



Autumn Lakes Gazette

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Board of Directors

Shah Smith 314-960-6620 *President*
Laura Farkas 314-770-9442 *Vice President*
Madonna Esposito 314-358-1191 *Trustee*
Pam Bell 314-369-2885 *Secretary*
Retta Morcom 314-479-7447 *Trustee*
Madonna Esposito 314-358-1191 *Amenities*
Shah Smith 314-960-6620 *Architecture*
Cathie Burkard 314-443-0253 *Social Activities*
Laura Farkas 314-770-9442 *Landscaping/Gazette*

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Business Hours: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m

AL Website: AutumnLakesSTL.com
CPM Website: www.cpmgateway.com



Autumn Lakes Board Meeting – January 17, 2024

Trustees in attendance: Shah Smith-President, and Bob Beasley- Maintenance Director. Norm Rhea – city councilman also attended.

Laura Farkas-Vice President, Madonna Esposito-Trustee, Butch Rhomberg-Trustee, Pam Bell-Secretary. Representatives from CPM in attendance were Janet Lynch – CAM,

COMMUNITY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (CPM) REPORT

Janet Lynch reported that CPM has not received all the Autumn Lakes transition paperwork from SMG. That includes ending balances for owner accounts and AL financials. SMG is frequently slow in providing transition information.

Clubhouse Rentals: The new clubhouse rental process will allow a condo owner to temporarily reserve a date online through the calendar. Condo owners who are not registered on the portal, and house owners can call customer service to reserve. The owner still must complete the rental forms and submit the rental fees to confirm the rental date. The payment can be made online.

Work Orders: Janet reported there were about 25 work orders submitted in January. Many of these came from the board review of the SMG Open Work Order Report which incorrectly showed 760 open work orders. About 11 work orders were identified as still being open from the report, the others have been reported by owners. 11-12 work orders are still in process. Janet reminded owners that they will be updated when work will be done. Owners are asked to be specific when submitting work orders, provide the location and size of the problem/damage, pictures are always helpful. This will give Janet and Bob the best information to identify who needs to be assigned to the repair.

OLD BUSINESS

Governing Documents: Shah Smith reported that our governing documents (Declarations, Indentures, Bylaws, Amendments) are in the hands of attorneys who are identifying issues and recommendations that we may want to consider changing.

Reserve Study: Reserve Advisors has been contracted to perform the reserve study for Autumn Lakes in March. They expect it to take 3 to 4 weeks. We expect to get the report with their recommendations in April or May

after the financial analysis portion is completed. A Town Hall will be set up to review the results with owners. Part of what Reserve Advisors will provide is a recommendation for a timeline for capital expenditures and alternatives to how owners could pay for these.

Snow Removal: Butch Rhomberg has been the board contact with St Louis Hardscape Solutions, our snow removal contractor. Butch reminded attendees they will not plow unless there is 3+ inches of snow at the airport. Treatment for sleet and ice predictions will be reviewed for each situation.

2024 Budget Changes Reminder: Laura Farkas reminded owners that several things were left out of the budget for 2024. Reminder: there will be No mulching at the condos, No trees planted and there will be No pool monitor, everyone be on good behavior!

NEW BUSINESS

Clubhouse 1st Floor Furnace: Shah reported that the furnace for the first floor of the clubhouse has not been working for a while. Three bids were received. The existing furnace was from the 1990s and was designed to take care of the clubhouse when it was a commercial facility (golf pro shop and the Hexagon Hut bar and grill). It was recommended to change the size from a 10-ton unit to a 7.5-ton unit. Two bids were received for the smaller unit. The board selected Jetco and approved their bid for \$19,987. We are waiting for the installation date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Social Committee report by Cathie Burkard: December holiday party was a success! \$285 was raised for the Clubhouse Special Project fund. Cathie also reported the winners of the Holiday Lights which were identified in the last gazette! Congratulations to the winners!

Cathie also pointed out that there was a sign-up sheet at the meeting for anyone who is interested in joining a Bunco group. The interested parties will figure out a schedule for the games. You can contact Cathie if you are interested.

Landscaping Committee report by Laura Farkas: Laura will be getting the prior committee members together soon. Topics that the group will be working on include:

- Lawn Groomers suggested that some steep areas should not be mowed every week (it continues the problem with ridges and LG had a mower fall down a hill last year) .
- Lawn Groomers also suggested that some areas that are badly eroding might be better handled by planting plants in those areas that could reduce the erosion problems.
- We didn't have any plants at the AL entrance last year and the group should decide what or if we should plant those beds this spring.

Amenities Committee report by Madonna Esposito: Planning of any fundraising events will be the responsibility of the Amenities committee. They will work with the Social committee on any joint events.

OWNER FORUM

Q: An Owner reported that Lawn Groomers cleaned up the leaves around her unit before Window Gang came to clean the gutters. They just left piles of stuff on the ground. She suggested that the two events could have been scheduled better.

A: Laura responded that in previous years the gutter cleaning was always scheduled before the leaf clean-up but SMG was having trouble getting gutter cleaning bids for us. Lawn Groomers was scheduled when CPM gave us the name of the Window Gang. We will plan for better scheduling next year.

Q: An Owner asked if there was a person at CPM to call with computer questions.

A: Janet recommended that anyone with CPM's Customer Service can help or they will get you to someone who can. Call CPM at 636-227-8688.

Q: An Owner asked how/where to get the certificate of insurance specific to her unit for her mortgage company. She also asked why the board dropped the earthquake insurance.

A: Owners can email Daniel & Henry at JRcois@danielandhenry.com for a certificate for their unit.

Laura mentioned that the Unit Owners' Insurance Requirements document is on AutumnLakesSTL.com under the Master Insurance Policy Documents tab for general information about the master policy.

Shah explained that we didn't have earthquake insurance prior to 2023. While we were signing up for the other types of insurance after the fraud, the board was offered earthquake insurance. We thought it was a good idea. Just a month or so later when we were working on the budget, we recognized how much of a fee increase would be needed for 2024 and decided it wasn't the right time to add earthquake insurance.

Q: An Owner wants to know why the board makes all the decisions for the subdivision, why can't the owners make the decisions.

A: Shah explained that that is the purpose of HOA boards and other situations where you vote for representatives. The owners vote for board members to make the best decisions for the good of the subdivision.

Q: Residents, via Zoom, asked will we find out tonight if owners are getting a special assessment?

A: Shah explained that the board doesn't have any plans for a special assessment. When we get the reserve study report and recommendations, we will have a Town Hall Meeting with the owners to explain the recommendations and costs. The Board will then come up with an approach to pay for the recommended repairs and build the necessary reserves. If that approach includes a special assessment the owners will have to vote to approve it. We will need as many owners as possible to attend any meetings to discuss the reserve study results, so everyone is knowledgeable about the decisions we need to make.

C: An Owner commented that people spreading rumors about special assessments and the amounts they will be, need to stop. They don't know what they're talking about.

Q: An Owner asked why the request for audits of at least 2 years of financials isn't in the budget.

A: Shah replied that it was discussed in the Understanding the Budget meeting that was held on November 11, 2023. The management companies we were considering to replace SMG mentioned that the price of audits have gone up significantly in the last few years because the requirements have changed for the CPAs. Both companies suggested that you needed to have an expectation of how much money you thought was missing and it needed to exceed the cost of the audits or you were just wasting money. While the board was unhappy with the financials prepared by SMG, we did not think money was missing. The big problem was that they couldn't seem to get the invoices charged to the correct GL accounts. For example, the water bill would show up in the sewer GL account. The board determined audits were not a good use of our funds.

C: Shah explained that we never posted financials when we were with AMC. Owners received the December financials for the prior year with the election ballots in May. Otherwise, they saw the Over/Under Budget numbers in the gazette. When we moved to SMG, they promoted the fact that they could put the monthly Income & Expense and Balance Sheet reports online for the owners. Then the reports were so inaccurate the board didn't want them posted.

CPM's process is that they will post the monthly Income & Expense and Balance Sheet reports for the owners on the portal. The reports will be posted at the end of the month AFTER the report month. For example, the March reports should be on the portal at the end of April. The December 2023 and January 2024 reports will be delayed due to the transition.

Q: Resident asked how to get access to the Zoom meeting recording.

A: Send Madonna an email at AutumnLakesBoard@gmail.com to request the link. Many owners have requested they not be shown on the Zoom meeting. So, the Zoom recording **SHOULD NOT BE POSTED** on social media. We don't have the recordings on AutumnLakesSTL.com for the same reason.

Q: An Owner asked if Maryland Heights is doing anything about the big puddle on McKelvey across from AL entrance.

A: Madonna has reported this to MSD as they are responsible for the drainage on McKelvey.

Q: An Owner asked if we have a project waiting to be worked will it be carried over from SMG to CPM?

A: Yes, your project is still planned to be worked.

Q: An Owner asked about the wood-burning fireplaces and the person who was threatening to use their fireplace.

A: Shah responded that the attorney sent that owner a cease-and-desist letter. We are checking for usage. Fines will be assessed if needed.

UPDATE: Board received feedback that the Missouri Director of Insurance closed out its investigation related to the matter and found no violation.

C: Shah explained that she thinks we got better insurance pricing by getting our insurance in September. Based on social media and other conversations she thinks the subdivisions renewing now are paying more than we are.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION/NEWS

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT

On January 30, Butch Rhomberg asked to step down as a Trustee. Retta Morcom agreed to return at the board's unanimous request to complete the vacated term (2025).

The Board sends a **BIG THANK YOU** to Butch for offering his service to help during last year.

- ❖ **COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** If you are interested in getting involved with the community a good way to start is to join one of the committees. Volunteers are needed for the Landscaping, Social, Amenities and the new Fund Raising committees. Joining one or several of the committees is a way to meet neighbors and provide input to activities that are needed to support the Autumn Lakes community.
- ❖ **Wood-burning Fireplace Restriction Reminder:** Madonna Esposito reminded attendees that wood-burning fireplaces cannot be used in Autumn Lakes. Owners using their fireplaces will be fined \$100 for the first violation, \$250 for the second violation and \$500 for each violation after that. Residents are asked to report violations to the board so any problems can be handled before there is a problem with the insurance company.
- ❖ **Large Item Pickup:** Contact Republic Services directly to schedule a large item/bulk pickup. Once Republic has provided a confirmed date, you can put your item(s) out by the curb the night before. There is also a deaf man who drives through the neighborhood on normal trash day and will pick up metal and other items.
- ❖ **Dryer Vent Cleaning:** Any resident interested in having their dryer vent cleaned should contact the Board at AutummlakesBoard@gmail.com. The board will collect the names and contact the company to get more information. Depending on the interest, the company may discount the service.
- ❖ **Recycle / Trash Bins:** Don't forget to put recycling and trash bins in your garage after trash pickup.
- ❖ **Salt/ice melt:** If an owner would like a small supply of salt/ice melt from our supply, contact Butch to make an appointment to come fill their own bucket at the maintenance garage.
- ❖ Madonna reported that she has called St Louis County about better traffic control on McKelvey Rd at the AL entrance. AL residents must pull too far into the road to check on-coming traffic. She has also asked that the lights be better coordinated to make entry/exit easier for AL residents.
- ❖ Stacey Diefenbach and Janet Klutho complimented CPM on the recent customer service support they received when they called.
- ❖ Shah reminded residents that if they hire someone to clear snow from their driveway or walkway, make sure they have liability insurance.
- ❖ Cathie Burkard reported that her pipes froze the prior week as did her downstairs neighbor's. They heated the pipes slowly to prevent pipe breakage. She reminded everyone to keep their cabinet doors open and let the water slowly drip to help prevent freezing during extremely cold conditions. And, if you haven't already done it, be sure to turn off the water to outside faucet.

Social Committee Kickoff: The Social Committee met January 24 to discuss social activities for the year. Many ideas were discussed including the Ladies Luncheon, Summer Pool party, Fall party, Game nights, Community BBQ and Holiday events. More details will be forthcoming.

Fund Raising Committee: In order to avoid confusion between social activities and fund raising events, the amenities and social committee thought it would be beneficial to have a new committee formed with the focus on

hosting events that would help raise money for clubhouse improvements. The committee has plans to sponsor a Vendor Craft fair in the spring. Volunteers are needed to help this committee. Contact Madonna Esposito for details.

Clubhouse Ramp: Jerris Ruth was able to obtain additional ramping that will hopefully meet the requirements for the ramp. Work has begun on reviewing requirements for installation of the ramp. Design drawing and permits will be required before any installation can be started. Anyone interested in volunteering to help with this project is asked to contact Madonna Esposito.

Maryland Heights report from Norm Rhea:

- A Hilton company is planned for Dorsett Rd near the Post Office. They are having problems with County planning and zoning requirements.
- Chick-fil-A opened about a week ago at Dorsett and McKelvey
- Westport Plaza happenings: The Soda Fountain Express restaurant/ice cream fountain has opened, several buildings in the center of the plaza have been removed to create a park in that area and planning for a multi-family residential area is progressing.
- No progress has been made on repairs to Pritchard Farm Road. It is up to St. Louis County, who doesn't have the money to do the repairs. The work being seen on pipes is related to another project.

Norm also reported on the upcoming work behind the maintenance garage and 12061-12075 ALD where there is swampy ground and cattails. This area has been retaining water because the drain under Hwy 270 that used to take storm water to the other side of 270 has been completely blocked for years. Several years ago Maryland Heights had agreed to work on the problem and a plan was made with MODOT to begin work this winter. Maryland Heights has budgeted their share of the cost. Now MODOT has determined that it is a bigger project than they had originally thought. Surveyors will be out in the next two weeks so that there can be a new engineering plan to make sure the planned culvert will handle the runoff. Maryland Heights is waiting until MODOT commits the funding which should happen this fall.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

BOARD ELECTION INFORMATION

Interested in getting involved? Consider running for one of the two openings on the Board. Things to know:

- ⇒ **Candidate forms will be available at the meeting and from CPM after the March 20th meeting.**
- ⇒ Interested owners should contact a board member for a description of duties and expectations.
- ⇒ There will be a candidate forum for owners to meet and ask questions of the candidates on April 21st at 1:00pm in the Clubhouse.
- ⇒ Elections will be held at the Annual meeting in May. There are 2 spots open: One two-year term and one three-year term.

TOWN HALL – GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

A town hall will be held at the Clubhouse on **Wednesday, March 13, starting at 7:00pm**. The purpose is to discuss the AL governing documents, the findings and recommendations from the attorney. At the town hall the board will take a 'straw poll' of the attendees to see if they agree that revising the governing documents should be pursued. If so, at the March HOA meeting, all interested owners will be invited to join a task force for owner review and recommendations. Once the Task Force has made their recommendations, the requested changes will be forwarded to the association lawyer, for legal review. Any changes will be voted on by the ownership.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Town Hall Meeting: A town hall will be held at the Clubhouse on **Wednesday, March 13, starting at 7:00pm**. The purpose is to discuss the AL governing documents, the findings and recommendations from the attorney.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for **March 20, 2024**, and will be held at the clubhouse and available via Zoom. The meeting will start @ 7:00pm. Check the AL website: AutumnLakesSTL.com for the link to the Zoom meeting.

Ladies Luncheon: This event is planned for April 14, 2024. More details will be forthcoming. Mark your calendars!

