



## JANUARY 2020 - NEWSLETTER

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE HPIII BOARD!**

Wishing you all the best in 2020~

### **OFFICER CHANGES**

Due to a medical situation that is taking up an increased amount of time and focus I have decided to step down from the role of HOA President. With the approval of the board, Bev Wedda, who has served as Treasurer for several years, and I will exchange duties for the remainder of the current year. New board members are elected each year at the annual meeting, after which the board selects its officers for the year.

*David Newman, Treasurer*

### **FINANCE**

The finances for Homeplace III continue to be on a solid footing with operating costs under control and healthy bank balances that ensure our ability to continue on the important capital projects.

If you will take a minute and look at the budget that was mailed with next year's payment coupons, you will see our projected income for 2019 is slightly higher than budgeted, but that, with the exception of General Building Maintenance, our operating costs are expected to finish the year below budget. This pattern is reflected in our 2020 projections. This is the result of careful management on the part of both the board and Grandchester Meadows.

What this means is that an increased portion of our regular (\$160 month) dues is being set aside of capital costs. This is reflected on the back page in the "Surplus to Reserves" line under the Miscellaneous category. The projected year-end of \$273,405.87 is \$15,000+ above the original estimation, and this is hoped to increase again in 2020.

The only area of concern is the cost of Capital Roof Replacements, which are higher than projected. But, because of the work over the last decade or so to build reserves, we foresee no problems in completing the roofing project in 2020 as scheduled. We plan to start painting as well!

# **RESERVE STUDY – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Our experience with roof replacement project has led the HOA Board to desire a more complete overview of kind of capital expenses we will be facing over the next 30 years. We hired Reserve Professionals to do the study. The result is an 82-page document that the board is working through and that we will present to you over time and post on the website. We are in early stages of understanding the document and all of its implications. But the first thing we would like to share is the thoroughness of the items covered in the study. We have historically looked at capital costs in terms of paving, roofing and painting. Reserve Professionals suggest we take the following, more inclusive view:

## **SITE MAINTENANCE**

- Asphalt - Repairs
- Asphalt - Repaving, 1.5" Overlay Landscaping - Refurbish
- Mailboxes - Replace
- Sewer and Water - Repairs, Allowance
- Site Concrete - Gutters and Flatwork, Repairs Site Concrete - Paving, Repairs
- Site Drainage - Repairs or Regrading,
- Storm System - Repairs Allowance

## **ROOF REPLACEMENTS**

- Roofs - Composition Shingle, Replace - (over a 3-year cycle)

## **PAINTING**

- Siding and Trim - Repairs & Repaint (over a 4-year cycle)

## **EXTERIOR UNIT REPAIRS**

- Brick - Clean and Point Up
- Gutters & Downspouts - Replace

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Rail Road Ties
- Signage - Directional Signs

Each category is further broken down into a frequency cycle (for example, Painting is planned to occur every 8 years) and costs are assigned for each item in each year with an inflation factor included. The plan extends out over 30 years and it is recommended that we update every five years to account for the changes in costs for individual items and general inflationary trends.

It's a lot to digest and we will continue to pass information on through the newsletter and postings on the GM website.

### **Update from the Social Committee:**

Sending a special thanks to the community members who attended the HP3 Holiday Potluck and Game Night on Saturday, December 28th in Suite K of the Woodcroft Professional Building. All were able to enjoy sharing food and conversation, followed by some fun while four different games were being played. Watch for our next community gathering in the spring and the opportunity to come meet more of your neighbors.

## **Home Place III Landscape Committee Updates**

As we begin 2020, the Community's Board of Directors continues to explore ways to improve both the efficacy and safety of our grounds maintenance practices. Our grounds include our tree canopy and tree beds, our foundation plantings and shrubs, and our lawn areas. This exploration is challenging some of our "business as usual" assumptions, and is taking the form of more nurturing, harmonious, and preventative approaches. This may shift us over time from working primarily with one contractor, to partnering with a small team of landscape contractors.

### **Lawncare Service Working Group Meet with Organic Lawn Care and Landscaping Service.**

This past summer, while questioning the safety and long-term efficacy of the chemical spraying practices being used on our lawn areas and foundation plantings and shrubs, a working group of four community members was formed with Board approval, to research alternative approaches and service providers. One such service provider from whom a quote was received is "Pleasant Green Grass" Organic Lawn Care and Landscaping. They express a concern for the environment, and for creating healthy ecosystems, in our lawns and elsewhere. Taken directly from their website: "We're all about working with nature not against it. Our focus is the soil. If your soil is out of balance it will be obvious; your grass will be thin and weak and full of weeds and disease. These are all symptoms of poor soil. Your soil is working against you. If you balance and bring life back to the soil it will start working for you, weeds and disease go away and the grass grows thicker and healthier." The Board is holding the possibility that Pleasant Green Grass will be a member of our team in the future, with their approach to healing our soil.

### **Board Members Meet with "Treecologists".**

Most members of our community will agree that our trees are one of our most valuable assets. On a bright fall afternoon the last week in November, many Board Members met with arborists, Basal and Stuart Camu of "Leaf and Limb Tree Care" to walk our grounds and discuss how they might provide services to help maintain our Home Place III tree canopy and shrub foundation plantings as a component of our grounds maintenance program.

Our walk of the grounds included discussion of a menu of services that they might provide for us which included:

1. Leave the Leaves: Continue to keep leaves on site in mulched tree beds to retain moisture and provide soil nutrients instead of paying to remove them. Supplement the leaves with wood chips that they can provide at no cost.
2. Monitor the health of our tree canopy, identify trees that may have problems, and recommend the best ways to treat or remove them as a last resort.
3. Trim branches that grow to overhang roofs or decks too much or where additional light is needed for maintenance of ground cover areas.
4. Develop guidelines to replace overgrown and diseased foundation plantings with smaller native plants that provide food for birds and pollinators and require far less pruning.
5. Use natural products to fertilize and suppress weeds in our planting beds. Use chemical controls only as a last resort.
6. Control of erosion strategies include expansion of mulched tree beds and trimming or removal of selected trees and branches to allow grass or other native ground covers to take hold in erosion prone areas.

## LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE UPDATE CONTINUED:

The Board agrees with the Leaf & Limb company philosophy which is summed up as follows: “.... we care for trees because we believe they are essential for the well-being of our planet. Trees clean our air, water, and soil. They provide us with food, shelter, and medicine. They make us happier, healthier, and add value to our community.” They will provide a tree cover maintenance services proposal for us before the end of the year.

### **Completing the Team with Lawn Mowing and Edging Services**

Our management company, Grandchester Meadows, is in conversation with and awaiting proposal from our current lawn care service contractor about narrowing the focus of their services to lawn mowing and edging only. Grandchester Meadows is also getting quotes from additional service contractors for this work.

After all the service quotes are received and reviewed, the Board of Directors will decide what approach to take as we head into 2020, amidst our other priority commitments and obligations.

### **REMINDER - Homeplace III Call List**

#### **Durham One**

**919-560-1200**

- Trash collections/bin issues, recycling
- Large item disposal (couches, mattresses)
- potholes, street repairs
- water and stormwater services,

#### **Duke Energy Progress**

**800-419-6356**

- Report a power outage
- Report a streetlight out
- Report a tree down affecting power equipment

#### **Grandchester Meadows**

**(919) 757-1718 (phone or text)**

- Exterior building maintenance- siding and non-window / non-door trim only, gutters, roof repair.
- Maintenance of common areas, including landscaping, common sidewalks, and roads
- Tree limbs and other landscaping issues
- Mailbox repairs and replacement
- Trash & Litter removal from common areas.
- Snow removal

**15 MPH – THE COMMUNITY SPEED LIMIT**  
**PLEASE REMEMBER THE SPEED LIMIT THROUGH OUR NEIGHBORHOOD IS**  
**15 MILES PER HOUR.**  
**THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN, NEIGHBORS AND PETS DEPEND ON IT!**