

Excelsior Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes: Approved 1/15/2024

Location: 6263 Midnight Pass Road Sarasota, FL 34242 Community Room
Date: 1/9/2024
Time: Called to order: 10:15 AM Adjourned: 11:45 AM
Next Meeting: TBD

Attendance

Bruce Ketcham, Chair

Committee Members Present: Lynne Brown, Denise Baum, Patricia Ketcham, Judy Wittmus

Committee Members Unable to Attend: Jim London

Patricia Ketcham volunteered to take minutes for this meeting

Purpose of Meeting

1. Review of projects related to Grounds that occurred since Annual Owner's Meeting in November, 2023 presented by Bruce Ketcham.
2. Future planning for Grounds projects with committee input.

Discussion

1. Contract for landscape enhancements to bayside entrance was let in November. Work scheduled for January 11th and 12th with irrigation improvements for new plantings in progress on January 9th. Discussion ensued about the scope of the work.
2. Several replacement flowers were planted in the gulfside planters and around gulfside entrance in December. Committee discussed the annual flowers including Pentas and Vincas that are hardy in Florida.
3. In a trial to improve the appearance of the grass, BioFlex Fluvic was applied to grass at the SE corner of Building 2 in December by Tropical Gardens at no cost to Excelsior. Nitrogen will be applied to the area during mid-January. Committee discussed that no improvement in the grass has been observed to date.
4. Board tour of Tropical Gardens maintained properties conducted on December 7th. Only board member able to attend was Bill Traegar. Key takeaways discussed with the committee and a PowerPoint presentation of this information will be made at the next board meeting (TBA).

5. County repaired water main leak at NE corner of Building 4 in December followed by sod installation by a county contractor. Repairs to irrigation system damaged by the county made by Excelsior's irrigation contractor and curb repair completed by Excelsior staff. Repairs to irrigation system around gulfside patios damaged by fence contractor who was repairing fence damage from Hurricane Ian were made in December. Repairs to the gulfside dry pond area from damage caused by a pickup truck on December 31 will be made with other landscape work on January 11th and 12th. Committee discussed the damage to building 4 carports by the county contractor and expressed concerns about mounting costs for grounds repairs, especially irrigation system, due to damage by various contractors or accidents.
6. Revision made to provide irrigation around the bayside pergola in December. Discussion focused on the fact that summer drought conditions revealed key areas that lacked irrigation on the property.
7. New spotlight installed to illuminate the American Flag at the bayside entrance. Discussion followed about the torn flag that is currently flying. Dan has been requested to purchase a new flag.
8. In December, a total of 17 new upright chairs were ordered for the pools and beach. 24 damaged beach lounge chairs were sent out for repair welding, repainting, and restrapping. The new and refurbished chairs are scheduled to be returned in late January.
9. Bruce discussed proposed improvement to the bayside well pump with the installation of a digital clock to replace the mechanical clock that was installed with the variable frequency drive (VFD) by the pump contractor. This would allow for improved control of the schedule of well pump operation. The need was discussed with Dan Watnem and a quote has been requested from multiple pump contractors.
10. Bruce presented a proposed schedule for tree trimming. The gulfside and bayside seagrapes and mangroves and the beach palm's January trimming is in progress and a light trimming will occur in May. Hardwoods, firs, and various trees will be pruned in March. Palms will be trimmed in September. A second trimming of the seagrapes and mangroves is planned for November to return pruning to an appropriate schedule. Due to budget constraints, the planned fall trimming of the mangroves and seagrapes was delayed from 2023 to January 2024.
11. The Grounds budget for 2024 was reviewed and discussed. A focus was on the tree trimming budget compared to proposed costs by tree trimming contractor. Additional categories of the budget discussed including plantings and mulch, lawn service, irrigation, and grounds equipment that includes beach and pool chairs. Concern was voiced by committee members as to whether the 2024 budget was sufficient to do necessary maintenance as the estimated cost from the tree trimming contractor is \$25,000 more than is budgeted for the year. Discussion ensued.
12. A committee member voiced concern about the new pond fountain and condition of ponds particularly by Building 2. All members supported this concern and discussion ensued regarding who or what committee was responsible for the fountains, pumps, and ponds in general. Bruce responded that Terry Jones had assumed responsibility for the ponds and fountain pumps. Some

committee members suggested that the ponds and fountain should be the responsibility of the Grounds committee.

13. Several committee members questioned the woodchip-filled square behind Building 1 where a tree was removed due to damage by Hurricane Ian. Bruce explained that a proposal for fill dirt was obtained, but that a management decision was made to fill the approximately 3ft deep hole in with wood chips from the Bottlebrush tree trimming. Those chips are now compacting, will continue to decay, decompose, and sink. He will consult with landscape contractor to explore possible solutions to improve this area.
14. Final discussion centered on a proposed plan for the next landscape improvement. Completion of all necessary improvements will extend beyond 2024.

Action

1. Advise the Board of the difference between the 2024 Budget and actual proposed cost of tree trimming from contractor prior to the next board meeting. Request that discussion of the tree trimming plan, estimated cost, and budget be included on the agenda for the next board meeting.
2. Request that discussion of the condition of the fountains, pumps, and ponds be included on the agenda for the next board meeting.
3. Obtain proposals for landscaping restoration projects, particularly to the back of Building 1, Buildings 2 and 4 that have not been restored following building repairs, and the bayside pool area. The amount should fall within remaining 2024 Budget of \$20,000 and be divided into small projects of approximately \$5000 each.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Ketcham