



# Autumn Lakes Gazette

Established 9/85

## March 2023

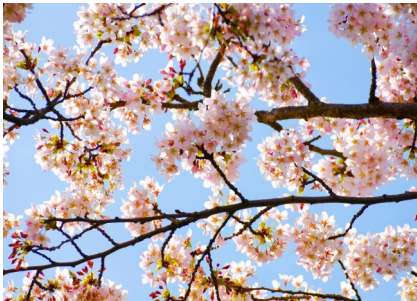
XXXIX No 2

### 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**  
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**Emergency Service: 314-968-7850**

**AL Website: [AutumnLakesSTL.com](http://AutumnLakesSTL.com)**



## Autumn Lakes March Meeting

3/22/2023

**Present:** Shah Smith – President, Laura Farkas – Vice President, Jennifer Morgan – Secretary, Retta Morcom - Trustee, Dick Ornberg – Trustee. Mandi Mueller from Smith Management was present. Norm Rhea, City Council Representative for Maryland Heights was present. Susan Piazza from Republic Services was also present.

**Republic Services** – Susan Piazza provided information to residents about recycle and trash services for the neighborhood as contracted by Maryland Heights. Republic Services is number 1 in recycling services and offers single stream recycling.

What can go into the recycling bin? Think containers. They want containers not odd pieces of glass or plastic. Everything should be clean and dry.

Flattened cardboard boxes and chipboard, no greasy pizza boxes

Paper – whole and shredded

Aluminum, metal, tin – empty, clean and dry

Plastic bottle and jugs – no plastic bags

Cartons – gabled containers like juice boxes

Glass – container glass like wine bottles, jelly jars, no broken glass like mirrors

Don't bag your recyclables – items should be loose. Trash should be bagged to avoid having it blow around the neighborhood.

Do not put lithium batteries into the trash. Latex paint can be thrown in the trash if it is completely dried up.

### President's Report

Shah provided the following information.

- There were 21 new work orders submitted since the January meeting.
- **Animal and Pest Control Concerns** – The community has a lot of animals such as squirrels, birds, raccoons, carpenter bees and wasps causing damage to buildings. It is vital that residents have someone check their home if they are gone for an extended period (more than a couple of weeks) so that pest issues can be caught early.

- **Water Bill Overages** – The community recently had a water bill overage in one building. The bill was \$1,000+ higher than normal one month caused by a running toilet in an empty unit. It is also vital to have an emergency contact who has a key to your unit on file so that if something happens to the unit like a water leak SMG or a trustee can contact them and get into the unit to turn off the water until the problem can be fixed.
- **Homeowner Forms** – Forms were due by January 31st. The board will be following up with residents who have not turned in their forms by May. It is vital to have an emergency contact on file in case something like a water leak occurs. If forms have not been turned in by mid-May the owner's pool keys will not be turned on. The board is considering a fine to ensure all forms are turned in. A new Owner Information Form is required from each condo and home **EVERY YEAR**.

## Financial Report

- Laura Farkas provided information on the financial status. She stated that financials could not be provided because the adjustments mentioned at the January meeting had not been completed so we still do not have December-February reports. The AL community is unusual because it has two different financial accounts for the associations. Several invoices were identified with the wrong association or GL account and some other problems. The Board is working with SMG to get the transactions recorded to the right account with the correct amounts. They are also reviewing invoices from 2022 regarding work orders.

## Old Business

- **Utility vehicle** – Now in use.
- **3158 Retaining Wall** – Permitting has been completed. Work will be done the week of March 27.
- **Dam Report** – A trustee and committee chair met with the MSD engineer. They were told that we don't have to have MSD involved in the repair of the dam. He did provide some recommendations, stating it was not as bad as it appeared and the dam is not in danger of collapsing into the middle lake. We will be getting bids for the repair based on that conversation. And MSD is happy to review the bids and provide advice.
- **MH/MODOT Design Engineering Report** – The drainage issue caused by the MODOT culvert behind Building 14/Garage was the subject of the engineering design commissioned by Maryland Heights and MODOT. The report recommendations have been made to build a berm to direct drainage to the creek. Work should begin next fall, at no cost to the Association.
- **Asphalt Work** – The Board approved a bid from Asphalt Paving for driveway repairs for \$44,102. The bid for sealing driveways from Asphalt Paving was approved at \$34,680. The addresses of the driveways that will be repaired will be listed in the May Gazette.
- **Building Report** – An outside contractor reviewed the siding and trim conditions on all buildings and has completed a report to be reviewed by the Board. The board will be doing a walk through in April to identify and prioritize needed repairs for each building.
- **Roofing Claim Update** – Our insurance company doesn't believe that the damage reported was due to hail in 2021. Reports from roofers stated otherwise. The Board will talk to LHR about what the options are.
- **Trustee Elections** - There are 2 trustee positions that will be up for election this May 17. The ballots and candidate information forms will be mailed the first week of May.
  - The board plans to have a Candidate Open House on Sunday, April 30 in the afternoon so owners can meet and question the candidates before voting. The Open House will be at 1 pm.
  - If interested in running, the residents were asked to review the trustee description and responsibilities available on AutumnLakeSTL.com website in the FAQs section or speak to a current trustee.
  - Copies of the candidate form were available at the March meeting
- **Community Garage Sale** – The garage sale is currently scheduled for May 20th. The community will advertise and put out signage for the event. All interested residents should participate. This will be the same day as the Vendor/Craft Fair at the clubhouse which will hopefully bring more traffic to the neighborhood.

## New Business

- **Owner Questionnaire** – A brief questionnaire will be sent out in the May election packet to ask owners' opinions on some of the neighborhood priorities.
- **Foundation Repairs** – The Board approved some foundation repair bids. The Association is responsible for foundation repairs but is not responsible for basement repairs. If residents think they have a foundation crack, they should fill out a work order.

- **2024 Property Management:** The property management contract is up for review in the next few months. Any owner who would like to make a recommendation for additional companies to be considered, please turn in the name of the management company, the community they represent and a name of a community board member to an Autumn Lakes trustee. It should be a company that manages primarily owner-occupied condos not investor-owned units.
- **Insurance:** The Board will be investigating insurance companies for next year.
- **New Tennis Court/Sports Court & Pool Roles** – The board is reviewing and will provide revised rules to residents.
- **Address Signs** – The board has approved some guidelines for residents who want to put up additional address signage. Details are on the Gazette. Insert page.

## Committee Reports

- **Amenities Committee** – Shah Smith reported that:
  - Owner Information Forms** – Have to be on file for the current year to use the tennis court/pickle ball court and pool. Key cards for the pool will not be turned on until Owner Information and Amenities forms are on file. Owners can turn in forms by mailing them to SMG at their Des Peres office or using the drop box on Shah's front porch at 3134 Autumn Trace Dr. Contact Shah about obtaining new keys or cards.
  - Pickle ball Nets** - New pickle ball nets have been ordered.
  - Tennis Court Keys** - New tennis court keys will be given out in May as requested.
  - Pool Keys** - Those who have requested a new access card will receive them in May. Existing access cards will be turned on by May 27 if the owner has turned in a 2023 Owner Information form and an Amenities form.
  - Clubhouse Rental** – The clubhouse calendar with open dates is now available on TownSq. Information and Reservation forms are on both TownSq and our website AutumnLakesSTL.com. Contact Shah if you are interested in renting the clubhouse or turning in a reservation. There are two monitors that can meet with residents who would like to see the clubhouse. Maximum occupancy in the clubhouse is 70 people.
- **Landscape Committee** – Shah provided information for Cheryl who couldn't attend.
  - Landscaping requests/approvals are required for anything planted outside of the unit. The committee needs to know where items are being planted to make sure they don't interfere with mowing and are not invasive species.
  - The committee is currently compiling a list of builder bushes that need to be replaced.
  - Mowing will begin the first week of April. The need for a spring leaf cleanup will be assessed during the trustees' walk around.
  - Tree rings – please do not put decorative rings around trees. These are being removed as units change ownership. Existing tree rings need to be well-maintained or you will be asked to remove it.
- **Architectural Committee** – Richard Ornberg reported on the committee work.
  - A reminder to residents that there is a Condo Owner vs Association grid available on the websites for any questions about what can/can't be done and who is responsible. Any work to the exterior of the building, including decks, windows, garage lights, doors, etc. needs to be approved by the Architectural committee.
  - The board will be discussing how the community does mulching in the future as mulch too high up against the buildings damages siding. More details to come.
  - Owners can request a door color change using one of the approved exterior paint colors for doors. Owners are responsible for painting the door if they are just wanting to change the color. The Association takes care of painting doors when the building is being painted or if a new door is installed. In all cases, an Architectural Request must be submitted for pre-approval.
- **Social Committee** – Madonna provided information about some upcoming events.
  - Ladies Luncheon April 22. Door opens at 11 am and lunch starts at noon. Call Cathy Burkard at 314-443-0253 or email [ALSocialComm@gmail.com](mailto:ALSocialComm@gmail.com) to respond. The deadline for reservations is April 15.
  - Vendor/Craft Fair – In addition to the Garage Sale, May 20th, the neighborhood will host a Vendor Fair from 8 am until 2 pm. To register as a vendor, please contact Madonna Esposito at 314-358-1191.
  - Autumn Lakes Home and Garden Tour – June 10th - If you are interested in showing your home or garden, contact Shah at 314-960-6620. More details to come as we get closer to the date.
  - Ice Cream Social – June 25th -- More details to come as we get closer to the date.

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## *Residents Questions & Comments*

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

**Comment:** An owner wanted to speak about some of the good things our community neighbors are doing. They wanted to thank those who have been such good neighbors to help pick up blowing trash and other peoples' dog poop. The community has another neighbor who cleaned up the pickle ball court on his own. There was also a great neighbor who saw the water flooding down the hill and was able to take quick action to help an owner who was out of town. There are a number of people helping out neighbors by taking out/in trash totes, making pharmacy or grocery runs, etc. When you see someone doing a good deed, please thank them.

**Question:** An owner asked how long should it take to hear about open work orders?

**Answer:** Mandi said she looks at work orders every business day. As soon as Mandi has an update on when a worker is coming out, she'll notify residents through TownSq. If it is an emergency, please call SMG immediately or send a work order with EMERGENCY in the heading.

**Question:** An owner asked how the Board is addressing how to reduce expenses for areas such as landscaping and water bills.

**Answer:** Laura explained that this is done through the contract bid process and monitoring expenses. Request for proposal for snow removal will be sent out this spring to reduce costs. The board is working with SMG to monitor water bills. Residents also play a part in reducing costs by monitoring their own interior water usage, especially running toilets. To prevent gaskets from drying out, make sure you flush toilets every day. Reminders of water saving tips will be put into the newsletter when space is available.

**Comment:** An owner suggested that residents look into getting a lever handle (ball valve) installed at their main water shut off. Units originally had gate valve handles (looks like a wheel). Regardless of what type of shut off is installed, it is recommended that residents turn the shut off slowly to prevent damage to the mechanism when turning off interior water to a unit. It was also noted that reduced water pressure is often due to old unit water shutoffs. Also, if the water needs to be turned off to the building, all neighbors must be notified. It is best to use a plumber to do this, as the owner having the water turned off is responsible if there is any damage to the exterior valve or other units.

**Question:** An owner expressed gratitude to the Board for trimming the gall-infested tree in front of her unit, instead of cutting it down. She presented a letter to the Board that included comments about the health of the tree as made by her arborist.

**Answer:** The board received the full report previously and took it under advisement.

**Question:** An owner asked about how and when siding is replaced? Who paints the repaired siding? And how long does it take the get siding repaired.

**Answer:** As noted earlier in the minutes, the Board has just received the siding report done by an outside company. It will be used to prioritize the work to be done. Numerous small repairs have been being done since SMG took the community on. These have been done through work orders placed by owners, the maintenance person or a board member. In some cases, the siding might be repaired by our maintenance person or by an outside company depending on the amount of work needed on the building. The Association paints the siding repairs.

### **DRYER/FAN VENTS**

If you have not had your dryer/fan duct cleaned in the last year or so, it might be a good time to do so. Clogged ducts reduce the efficiency of the dryer/fan, and can create a fire hazard. The Association will replace damaged or missing exterior covers, but cleaning the duct is the owner's responsibility.

### **WATER SHUTOFFS WITHIN YOUR UNIT**

The main water shutoff in each condo can become stiff or begin leaking with age. If you have reduced water pressure or if you notice leaking, it may be time to have it replaced. The lever handles are much easier to manipulate than the old "wheels". To change out the valve, a plumber will need to shut off the water to the whole building (in most buildings) for a short period of time. Neighbors must be notified in advance.. This might be a good project to coordinate with neighbors to get a reduced plumbing cost.

## For the Good of the Community:

**US Mail:** Our long-time mail carrier has retired. Temporary mail carriers are currently covering the route until a replacement is in place. Mail delivery times will vary until a new mail carrier is assigned.

**Republic Waste** – Trash pickup is a Maryland Heights' contract. SMG doesn't have anything to do with trash pickup. You can contact Shah Smith or Maryland Heights if you have issues. Pick up times may vary. Please have trash/recycling out on the street by Tuesday 7 am. Please make sure you keep the recycling cart and trash cart approximately 3 feet apart for pick up. Carts need to be stored back in your garage Tuesday evening or fines will be assessed.

Unlimited bulk pick up is available on Fridays. You must call the Republic Services to schedule a pick up. If you are given a quote for a charge, please remind the call center that you are a Maryland Heights resident and should not have a charge.

**City of Maryland Heights** - Norm Rhea spoke briefly about redevelopment of West Port, including a new apartment complex and an ice cream shop.

## ADDITIONAL ADDRESS SIGNAGE

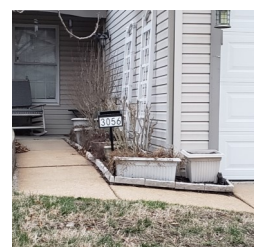
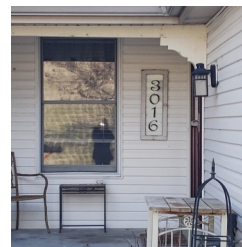
Some residents already have address signage in addition to the unit numbers provided on the garages. Another owner asked about putting up an additional address sign. This information will be added to the General Rules and the Assoc vs Condo Owner spreadsheet.

If owner wants to display a house number sign in addition to the numbers over the garage, the options include:

- Number sign on garage brick, siding, or porch posts
  - sign not to exceed 12" x 24"
  - can be lighted
  - cannot put holes in brick or siding, special hangers are available
- Number sign on short post, in garden mulch areas around the unit
  - sign not to exceed 5" x 12"
  - can be lighted
  - not in grass
  - posts not over 3 ft tall
- Number on decorative board that leans on porch, can be larger numbers
  - sign not to exceed 9" x 60"

**Note:** If you put a sign on the garage wall, put it under a light so it can be seen more clearly at night.  
If you put sign on the porch, put it under/near a light so it can be seen more clearly.

Here are some examples found around Autumn Lakes:



# Meet the Candidates

Sunday, April 30th at 1 pm  
At the Clubhouse

Meet the candidates running for the two trustee positions in the May election.  
This is your chance to get to know them and ask your questions.

## AL Garage Sale and Vendor/Craft Fair Saturday, May 20th, 8 am to 2 pm

The Spring garage sale will be Saturday, May 20th. The same day there will be a Vendor/Craft Fair at the Clubhouse. The Association will put up signage and advertise.  
Be sure to share the events on your social media.

**Interested in registering as a vendor for the Vendor/Craft Fair?**

Tables are still available. Contact Madonna Esposito at 314-358-1191.

**The next Autumn Lakes Association Meeting and Election is 5/17/23 at 7 pm.**



**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.