

MERIFIELD ACRES NEWSLETTER

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GENERAL INFORMATION - The MALA Board of Directors is composed of nineteen members, all of whom are property owners in Merifield Acres. These individuals contribute their time and effort in support of our community, and do much of the work necessary for its continued success. The fact that we rely on volunteers means that our assessments can be kept low, and that the monies we collect can be used directly in support of our association needs. The 1996 Budget is included in this mailing. The MALA Treasurer will be happy to provide income and expense statements on request.

As mentioned in the Summer 1995 Newsletter, the matter of equalizing assessments throughout Merifield Acres was reviewed with legal counsel in 1992. Since our community was developed over many years by four different developers, different types of covenants and restrictions were used, some requiring annual assessments and some not. We were advised that only some of the covenants might be changed, but that the cost of the related litigation would be very high. Considering how prudent we are in spending our income, this was not viewed as a viable alternative to increasing revenues. In addition to the mandatory assessments, our approach has been to seek assessment contributions on a voluntary basis from other MALA members who are willing to help bear the cost of maintaining our community as a quality residential area. Every resident of Merifield Acres should realize and appreciate how low our financial burden is when compared with comparable communities in other locations.

COMMON FACILITIES - In 1995, work was done on the stable, the horseshoe pits, and many of the planted areas. The walking path had weed killer applied. A new split-rail fence was constructed along the Merifield Drive side of the tennis courts to replace the one that was badly rotted. Bradford Pear trees and other plantings were placed along the fence line. Additional plantings and a gravel walk for the school children were placed at the front entrance. Ed Smart, Common Facilities Chairman, welcomes volunteers to help he and Dennis Hayes in these efforts.

FINANCE/SPECIAL ASSESSMENT - The MALA Finance Committee met three times during the last six months of 1995, and Dr. Frank Clippinger, Roads Committee Chairman, attended all of the meetings. Many roads in Merifield Acres are in need of repair, and some of the more heavily traveled roads need to be hard-surfaced so they won't deteriorate any further. It was agreed that additional capital funding would be needed for these repairs and upgrades, as well as for a storage building to replace the old hanger. Projects and funding were discussed and approved at the annual meeting in September, and subsequently approved at the MALA Board of Directors meeting in December.

After reviewing the three year special assessment in 1989, 1990 and 1991, and road improvements made during that period, The Finance Committee felt that another three year special assessment was the best approach. The new special assessment will be for calendar years 1996, 1997 and 1998, with homes being assessed at \$65.00 per year and undeveloped lots at \$30.00 per year. Regular assessments are due on March 1 of each year. Special assessments are due by May 1 of each year, but can be paid along with the regular assessment if desired. To save on postage, assessment notices have been combined on the first page of this mailing.

ROADS - Last year, the primary focus was on rebuilding Meriwether Drive and repairing existing pavement sections. There was simply not enough capital money available to asphalt Lewis Road as originally planned. Meriwether Drive needed extensive repairs, and the portion beyond Roanoke Court had to be totally rebuilt. Royster Court and Bridle Path were resurfaced with tar

and gravel. An additional layer of asphalt was applied to two areas on Lakepoint Drive and Merifield Drive where the base was shifting and the pavement was cracking. Several road repairs were postponed due to lack of funds.

The Roads Committee intends to continue using tarred gravel resurfacing on most secondary roads for the foreseeable future. Myrtle Court may appear to be an exception, but this road was fully resurfaced with asphalt at the request and the expense of property owners on that road. This option, of course, is open to any group of owners who wish to pool their resources.

Anticipated income from the three year special assessment is designed to provide the capital funds needed to asphalt Lewis Road in 1996, then to asphalt Oak Run and Hazelnut Drive in the years ahead. The resurfacing of these three will complete the scheduled upgrading of our most heavily traveled roads.

Another capital-related expense we are anticipating (and have built into the special assessment parameters) is the replacement of the old hanger with another structure to house maintenance equipment and supplies. The hanger is living on borrowed time and it won't be many years before a snow or wind storm will level it. It is important to keep the maintenance equipment on our property; in effect, to have it available for emergencies such as downed trees, snow and ice, etc., as well as to avoid paying for contractor travel time to and from Merifield. At present, the back section of Oak Park appears to be the most logical place to construct the new storage building (from the standpoint of aesthetics and zoning). Proper fencing and concealment must be part of the consideration. We still have time to do more evaluation and planning on this.

The snow and ice that greeted us at the beginning of the new year required road scraping and chemical spreading; activities we haven't had to deal with for a few years. Some of the center line reflectors were pulled up in the process and will have to be reinstalled as time permits.

ARCHITECTURAL - A total of five houses, three additions, and a satellite dish installation were completed in 1995. Three additional houses have been approved and are presently under construction. Please remember that plans for the installation of satellite dishes, no matter the size, should be submitted to the Architectural Committee. Even the small dishes must comply with restrictive covenants and be placed the required distance from lot boundaries. Some form of concealment (i.e., plantings) are required if the dish is located in the front perimeter of the lot.

SECURITY - Just a reminder that homeowners in Merifield Acres should use a neighborhood watch approach to security since it is no longer feasible for MALA to provide home and property security on an individual basis. Don't hesitate to call on neighbors to observe your property when you plan to be away. Also, please obtain and display your MALA vehicle stickers.

YOUTH / SCHOOL LIAISON - Thanks to all those involved for bringing about a safe smooth transition at the main gate. Parents have been doing a good job in parking off the road, and the school children have been using the walking path. If anyone has ideas or comments regarding after-hours youth activities, family outings/get-togethers, etc., please contact Lannie White at 374-8366. Unfortunately, in the months ahead we will be losing several of our young families due to job transfers. They will certainly be missed.

MISCELLANEOUS - A reminder from the MALA Board and the Architectural Committee that it is everyone's responsibility to comply with our covenants. Keeping dogs confined within individual property boundaries still appears to be a significant problem. Invisible fences have proven to be kind to pets, and they make for much better neighbor relations. Let's all of us do our part.