

THE RESERVE AT UTE CREEK HOA UPDATE

The Board of Directors (BOD) would like to thank those of you that attended the Summer Meeting on July 14th. Many good questions came up, as well as a good discussion about the pending Neighborhood Improvement Project and the grant from the City of Longmont. *Together we can all make this a great neighborhood to live in!*

We also want to thank Kelly Kuczka, Wendy Allen, Dan McGlothlin, and Judy Lindberg for putting a very successful Ice Cream social on July 12th. This was funded by the City of Longmont activity fund. Everyone who attended had a great time!

Several questions came up that we would like to answer for you. Forgive me if I miss any questions, so I will remind you that every Board of Directors meeting is open to the public and you are all welcome to attend. We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Longmont Senior Center.

A question was asked about who is responsible for the care and maintenance of the grass on the golf course side of the fence. We have been told that the homeowner's on the golf course actually own ONE FOOT on the outside (golf course side) of the fence. This means it is the homeowner's responsibility to kill the weeds and cut the grass as they see fit. The golf course maintenance crews have been told to stay one foot away from the fence.

Rules Violations continue to occur. Although the BOD does try watch for violations, it is also the responsibility of the entire neighborhood to police this. If you see something that you believe to be a violation, please put it in writing or email one of

the Directors. Then we will check the regulations and two Directors will confirm the violation and proceed with enforcement. Complaints cannot be anonymous. The BOD also cannot observe the homeowner's backyard without a neighbor first filing a complaint. Please be familiar with the CCR's so you know what you can and cannot do. Also, if it is a parking violation, you can file a complaint with the City by calling (303) 651-8501.

Several questions were also asked about the BOD's authority to spend money without a vote of the general membership. This is defined in the By Laws and CCR's that are posted on the website (<http://reserveute.tripod.com/reserveute/index.htm>).

- 1) The BOD is entrusted to develop an annual budget that must be presented to the homeowners at the end of every year. Unless 67% of the membership votes to reject the budget, it is ratified.
- 2) The annual dues cannot be raised by more than 25% in any one year without the approval of 67% of the general membership.
- 3) No special assessment can be made by the BOD for any new capital improvement without the approval of 67% of the membership.
- 4) The BOD can raise dues to balance the budget or pay for repair or maintenance of any existing capital improvement.

And, now for the rest of the story...

The Neighborhood Improvement Project And the City Grant

There were lots and lots of questions about the Neighborhood Improvement Project. As one of the members of the initial landscaping project, it was difficult to hear the number of misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding the project. For over 10 months, the committee and the BOD looked for volunteers and input from anyone who wanted to give it. There were newsletters, flyers, Owner's meetings, BOD meetings, and announcements on the website. To hear the complaints less than 12 hours before the project was scheduled to start was difficult and has proven to be costly. Although the BOD thought that everyone's concerns were addressed at the meeting July 14th, when the work started on the July 15th, the workers were forced to stop due to angry homeowners who were yelling and screaming, causing the workers to feel unsafe. Homeowners gathered for volunteer labor on July 18th to find nothing to work on. So the BOD held a meeting, along with the neighbors who showed up to volunteer, to review the plan. The project committee explained what was planned, and how the plan had been modified to stay within the budget so no additional costs would be incurred by the HOA.

The goal of the Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP) is to improve the neighborhood's assets and costs without increasing the budget to pay for this or any other project, with the ultimate goal of controlling as well as decreasing our annual budget needs as well as dues. Most of our expenses are related to common area landscaping and maintenance. So the most effective way to reduce the HOA budget is to reduce ongoing expenses related to common areas, especially turf areas that require watering, irrigation repairs, and mowing.

The budget for this part of the project (phase 1) follows:

- 1) Total Cost \$4,400: \$1,400 redirected from the HOA's traditional "Spring Planting" budget, plus \$3,000 from a City-approved grant, plus 360 hrs volunteer labor (at \$10/hr) for planning and landscaping.
- 2) Breakdown of the costs:
 - \$800 for flowers and mulch to replace the annual flowers with perennials. This also included several small bushes planted at the west end park in two of the flower beds.
 - \$2800 was bid to Wards Landscaping to remove the grass behind the entrance sign and approximately 100 square yards of grass on each side of the entrance on 17th; to replace the edging on the entrance beds on 17th; and to modify the sprinkler systems on the 3 beds.
 - This left us with \$800-\$900 for rock and new landscaping fabric.
- 3) Originally we had hoped to replace the bushes at the entrance on 17th, but due to budget constraints, the existing bushes were trimmed with the plan to fully replant both beds at the entrance with low water, low growing, preferably flowering shrubs with next year's plan. If HOA income exceeds the 2009 budget, or expenses come in below budget, the BOD will consider adding the greenery to the rock areas in Phase 1.
 - It was estimated that there would be a total of 6 phases at a cost of \$10,000 per phase. This \$10,000 figure is **not** HOA cash outlay! It is the combined total of \$1400 per phase redirected from the HOA's historical planting budget, plus expected City grants of \$5,000- \$6,000 per Phase, plus volunteer labor. This will be modified from year to year depending on money available for the project. Lower grant

approval and/or less volunteer labor will reduce the budget for a given phase accordingly.

- The HOA portion of the project would be funded by using the money currently budgeted for spring planting (\$1400) and hours volunteered by the HOA members.
- Volunteer hours are credited by the City at the rate of \$10 per hour. Estimated annual volunteer hours will be 360 hours per year.
- Based upon the estimated cost of each phase, the cash contribution of the HOA will be 14%
- We will be asking for grant of \$5000-\$6000 per year from the Neighborhood Improvement Program from the City of Longmont. The Phase 1 grant was approved at \$3000, so the phase was scaled back to stay within the budget for HOA cash contribution.
- There is no requirement by the City of Longmont and/or the Neighborhood Group leaders Association for matching funds; however it is considered as part of the grading system for approval, accounting for 20% of the points awarded. Volunteer hours are equally important to the dollars contributed.
- NO part of the project will be funded with a dues increase
- Should the City not fund or if we do not get approved for the project in any one year, then the BOD will decide how to proceed. There is no guarantee that we must proceed with the project if funding is not available. The landscaping committee will be asked to work within the confines of the funds available from year to year. Each Phase of the project is self-contained, so that there will not be partially completed work that looks unsightly until the next Phase.
- It has been estimated that we will be able to save approximately 20% on our annual watering bill at the completion of all 6 phases. This equates to

approximately \$1250 per year (the current 8 year average for water is \$6288 a year times 20% = \$1250). If we spend \$1400 a year, or a total of \$8400, it will take approximately 6.72 years after completion to pay back the investment. This does not account for increased water costs due to inflation or savings that will be realized by lower maintenance costs.

- The project in 2009 is removing a very small percentage of the total grass that encompasses the common areas. The primary goal was to replace the annual flowers with perennial flowers and increase the visibility at the entrance on 17th. If we were to stop with this year's project, the return on investment would be 100%, as we would no longer have to replace the annual flowers and that line item could be eliminated. The savings would be \$20 per homeowner, should the HOA decide to not pursue future Phases.
- If we continue with future phases, the continuing budget for the HOA will be \$1400, and the savings will grow every year due to the water savings and lower cost for mowing. It would be projected that the savings will be equal to the percentage of grass that is removed. After completion of the final Phase of the project, then the \$1400 budget item could be removed as an additional savings. A Future BOD would have to make that decision.
- Each year the project focuses on different water wasting and cost cutting measures. This year, in addition to eliminating the annuals, we are also eliminating a section of grass that was over watered (watering the street and harming the trees) and difficult to mow. We also are enlarging the entrance to the neighborhood to create a visually appealing entrance rather than one with mulch that blows away, bushes that get too tall to see around, and bushes that get leggy and are unappealing.

- We will replace grass with attractive well placed rock (combining small and large rock) and shredded mulch that will conserve water around the trees.
- We are donating some of the grass that is removed to Laurie Haring to finish a decking project that Chip had started. If anyone else is interested in the grass, please let us know before the remaining amount is disposed of.

As we move forward with this master plan, each year the newly elected BOD will be responsible for working with the association members and committee volunteers to detail the next phase of the plan. This project needs everyone's involvement to make it succeed. I employ your commitment to making this a community we can all be proud of.

Barring further delays, Phase I will resume in early August with Wards Landscaping removing the excess grass and reworking the watering system at the 17th Street entrance. Please respect their space during this construction time. We will be needing Volunteers over the next 2 weekends to complete the project.

**Your help is key to making this project
successful!**