



Autumn Lakes Gazette

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January 2023

XXXIX No 1

Board of Directors

Shah Smith 314-960-6620 *President*
Laura Farkas 314-770-9442 *Vice President*
Jennifer Morgan 314-344-2928 *Secretary*
Richard Ornberg 817-357-2633 *Trustee*
Retta Morcom 314-479-7447 *Trustee*
Laura Farkas 314-770-9442 *Gazette editor*
Social Committee Chair: Madonna Esposito
Architecture Committee Chair: Shah Smith
Landscaping Committee Chair: Cheryl Eggert

Smith Management Group (SMG)
1630 Des Peres Rd
Ste 210
St Louis, MO 63131
Business Phone: (314) 394-4200
Office Hours M– Fr 9:00-5:00
Emergency Service: 314-968-7850

AL Website: AutumnLakesSTL.com



Autumn Lakes January Meeting

1/18/2023

Board of Trustees present: Laura Farkas – Vice President, Jennifer Morgan – Secretary, Dick Ornberg – Trustee, Retta Morcom – Trustee. Lisa Love from Smith Management was present. Norm Rhea and Steve Borgmann, City Councilmen for Maryland Heights, were also present. Shah Smith – President and Mandi Mueller, SMG, were absent.

Management Report

Laura provided the SMG report for Mandi.

- There were 23 new work orders submitted since the November meeting. 19 have been completed, 1 was canceled and 3 are in process.
- Roofing Claim – The board hasn't received the detailed report from Lincoln Hancock Restoration (LHR). LHR did send their report to the Autumn Lakes Association insurance company. The insurance company sent a third-party adjuster to examine some roofs. Based on those findings, the insurance company says there wasn't much damage from the July 2021 storms. Other roofing companies provided different feedback as they did repairs in 2022. The board is waiting for the LHR recommendation on the next steps.

Financial Report

Laura reported on the year to date financial information.

December financials have not been finalized yet. Needed corrections to the actuals have been identified by trustees. A member of the board will be meeting with SMG accounting to review and make corrections as needed. The board knows that along with other TownSq issues, the financials are still not available to owners on TownSq. Mandi is meeting with the TownSq administrators to address these issues.

ALA Income – \$233,910
Under Budget on Income -- \$1,962
Expenses – \$262,686
Over Budget on Expenses -- \$29,496 – due to water expenses and allocation of lawn care expenses.

ALC Income -- \$965,360
Under Budget on Income -- \$28,564
Expenses - \$1,112,321
Over Budget on Expenses -- \$126,110 – due to pest control, snow removal, incorrectly allocated building/roof repairs and lawn care expenses.

Old Business

Upper Dam Report – The board voted to table this topic until the MSD report has been received.

Republic Waste - Notifications about Republic Waste's trash receptacle requirements were sent to all homeowners. All trash and recycling containers must be in compliance by the week of February 20th. A bulk order for Autumn Lakes is being placed with Republic Waste at the end of January. Please contact Shah Smith to place an order if interested. New trash carts will be delivered to the clubhouse by Republic and our maintenance man will deliver the carts to those who requested them. Any old receptacles will be removed if left at the curb on February 15th. Owners leaving trash bags or other junk not in a trash can at the curb for trash pick up may be assessed a fine.

Tree Trimming/Removal Status – All trees close to the buildings have been trimmed as needed. 24 trees were removed, stumps ground out and these areas have been leveled. The areas will get seed and straw in the spring.

New Business

- The board accepted a snow removal contract for 2022-2023 with STL Hardscape.
- The board approved the purchase of a replacement grounds utility vehicle for \$15,999 + tax to enable Chris, the on-site maintenance person, to accomplish more assigned tasks. See picture.
- The board approved increasing Chris to 21 hours onsite per week. He will typically be onsite on Monday afternoons, all day Tuesday and Friday starting next week.
- To allow sufficient time for financial reviews, the board approved changing meeting dates for Board Meetings to the 4th Wednesday of the month (March, July and September). November will move to the 5th Wednesday of the month this year due to Thanksgiving. The annual Board and Election meeting will remain on the 3rd Wednesday of May per the indentures.
- The Social Committee asked the board to add a line item in the ALA Reserves, to be called Clubhouse Improvements, for funds from fund raising efforts and unspent clubhouse rental funds to be used for clubhouse improvements. This line item would be in addition to the Clubhouse Repair and Maintenance reserve budget line. The board approved adding a line in the ALA Reserves: Clubhouse Improvements.
- The board has scheduled a Trustee Open House on Saturday, February 18th from 10 am to noon at the clubhouse.
- There are 2 trustee positions (Jennifer Morgan and Dick Ornberg) that will be up for election this May. Candidate Information forms must be turned in to SMG by Friday, **March 24th** to be on the May Election ballot. Interested owners are asked to review the trustee description and responsibilities available on Autumn-LakesSTL.com website in the FAQ section or speak to a current trustee.
- Copies of the Candidate Information form will be available at the March meeting.
- The board plans to have a **Meet the Candidate Open House** on Sunday, **April 30th** so owners can meet and question the candidates before voting in May.

Committee Reports

Welcome Committee -- Jen —A meeting of the committee will be scheduled for the end of January/early February to update the welcome packet for new owners.

Amenities Committee -- Laura reported for Shah.

All homeowners must turn in a 2023 Owner Information form which includes contact information, an emergency contact, and a list of the residents (including children or tenants) who live in your unit. To have access to the pool or the tennis courts, you must also turn in an **Amenities Request Form**. New court keys will be assigned later this spring. Pool access cards will be turned on in time for the pool opening Memorial Weekend only if both forms are on file and HOA fees are current. Owners waiting until May to turn in forms may have delayed access. These forms were included in your December mailing. If you have misplaced your forms, if you are needing new keys or have amenities questions, please contact Shah Smith at ShahSmithAutumn-LakesTrustee@gmail.com or call 314-960-6620.

Landscaping Committee – No report

Architectural Committee – Dick -- 4 decks, 1 door were approved. Maryland Heights rejected 1 permit request which can be resubmitted when the request meets MH requirements. Owners were reminded that they need to fill out an Architectural Request form to make changes to the exterior of their unit (including doors and windows). These Architectural Request forms are reviewed by the committee to ensure that requests are in line with AL guidelines. The forms also provide acknowledgement by owners about obtaining building permits from Maryland Heights and ensuring the contractor has workman's comp insurance.

Social Committee --

On Saturday, **April 23rd**, 11:30-1:30 the Social Committee will be hosting an **Autumn Lakes' Ladies' Luncheon** consisting of Pasta Con Broccoli, a meat sauce pasta, garlic bread, salad and a dessert prepared by the committee. There will be no cost for Autumn Lakes residents, but because of the limited space, reservations will be required. If you are unable to access the clubhouse, deliveries might be available (\$5 to cover the cost of containers). **Reservations must be received no later than April 9th**. Email the Social Committee (name/address/phone number) or call Cathy Burkard 314-443-0253.

On Sunday, **June 25th** from 1-4 pm an **Ice Cream Social** will be held at the pool. Ice cream, toppings and drinks will be provided along with games. Bring your kids and grandkids. Reservations appreciated, but not required. Email the Social Committee or contact Stacey Diefenbach 314-277-7799.

Social Activities for the fall are in the planning stages. Suggestions so far include a fall festival-possibly at the large lake, a Beer-Wine-Whiskey tasting, a Trivia night, and a Holiday Decorating contest. Email the Social Committee or contact Madonna Esposito 314-358-1191 with your ideas, or to serve on the committee.

Save the Date for Autumn Lakes Social Activities

To make reservations, make suggestions or ask questions email the Social Committee ALSocialComm@gmail.com or contact the person hosting each event.

Clubhouse Improvements

Repairs and maintenance items for the clubhouse are routinely budgeted each year. The Social and Amenities committees asked the Board to create a line item in the Reserves to set aside funds for big ticket clubhouse improvements that may otherwise take many years to complete. Two or three money making projects would be scheduled each year. Our regular free social activities would continue. Often-requested improvements by owners who do use, or would like to use the clubhouse, are the addition of a ramp and an upstairs bathroom. These would make the clubhouse accessible to many more owners, particularly those wishing to attend meetings and social activities, or to rent the clubhouse for their personal events.

Fundraising Activities for Clubhouse Improvements

On Saturday, **May 20th**, 8-2 pm (the same day as our community Garage Sale) a **Vendor Craft Fair** will be held at the clubhouse. Autumn Lakes residents will be eligible for early booth reservations, then the booth reservations will open to the public. There will be no entry charge to attend. More information will be in the March Newsletter. Email the Social Committee or contact Madonna Esposito 314-358-1191 for more information.

Ever wonder about the variety of condo models (9+) we have here in Autumn Lakes? Looking for ideas on how to enhance your own unit or garden? On Saturday, **June 11th** we will be hosting an **Autumn Lakes House and Garden Tour** highlighting some of the different models found here in Autumn Lakes. Do you have a green thumb, or want one - Stop by and see some of the glorious mini-gardens and talk with the owners. Tickets will only be available to Autumn Lakes Residents and their guests. More information will be out in March, but if you are particularly proud of your home improvements and gardening abilities, let us know you would like to have your unit or garden included by emailing the Social Committee or calling Shah Smith 314-960-6620 for more information.

City of Maryland Heights

Norm Rhea spoke briefly about a new apartment complex. It will be a 60-unit, 1 bedroom senior living facility located near Serra's along I-270.



Pink Flamingo Parties will be back once the weather permits this spring, summer and fall. All it takes is a willingness to offer up your driveway (or back yard) for neighbors to gather on the Friday evening of your choice. Signs with your address and flamingos go up at the entrance and in your yard.

Everyone brings their own drinks, a chair, and snacks to share around 6 pm. If you can't come for the whole time, just drop by and spend a little time with your neighbors. All you need to do to host is to email the Social Committee or contact Shah Smith 314-960-6620 the week before.

Residents Questions & Comments

Open Forum: (Owners were provided question/comment forms to submit.)

Question: An owner wanted to replace windows in his rear bedroom. His contractor told him that Maryland Heights won't approve the windows because there is not enough of an egress at the back of his unit.

Answer: There have been some owners who've had this problem but it was resolvable with Maryland Heights. Owners need to contact Maryland Heights for building code information.

Question: A member of the Social Committee asked the owners in attendance if the community would support activities with a small fee as a fund-raising effort for the clubhouse.

Answer: Based upon feedback from some owners, it will depend on the cost of the activities. Some owners felt that the Association fee should be enough for clubhouse improvements. The usual budget for the clubhouse pays for repairs and maintenance. The committee suggested that a ramp at the upstairs entrance and an upstairs bathroom would make the clubhouse more accessible to our owners and their guests. Some felt that the clubhouse could be a bigger revenue generator if more investment was made in the clubhouse. Others at the meeting felt that the fund-raising efforts for changes to the clubhouse would be helpful as an addition to the budget.

Question: An owner asked why the cost for the December snow removal was so much.

Answer: Lisa reported how the snow removal company itemized their fees. The December snowfall required two salt treatments (pre and post storm), plus driveway plowing and the labor to shovel front walkways costing \$40,000. The cost break down was approximately \$110 per unit, plus shoveling labor. They felt that due to storm expectations and the drastic temperature change, plowing and shoveling were necessary to prevent ice. The board and SMG have made plans to communicate with the company on how we can reduce costs for any further snow events.

Question: An owner asked why AL was under budget in income.

Answer: There are a number of owners who are delinquent on their fees. There is ongoing follow up with delinquent homeowners.

Question: One owner expressed concern that they were receiving mail for other addresses.

Answer: One item had the previous owner's address and was hand delivered to her. Lisa said she would investigate the SMG addresses on record, along with absentee owner addresses.

Association Meeting Dates Changing

The Board approved changing the Board Meeting dates to the 4th Wednesday of the month in March, July and September, and going forward, January. November's meeting will normally move to the 4th Wednesday, but this year will move to the 5th Wednesday due to Thanksgiving. The annual Board and Election meeting will remain on the 3rd Wednesday of May per the indentures. The change will allow more time for SMG to reconcile the financial accounts and for the Board to review the accounts.

The meetings for the rest of 2023 will be: March 22, May 17, July 26, September 27 and November 29.

Question: An owner asked why the board approved a vehicle for an SMG employee to do work.

Answer: The vehicle that the board approved is a grounds utility vehicle, not a passenger vehicle. This vehicle, which will be used solely in Autumn Lakes, will allow Chris to do jobs that require hauling supplies to areas that the passenger vehicles cannot go. This vehicle is a replacement for a similar vehicle that had had numerous repairs and was no longer working. Autumn Lakes has always had a utility vehicle for AMC and SMG employees to use.

Question: An owner asked about the tree trimming contract and why the board did not use an independent arborist instead of the tree trimming company's arborist.

Answer: In past years, one or two trustees made those decisions. In 2022 there were numerous reviews of the grounds by the Landscaping Committee and trustees to look at our trees. A list of concerns was provided to the arborist who then walked the grounds with a trustee to review the list and provide recommendations. Of primary concern is risk of damage to people or property and the overall health of the tree. It is not unusual for tree trimming companies to have their own arborists to assist clients in making the decisions about their tree health. The board feels confident that the arborist considered every aspect in assessing our tree population's health.

Residents Questions & Comments

Continued:

Question: An owner asked about the monthly financials that were supposed to be unlocked in TownSq two months ago. The owner stated the he made written requests but feels they have been ignored.

Answer: As previously reported, SMG is having technical difficulties with this section of TownSq. Mandi is working with the TownSq Admin to address this. The December financials have not been finalized yet, so they have not been posted.

Question: An owner asked why the financial publication and access was so problematic and late.

Answer: The board has been working with SMG to complete the crossover of accounts from the previous management company. There is still some clean up in the accounts that need to be completed, so a trustee is meeting with the accounting team to fix the errors and finalize the December reports. Mandi has been working with TownSq to fix the glitch to post the financials.

Question: An owner asked when they would receive pool keys after they have sent in payment.

Answer: Pool access cards are handed out and/or turned on in May.

Comment: Clarification for the Ladies' Luncheon. It has not yet been decided if or how deliveries may be made to homebound individuals.

REPUBLIC TRASH & RECYCLING

As of the week of February 20th, all trash containers must be a minimum of 37"H x 23"W x 28"D. The recycle containers must be 39"H x 26"W x 28"D. These are often backordered, but we have an arrangement to place one bulk order for Autumn Lakes. If you need to replace or add a container, make sure to do so by contacting ShahSmithAutumn-LakesTrustee@gmail.com or call 314-960-6620 before **January 31st**. New containers will be delivered to your garage door **Tuesday February 14th**. If you want to dispose of old containers, set them out at the curb for **Wednesday, January 15th** to be pickup by Republic.

After our February delivery, to order replacements for damaged containers call **(636) 947-5959** or visit their <https://www.republicservices.com/about-us>. There are no charges for these.

Reminder: Bags, boxes or loose items should never be placed at the curb on trash pickup days. For regular trash, interior bags should always be used. Loose trash often gets caught by the wind during the dumping process and blows through the neighborhood. For recycling, items should not be in bags (except paper bags for shredded paper).

REPUBLIC BULK PICKUP

Bags, boxes and other types of throw-aways can not be set out for regular/recycle pickup. Bulk pickup should be set out no earlier than Thursday when an appointment has already been made. Republic's website gives examples of what can be picked up by Bulk Waste appointment. Bulk item pickups (which can include empty, unbroken down boxes, furniture and separated 2-piece toilets) can be ordered early in the week for Friday pickup. There is no charge for this. **Construction materials can not be set out in trash or bulk pickup.** (Phone number and website are listed above).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media can be a fun and quick way to share information with your Autumn Lakes neighbors. Unfortunately, information on social media is often incorrect or incomplete and results in confusion and misinterpretation. Questions and concerns are best addressed directly with a Board Member. You can also refer to the information on our website AutumnLakesSTL.com. The Board encourages owners to attend the bi-monthly HOA Board Meetings, or the quarterly Trustee Open House for a more informal setting to ask HOA questions.



Here is the new grounds utility vehicle "Bob". It arrived February 3rd. Chris has already put it to work filling the hole on ATD. Dick Ornberg was supervising.





Holiday Lights Contest Winners

- * 1st Place Condos – 11923 Autumn Trace Ct— Mary Lucas
- * 2nd Place Condos - 11910 Autumn Lakes Dr —Alison Fisher
- * Houses – 12021 Autumn Lakes Dr — Susan Prentice
- * Decks –11913 Autumn Trace Ct— Valerie Flowers & Mike Campbell

Trustees' Open House -February 18th 10 am-Noon

All owners are invited to the quarterly Open House to meet with trustees to ask questions and share concerns in an informal manner. This will be an ideal time to learn how the board makes budgeting decisions. Assistance will also be given to anyone who still needs to sign up for the Town Square app. This is the best way to access your personal account, find documents, get notifications and input work orders.

The next Autumn Lakes Association meeting is scheduled for 3/22/23 at 7 pm.



"No winter lasts
forever; no
spring skips its
turn."

- Hal Borland