathered in addresses. House numbers - county has no mandate for change to sign changes.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT REVIEW

Board accepted financial report from September.

V. ACTION ITEMS

NEW BUSINESS

- **Board reviewed FY25 proposed annual budget**
Need budget approved by the end of the month. Anticipate virtual vote for the budget.
- **Swingset Replacement Behind Block 3**
Board reviewed initial proposal for replacement that meets insurance requirements for mulch setback.
ACTION: Ask vendor to update proposal to provide more context for the site (what is impact on existing bench and treeline behind the swings. Only want two swings - one baby swing and one regular swing. Will there be some kind of design for water drainage for that site?)
- **Landscaping Vendor Discussion**

Dissatisfaction about handling of leaf blowing and disposal in particular from current landscaping vendor. Decision about landscaping contract for FY25 preferred by the end of the month in order to include accurate costs in FY25 budget.

ACTION: Swartzendruber to engage landscaping committee to make the scope and sequence, find alternatives for more environmentally friendly or native plants, esp. ones that absorb moisture/help with erosion. Generate “no touch” areas on site maps to communicate to vendors what to be careful. Also please identify plan for how to handle random plantings that some members may not like.

ACTION: TWC - Provide feedback to the current landscaping vendor on issues especially with leaf blowing, want leaves vacuumed. Too much mulch around the trees. Some actual plantings are being destroyed/removed. Does this change any costs for FY25, if we continue with current venue?

- **Deteriorating Benches**

Existing benches are not repairable.

ACTION: TWC to look into full replacements for board to consider at a future session.

- **Request to remove bush behind 11509 Maple Ridge on common property**

DECISION: Request to be put on hold pending landscaping committee plan.

- **Charge Up Fairfax county initiative**

Rekas summarized survey results from HCA members who responded to the survey.

DECISION: No need to apply to Charge Up Fairfax initiative at this time. Continue monitoring for future opportunities.

- **Property on common property continuation**

DECISION: HOA to identify initial list of violations and send to RA for follow-up inspections

- **Hangtags**

New hangtags have been received by TWC. TWC will seek car registration from members.

Hangtags can be picked up at TWC mailed to members upon request. Members need to pick up the new hangtags by December 20, 2024.

IN PROGRESS BUSINESS

- **Review Board Code of Conduct - NOT DISCUSSED**

Board to review code of conduct in a board meeting - prefer all board members present.

- **Mail installations and numbers - NOT DISCUSSED**

Board did spot checking to identify homes with mailboxes that do not meet cluster standards. Initial list has been identified.

- **Hickory Cluster Logo Contest - NOT DISCUSSED**

DECISION: Standup committee to design long term Hickory Cluster logo

ACTION: Swift - Organize committee for long term logo

- **Electronic voting service options**

VoteHOANow - <https://www.votehoanow.com/how-it-works/index.php/>

ACTION: TWC to seek quote and pursue using the platform for HCA by-laws vote. TWC will be platform Vote POC.

- **Collections of Assessments - NOT DISCUSSED**

DECISION: Send draft policy back to TWC that the default acceleration policy is in line with the coupon books. If not, work with legal counsel to get them aligned. If the coupon book is not in order (for legal or etc. reasons), please advise the board.

ACTION: Kathryn - Work with TWC to get this in order.

- **BAMBOO REMOVAL**

Patch #2 removal completed in October.

DECISION: Have an arborist provide proposals for cleanup of what's on the ground that should be removed and any trees that need to be removed in the cleared area.

ACTION: TWC to seek proposals from arborists for what should be removed.

ACTION: Host cluster cleanup for easy to get debris.

ACTION: TWC - reach out to TriPoint to see what they will be planting along the property border? What is the woodchip path on the HCA common area?

- **Additional landscaping in Hickory Cluster**

ACTION: HCA Landscaping committee to look into additional landscaping for the following:

1. Top priority:

- a. Replacement plantings for removed large trees in block 2/3
- b. Re-landscaping of Block 3 utility wall area - board hoped laurel and liriopie is part of the plan, as this has worked well for other parts of the neighborhood.
- c. Some kind of flowering tree for the planter area between 11501 Maple Ridge and parking spot 101. Trees had been removed from this area a while ago, but no replacement.

2. Replacement trees along Maple Ridge Road between blocks 1 and 2 that have recently been cut (see Jeff Ashley for specific area).

3. Planter areas in front of 11547/11549 Maple Ridge - needs re-design.

- **Neighborhood Cleanup Day**

Need to provide guidelines on what the intent of items suitable for common area.

DECISION: Board would like to have a Neighborhood Cleanup Day

ACTION: Board - Seek host for the event from the neighborhood

- **Retaining Wall that FEA Recommends Be Replaced**

ACTION: Fay - Review contracts from HEMAX and Cornerstone Engineering, suggest next steps at next board meeting.

- **BLOCK 2/3 STREET LIGHT IS OUT**

Poles out on Maple Ridge - Dominion Energy and contractors looking for the issue physically in the Maple Ridge common areas.

Hickory Cluster still has one pole out on the Block 3 island (this one was working).

TWC has acquired two additional glass mushroom lamp covers.

ACTION: TWC - Engage PSE on pole out in Hickory Cluster island. Later, follow up regarding the cleaning once electricity/lamp are fixed.

BACKLOG

- **ANNUAL FEA RESERVE STUDY - BOARD - NOT DISCUSSED**
ACTION: Board - Study reserve study for the recommendations. Need to prioritize the board activities with this in mind. Further discussion will occur at future board meetings.
- **Hickory Cluster Registry of Historic Places - NOT DISCUSSED**
- **NEW STREET SIGN FONT SIZE REQUIREMENTS - NOT DISCUSSED**
Sign fonts must be 4" tall due to recent Fairfax County mandate. HC Covenants advisor provided prototype signs from Webb sign vendor. Board discussed options. Board to investigate estimate of bulk purchase/installation for neighborhood, not decided how to seek reimbursement from members or not. Discussion of likely making the sign choice a design standard.
ACTION: Cassidy - Seek prototypes samples from Webb signs and make recommendations at next board meeting or the following.
- **Covenants Cluster & Condo Directory - Rekas - NOT DISCUSSED**
How would HCA like the Association's contact information listed in Reston Association's Cluster and Condominium Association Directory?
 - External management company contact information listed only - **Board chose this option**
 - Dedicated Association email address only
 - Individual board member contact information listed
 - 397 Herndon Pkwy Suite 100 Herndon 20170 - Amanda's email
- **APRON CONCRETE GRINDING - Fay/Peabody - NOT DISCUSSED**
This project is next priority after getting tree removal settled. Areas with ½" are of concern.
ACTION: When effort re-engages, Peabody to work with Fay on project.
- **STORAGE DOORS IN BLOCK 3 - NOT DISCUSSED**
- **SOIL EROSION in BLOCK 3 - TBD - NOT DISCUSSED**
This is likely related to the problem with the trench drainage.
ACTION: Review past studies completed regarding this change and follow up.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned 9:40 p.m.

Next board meeting scheduled for November 20, 2024, at 7:30 PM on board-hosted Zoom.

//ENDS