

**BIRKDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
SPECIAL MEETING
January 27, 2022 6:00pm**

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Call to Order, Roll Call & Quorum – President called meeting to order at 6:03pm. Present were: Karen Moyer (President), Susan Lipp (Treasurer/Secretary), and Ron Buchanan (Member at Large). Not present were Linda Van Eckoute (Vice President) and Tony Russo (Member at large) due to illness. Quorum was met.

Also present were Committee chairs: Lee Kemmett - ARC Committee, and Wayne Bass - Grounds Committee.

Proposal 1: Native Landscaping – Violet Martin

- Violet Martin presented both in writing and in person the idea of switching our landscaping design for the community from a focus on manicured landscaping to native landscaping.
- Violet announced she is a qualified Master Gardener.
- Key points to her proposal include:
 - Convert 50 – 75% of several selected locations over to native landscape plant selections, one project at a time over the next 3+ years
 - Benefits of native landscaping: Little maintenance, drought resistant plants after they are well established, helps wildlife, may reduce landscape maintenance cost
 - The VA Conservation Assistance Program provides financial support and free advice to organizations converting landscaping to native plantings, with Grants available up to 75% of landscape costs with maximum of \$3500/yr., if the organization completes a grant application and plans meet the requirements.
 - “Plants by Design” was also mentioned as a good resource for assisting in designing native landscapes.
 - Other neighborhood examples of similar projects included The Landings at Swift Creek, which Violet conveyed had saved \$7200/yr in reduced mulching costs with their native landscape project in one area of their neighborhood.
 - Several locations within the community were listed as potential spots for conversion to native landscaping, including:
 - Spyglass gazebo area
 - Winterpock entrance
 - Around lake areas
 - Mulch areas
 - Any potential playground areas

- Each project may take a year to plan and plant. If the first project would be approved early this year in 2022, plantings would take place thru Fall 2022 before completion.
- The approach to how this project would be implemented is a suggestion of adding a sub-committee to the Grounds Committee.
- The sub-committee would be Violet Martin plus 1 – 3 others. She stated she had one other neighbor who has shown interest in joining her, but no name was given.
- No extra funding is being requested of the HOA for this project, as it is envisioned the funds will be included in the current HOA Budget with no additional assessments needed...simply use the \$25,000/year budget to replace plants for native plants instead of manicured plants.
- It is proposed the native landscape plants proposed be agreed with the current Landscape maintenance company for planting.
- Next Steps proposed by Violet Martin:
 1. Identify areas for 3 year plan
 2. Utilize VCAP and/or Plants by Design to help with design
 3. Submit single site plan for approval to HOA
 4. If approved submit Grant to VCAP

Questions and comments

- Locations – do all neighbors in the immediate area agree to revision to native landscaping?
- Maintenance – if the Landscape Maintenance co doesn't plant it, they won't maintain it, because if it dies they do not want the cost of replacement
- Community aesthetic expectations as golf course community – most people buy into the community expecting manicured and well maintained lawn, trimmed bushes and trees, and not wild grasses, flowing wildflowers
- Irrigation – only exists currently at the 2 main entrances, so establishment of new plantings in the first year without water may be an issue
- Current 2022 Annual budget includes approximately \$25,000 for landscape plant replacement and maintenance.
- Current plans for the Spring Run entrance are to eliminate some trees that are a problem

Vote

- It is motioned by the HOA President to take a vote for approving the establishment of a sub-committee which will:
 1. Obtain a specific location suggested by the current Grounds Committee Chair as a potential first site location

2. Develop a landscape plan using free resources available & in coordination with current Landscape Maintenance Co thru Grounds Committee Chair
3. Present this first location plan to the HOA Board for approval
4. If the HOA approves the plan, work with current Grounds Committee Chair and Landscape Maintenance co to plant within the Budget
5. This initial location would be a test site as basis for a larger 3 year plan

HOA President motioned to vote. All 3 HOA Board members vote unanimously yes. Motion carries.

Proposal 2: Park/Playground Proposal - Sterling Hundley & daughter

- Sterling Hundley and his daughter presented both in writing and in person the idea of building one or more Park/Playground areas within the Birkdale community.
- The proposal includes an Option A potential location at the dilapidated Tennis Court property owned by the Golf Course, or Option B which outlines 4 additional potential smaller ‘pocket park’ location sites:
 - Option A: Tennis Court area (owned by Golf Course owner). However, it was asked if the HOA had a piece of property to ‘trade’ the Golf Course owner for such that we could own the tennis court area. See comments below, Golf course owner has already decided to use this property for alternate use, plus there is no comparable area the HOA owns to offer him.
 - Option B:
 1. Corner of Royal Birkdale & Old Bond. Size 174’x129’. Shared easement with Dominion Power and overhead power lines.
 2. Birkdale West. 14425 Ashdale Way. Size 118’x133’. Near neighborhood entrance, close to existing house, no parking available unless from Golf Course parking spots.
 3. Seabrook Circle. 9500 Royal Birkdale Dr. Size 103’x125’. Cul-de-sac island location right off Royal Birkdale. Busy location with heavier traffic.
 4. Corner Royal Birkdale & Emerald Dunes. Size 174’x229’. Wooded lot would need to be cleared and privacy fence erected due to proximity to houses.
 5. Below dam at lower lake. Size 6 acres. This is a designated ‘wet land’ and likely not possible to build anything on
- The proposal options include construction and installation of a playground set in all options, plus dependent on the option also include paths, gazebo, adjacent dog park, bike rack and stroller parking, and car/vehicle parking spaces.
- Location: it is proposed the site selected be in close proximity to community entrances to be accessible to the entire community, and take into consideration homeowner privacy in the immediate area, and parking concerns.
- Benefits conveyed include: Bring community closer together, convert unused land into functional community assets, and add financially to home values to compete with other neighboring communities with playgrounds.

- Budget & Cost: It is proposed a playground of full commercial size would cost in the range of Option A: \$50,000, Option B: medium size \$25,000. These costs are estimates and do not include the estimated additional local application and filing fees which were conveyed as costing \$1800 zoning fee + \$400 application fee additional. In order to pay for this, it is proposed we raise community HOA Quarterly assessments by \$6-\$7/quarter for the next 2-3 years.
- In addition to Sterling and his daughter, he also has 4 or 5 additional community members who are interested in forming a committee to further research, design, and implement this project.
- Timing proposed: design in 2022, and implement in 2023.
- In order to go forward with the project, there are several steps and groups/members that must agree, including HOA Board, Community Members 2/3 vote if quarterly assessments are to be raised significantly or a non-emergency new capital project is proposed of this size, and the local government requires permits, application and a public hearing.

Questions & Comments

- Locations – several Members voiced a desire for a park, but concerns over having a park located close to their home
- Safety – several members note that any location along Royal Birkdale drive would pose serious safety concerns with speeding drivers and several locations are suggested around blind curves along Royal Birkdale Dr.
- Cost – Board member noted that any spending for a full scale commercial Park would require funds that exceed any annual allowable increase in assessments, without a 66% (2/3) vote of all Members of the Community.
- Size – It was noted that a full scale commercial park (\$50,000+) is generally designed for 50+ children to use at any time, and a medium park (\$25,000+) for 25+ children. Neighboring communities such as Woodlake and Brandermill which have playground park areas are communities of 2700 & 3500 homes respectively, yet our community has less than 650 homes. It is highly unlikely we would have any more than 10 or so children playing in a playground at any time.
- Desirability – several Members noted there are a larger number of young families moving into the community who may desire this kind of available asset. Additionally, other members without young children in their home, stated they would like to have an area for grandchildren to play or just neighbors to gather
- Proposal A location – several Members who know the history of the community noted use of the Tennis Court area for a playground/park was considered in 2014 and again in 2021. Both times, the Golf Course owner offered to either lease or sell the property, but at an extremely high cost, way beyond the going rate for such properties. Additionally, he will not offer any parking spaces used by the Golf course for any activities that may occur on this property now or in the future. Also noted, there has been recent discussion between the Grounds

Committee Chair and the Golf Course owner, that the owner already has plans to relocate the existing golf course landscape maintenance & equipment area to the Tennis Court area this year in 2022. Therefore, Proposal A is not feasible.

Vote

- It is motioned by the HOA President to take a vote for approving the establishment of a sub-committee which will develop a revised proposal for much smaller playground/park area with 2 – 3 potential sites identified that take into consideration:
 1. Size based on expected utilization
 2. Budget
 3. Safety concerns, particularly for traffic
 4. Parking
 5. Surrounding neighbor input as to desirability in their area

Motion made by HOA President. 2 Yes, 1 No. Motion carried.

Proposal 3: Adhoc Lake Committee – John Lipp & 5 other committee volunteers

- The Birkdale Lake is owned by the Golf Course, but is again experiencing unwanted aquatic plant overgrowth that threatens open water areas and may cause the body of water to turn to swamp.
- Previously there was an Adhoc Lake Committee formed and sanctioned by the HOA to deal with this problem back in 2015. The committee at that time conducted a study with professional help from aquatic plant companies, and selected and applied an herbicide, followed by grass eating carp fish to control this overgrowth. The treatment was effective from 2015 – 2021, but the problem has begun to resurface. The prior budget all funded by donations was \$15,000, including \$5000 from the Golf Course owner.
- Budget – since the lake is not owned by the HOA, no budget or any HOA funds were used in 2015. No use of HOA funds are proposed now, just donations. The Budget in 2015 was approximately \$15,000 but included a larger scope of work to study and identify what the problem was and how to deal with it. This time around, we know the exact problem and need no study, just herbicide treatment is required.
- Herbicide can only be applied during certain times of the year as to not interfere with use of the lake water to water the golf course. So, agreement to treat the lake and timing will need to be agreed with the Golf Course owner.
- The proposal requests the following:
 1. HOA formally recognize the formation of an Adhoc Lake Committee
 2. HOA approves of the Adhoc Lake Committee approaching the Golf Course owner on behalf of the neighborhood asking for his support for the project and funding
 3. HOA allows the Adhoc Lake Committee to provide article in the monthly News Bulletin and updates to inform the community

4. HOA approves use of ACS West to establish and maintain the escrow bank account to deposit donations and issue final payments to the lake treatment company

Questions & Answers

- It was conveyed by an HOA Board Member that no funds or work of any kind can be done by the HOA per the bylaws and guidelines since the lake is not owned by the HOA. This would include no use of ACS West to manage the escrow account. The HOA President was in support of getting second opinion from HOA attorney advisor if needed to confirm.
- It was reiterated that the Golf Course owner must be in support, or nothing can be done

Vote

The HOA President motioned to approve the first two above proposal points of: establish an Adhoc Lake Committee and meet with the Golf Course owner to develop a plan. All other aspects of the proposal are not to be voted on at this time until further information is known as to how the project would be coordinated and mechanics worked out with the Golf Course owner.

Motion by HOA President. Vote was 2 yes, 1 no. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:36pm. Meeting adjourned.