

LANDMARK MEWS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MINUTES

Board Meeting March 8, 2006

The March LMCA Board Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Board President Lou Wagner at the home of Roger Casalengo. Members present: Simon Bennett, Carole Trimble, Don Washington and Bruce Wood. Officers/Committee Members present: Roger Casalengo and Marty McDonald. Other homeowners present: Chris Dale, Tony and Michele Dropp, Bill Evans, Serap Fern and Brenda Johnson.

1. Engineering Study

President Lou Wagner opened the meeting with the introduction of Tom Larson and Rebecca Hummel, representatives of FEA, the firm that conducted the engineering study to assess the state of infrastructure at Landmark Mews and determine whether financial reserves were adequate to meet anticipated repair and maintenance costs. Ms. Hummel conducted the study in January and submitted a preliminary report for review by the Board in mid-February. (*Please see report filed with the minutes.*) She and Mr. Larson, a principal of FEA, were invited by the Board to attend the March meeting and respond to questions about the preliminary report.

Mr. Larson began the discussion by providing an overview of the purpose of such engineering studies. He told the Board that the study primarily is a visual observation based on accepted evaluations of the useful life of infrastructure elements. He explained that the ultimate objective of the study is to provide homeowner associations with financial models for planning purposes. Such studies are not meant to serve as in-depth engineering studies that would involve core samples and other more comprehensive tests of infrastructure elements. He cautioned the Board not to assume that all anticipated repairs and maintenance needed to be done exactly as scheduled in the report. He explained that FEA estimates on the conservative side and tends to project repair and replacement costs on the shorter side of the anticipated life span of an infrastructure element.

Mr. Larson then briefly reviewed the financial tables included with the report. He said that Table 4, a cash flow summary, is the key table to consider when assessing whether the balance between anticipated expenditures for infrastructure maintenance and repair and financial reserves is correct. According to Mr. Larson, LMCA is at a good funding level for anticipated needs. He said that if the FEA projections are accurate, then LMCA may be committing more to financial reserves than is absolutely necessary. However, he added that he hesitated to recommend a reduction in reserve commitments at this point because unanticipated expenses always can arise. If in another five years, when the next engineering study will be due for completion, and the firm conducting the study establishes that LMCA still is accumulating reserves at the rate they are growing now, Mr. Larson said that the association may then want to consider reducing the rate of savings.

Following these introductory remarks, Marty McDonald began the review of questions about the preliminary report that were submitted by Board members. (*Please see documents filed with the*

minutes.) Several of the comments or questions involved minor editing suggestions that Ms. Hummel said would be corrected in the final report.

Pavement requirements were a major item of discussion. Marty noted that the square yardage of pavement reported by FEA was higher than that reported in prior year engineering studies. He asked for assurance that the FEA measurement was accurate, saying this was important since bids for future road work were likely to be based on square yardage estimates. Ms. Hummel was confident that her measurement was accurate.

Marty then queried the FEA recommendation that seal coating and crack sealing of the streets be done in 2006. He wondered whether there would be any consequences to delaying this work until 2007 since it had just been done in 2003. Both Mr. Larson and Ms. Hummel thought that delaying the work for one year would have minimal consequences. Marty also asked why the FEA estimate for crack sealing and seal coating was \$9,470 when the cost of the project completed in 2003 was \$17,500. Mr. Larson said the FEA estimate was based on a cost projection of \$1 per square yard of pavement. Both Marty and Roger Casalengo said that other items, including painting curbs yellow and striping the parking areas, were included in the 2003 project, but they did not know the price breakout for that work. Roger thought the work also included sandblasting and stenciling house numbers on the curbs. Marty was to provide a copy of the invoice for the 2003 work to Ms. Hummel so that she could determine why that bill was so much higher than FEA's estimate for future crack sealing and seal coating.

Bruce Wood asked whether any of the pavement needs replacement now. The FEA response was that no area requires total resurfacing at this point, although a patch on Chaucer View Circle is the worst spot in the community. Mr. Larson said that a new seal cover should further extend the life of the pavement. He explained that the streets in Landmark Mews are exceeding normal expectations because they were designed to support a much heavier traffic flow than actually occurs in the Mews.

Simon Bennett noted that the issue of replacement of handicap ramps in the community was not specifically addressed in the draft report. He said that an engineer from Fairfax County who had toured the community told the Board that the current ramps did not meet new construction codes and would have to be brought up to code as the sidewalks and curbs were repaired and replaced. He wondered whether such replacement would add to the cost projections cited in the draft report for repair and replacement of curbs, gutters and sidewalks. In response, Mr. Larson said that yes, the access ramps would need to be brought up to code as sidewalks, curbs and gutters were repaired and replaced, but the issue did not need to be addressed separately because bringing the ramps into compliance would not increase the square footage of required materials and therefore would not add to the projected costs.

Items to be corrected in the final report included the following.

- Inaccurate dates of prior repairs to the surrounding brick wall and wood fencing, and an incorrect date on the installation of street lights. Corrections of these dates also would entail adjustments in the financial tables that would further spread out future anticipated expenditures.

- Addition of the Masfield Court walkway and gate access to Stevenson Avenue as a new infrastructure element.

Further discussion of the cost projection tables yielded the information that all costs projected in Tables 1 and 2 are in 2006 dollars. The costs projected in Table 4 reflect an inflation factor of 2.6%, based on the Consumer Price Index figure projected by the Congressional Budget Office. In response to a question by Bruce, Mr. Larson explained that FEA does not use multiple inflation factors to project future costs. He said that experience has shown that use of multiple inflation factors does not make a significant difference in overall cost projections.

Mr. Larson also said he would elaborate in the final report on the explanations of the tables and how the calculations were derived in order to help Board members better understand how to properly interpret and use the data provided. Additionally, he said he would make sure an explanation of the components of an engineering study and how such a study should be utilized was added to the final report.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the February 8, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously on a motion by Bruce Wood that was seconded by Don Washington.

3. Financial Report – See report filed with minutes.

Among the items reported by Treasurer Marty McDonald were the following.

- The audit of the 2005 financial statements was due to be delivered that evening.
- The projected level of unrestricted reserves of \$140,000 was going to fall about \$3,000 short because of taxes that had to be paid.

The Board then discussed Marty's recommendation to move \$30,000 in reserve funds from the Vanguard account into a certificate of deposit offered by Burke & Herbert. (*See reports filed with the minutes.*) Marty reminded the Board of a previous Board resolution that he had circulated through e-mail for review. The resolution requires that LMCA funds be invested only in FDIC insured institutions. Vanguard investment funds do not meet this criteria. Marty also warned the Board that the community is going to have to decide upon another institution in which to invest funds because investments at Wachovia were reaching the \$100,000 ceiling for FDIC insured investments. He also noted that a \$20,000 certificate of deposit at Wachovia would be expiring in July. After some discussion, the Board determined that an investment in a Burke & Herbert certificate of deposit would provide a safe, secure and liquid investment since the provisions of the CD allowed for one withdrawal of funds without penalty. Don Washington moved that the \$30,000 currently invested in a Vanguard fund be transferred into a Burke & Herbert CD. Bruce seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously. Lou instructed Marty to move the money on Thursday.

4. Property Manager Report

Among the items reported and discussed during the property manager's report the following.

- Roger recommended that street sweeping be skipped this spring for a savings of \$1,000 since there was little sand in the streets currently. The Board concurred with the recommendation.
- Roger has three estimates for saving the community oaks trees from bores. The best bid, according to Roger, recommended five treatments for a total of \$3,050. He said that he would send the proposals to Board members for review so that a decision could be made at the April meeting.
- Lou asked Roger to prepare his recommendations for maintenance and repair issues for this year with cost estimates for the Board also to consider at the April meeting.
- Roger said the long existing drainage problem to the west of Manchester Way near the walkway along the berm needed to be addressed this year. He said he did not want to bid out the project, but award it to Fountainhead, the firm that has completed other drainage and irrigation work in the community.

The Board also discussed the problem of keeping trees alive along Stevenson Avenue. Efforts to maintain trees along that strip of land, according to Roger, began after dry overgrowth caused a fire. VDOT spent \$40,000 to have trees planted, but all of them died, he said. Since that time, VDOT has relinquished responsibility for maintaining trees in that area to LMCA. Roger said that the cause of the death of 22 trees over the past year was the severe drought at the end of summer. He attributed the difficulty in maintaining trees in that area to the fact that the land slopes downward and does not retain water. He plans to replace dead trees by purchasing new ones and planting them himself. The Board then discussed whether planting the same type of trees again was sensible if they were likely to die.

The Board also discussed a proposal presented by Tim and Annie Foster to have Fairfax County install water meters at a cost of \$1,410 per meter in order to irrigate these trees that are planted on state-owned land. (*See proposal filed with minutes.*) Total cost of the project would be \$6,000 plus quarterly fees for water used for irrigation. Roger said it might make more sense to run a line off LMCA's irrigation system to irrigate the land along Stevenson Avenue. He thought that project could be completed at a cost of about \$2,000. He recommended that the Board wait a year before taking any action on an irrigation proposal to see how trees planted this spring survive. The Board concurred with the recommendation.

Lou moved to authorize Roger to spend up to \$1,000 to buy trees to plant along Stevenson Avenue. Don Washington seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

Roger brought up the topic of repairs needed to light posts in the community. He said that concrete bases need to be installed around each pole in order to protect the poles and wires that are not currently buried in conduits. He said that he has been repairing the lights and installing the bases on an "as needed" basis, but planned to obtain an estimate of the cost for completing the base installation around all lights in Landmark Mews. Don asked whether that plan would have any impact in regards to the just completed engineering study since maintenance and repair of exterior lights were costs covered in the report. Lou answered that Roger's plan would have to be considered in conjunction with the engineering report recommendations regarding light as the Board decides which recommendations to accept and which to reject from that report.

5. Covenants Committee Report

Lou announced that the specially appointed Board committee and the special Covenants Committee Process Review Committee were working together to resolve differences between the two resulting reports. He said a final report would be presented to the Board at the April meeting.

Lou nominated four new volunteers to serve as members of the Covenants Committee. They are Robert Ridgely, Tony Dropp, Lauren Scieurba and Martha Naismith. Bruce seconded the nomination. The members were elected unanimously. Lou said that the new Covenants Committee would meet to elect a chairman and added that Robert Ridgely has expressed his willingness to serve as chairman if elected. Lou also said that Adrian Polk, current co-chair of the Covenants Committee, had said he would work with the new members to ensure a smooth transfer of information and responsibilities.

6. Old Business

Lou reviewed the Zoning Committee report submitted by Annie Foster. (*See report filed with the minutes.*) In the addition to the proposal to pay for Fairfax County to install water meters for irrigation along Stevenson Avenue, Annie's report included a review of the action by Pulte to have six large trees removed from the buffer area between Landmark Mews and Overlook and other trees trimmed at the recommendation of the Fairfax Urban Forester. Lou said the trunks and limbs of the cut down and trimmed trees had been left in the buffer zone and could be claimed by anyone willing to split the remains into firewood and haul the logs away.

7. New Business

Lou announced that Brenda Johnson will replace Carole Trimble when Carole, who has placed her home up for sale, leaves the Board. Brenda had the next largest number of votes in the last election after the three people elected for the open seats. Lou said he would check the by-laws to determine if a Board vote is required to elect a new member when a vacancy occurs.

8. Executive Session

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:25 p.m. and reconvened in open session at 9:50 p.m. Simon made a motion stating that the Board had reconsidered all the issues surrounding the request by a homeowner that a tree on common property next to his home be removed and had decided to stand by the original decision to accept the finding of an arborist retained by LMCA that a tree was healthy and therefore should not be cut down, but that an exposed root of that tree be girdled. Don seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

Don moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 p.m. Bruce seconded the motion and the Board voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Trimble
LMCA Secretary