



Holiday 2023 Newsletter

Message from the President

Good day to everyone. My goal in this letter is to convey and build upon the current Board’s goal of more open communication with homeowners and increased engagement of homeowners in subdivision activities. The Board wants to facilitate a feeling of community among the residents and we want to feel more connected to you.. Our subdivision is large, 589 homes. Our lives are busy with work and family obligations. Therefore it is hard to get to know even the people on your street. For these reasons, the Board has been putting great time and effort into trying to build this subdivision-wide email list for better and more frequent communications to residents. The National Night Out and Halloween Event formed the start of our goal of bringing residents together to socialize. Concerning our second goal of engagement of residents, in the coming year the Board will seek to form committees of residents for various projects. For instance, I would like to have residents volunteer to help with committees such as: a landscape committee to help plan renovations of islands, a committee to help plan renovating the lighting and plantings at the Baxter entrance, a chain saw committee to help with cutting fallen limbs on mowed common ground and trimming dead branches on island trees, a committee to revise the Home/ Property Improvement application, and a committee to help maintain the 19 islands by weeding during the growing season and raking leaves by islands. Perhaps you have a committee suggestion. If so, please pass it on. So if you have any special talents or areas of interest that would benefit the subdivision, please let us know. Also, be looking for surveys to come out on email about various subjects so that the Board can measure your feelings and opinions about aspects of living here in Meadowbrook / Clarkson Estates. This will help guide us in making decisions in the subdivision. There’s just 5 of us but there are 584 of you. We welcome your suggestions, both positive and negative. In closing, on behalf of the Board I wish all of you a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely, Carol Fine
President



...New Residents

Through September 30th, 31 homes have been bought. 5 of these were rehabbed and then sold. Two others are currently being rehabbed.

DID YOU KNOW... ?

Chesterfield has an ordinance about holiday lights? Per Ordinance 2228, Holiday lighting, both residential and commercial holiday lighting, is permissible from November 15 to January 25.

Speaking of holiday lighting.....

If after this holiday season you are looking to thin out your outdoor holiday decor, please consider donating any outdoor decoration such as ornaments, garland, or wreaths to the subdivision. Unfortunately at this time we cannot accept inflatable items or lights since the entrances and parks do not have electrical access. We appreciate your consideration.

"A Fiendishly Fun Halloween Block Party"



The weather was cool and rainy, but spirits were high for Meadowbrook Farm / Clarkson Estate's 2023 Halloween Block Party the afternoon of October 28th. The spooky event was held at the Golden Rain / Kingsman Circle common grounds. Adults enjoyed apple cider and conversation, while youngsters compared costumes and played together. Prizes for best carved pumpkins were awarded in three age categories (see photo) before the menacing rain arrived and forced the cancellation of the costume parade. Despite the abrupt ending, the party met its "ghoul" of spreading friendship and neighborliness within MF/CE.

Thanks go to the team of volunteers (you know who you are) who did all the work to put this Block Party on. Events like this are not possible without the active participation of people like you.

Welcome Brad & Thank you Linda

Welcome to Brad Barks, our new trustee. Brad was elected into office back in October. Brad has volunteered to be our treasurer, replacing long time trustee Linda Walp.

Linda had been a trustee on and off for decades. She is one of the original residents. Linda has been such an asset to this neighborhood and especially to the trustees she accompanied. Her background in the financial industry is what made her a wonderful treasurer. We will miss her knowledge of the neighborhood and her ability to grab and calculate numbers on a whim.

Thank you Linda for all you have done for this neighborhood. We hope you enjoy this time you get back.

Your trustees,

Carol Fine, Lisa Monachella, Mark Stolzenburg, Brad Barks and John Thompson



Subdivision-wide Email list

We now have 111, that's 17% of households on the list and receiving emails. This is ahead of our year-end goal. The first supplemental e-newsletter was sent in July. The email list has also been used to send out reminders for the Halloween event and the annual HOA meeting. We plan to also use the list to reach HOA members to partake in a survey to gather info about members' concerns, likes and dislikes.

CHANGE IN MEETINGS TIMES

Starting 2024 we will be starting our meetings at 7 p.m. We are happy to say lately there has been lively discussion from homeowners attending the meetings and we would like to make sure everyone who attends has a chance to speak.

Subdivision Accomplishments

Please make sure you continue to pages 4, 5 and 6. We have provided detail on what the Board has attended to during 2023.

Board Professional Development

In order to become better informed trustees, various trustees attended three different meetings tailored to trustees' needs. The first was the West County Safety Town Hall for trustees. It was held at the Ballwin Golf Course building and sponsored by County Councilperson Mark Harder of the 7th district. Both police and fire chiefs from many of the surrounding cities, including Chesterfield, spoke about safety issues that they encounter in the communities and how they respond to them. The second meeting was the Town Hall Meeting for HOA board members put on by the City and Village Tax Office and Sandberg Phoenix Law Firm. It addressed the various issues currently facing HOAs. The third meeting was the Chesterfield Biennial Subdivision Trustee Symposium for trustees. The various heads of city government spoke and explained their functions.

Not sure if your project needs a HPIA?

Better to ask than guess. Email questions to us at trustee@mf-ce.com. We are happy to help! Submitting needed HPIAs helps avoid disputes with unhappy Neighbors and besides, per the subdivision indentures we all live by, HPIAs are generally mandatory for any material alteration of appearance or erecting of a deck, fence, pool, etc.

Want your opinion!!!!

We're working on developing surveys of list members to gather info about members' concerns, likes and dislikes. Look out for a survey invitation in the future and let us hear from you!



Curb Appeal Campaign

In response to homeowners at meetings who have routinely expressed concerns about lot owners not keeping their yards and homes in good condition, the Board has been sending homeowners letters about trash cans in view and mold on their homes in view.

In addition, Chesterfield has ordinances against both of these things. About 85 letters were sent out for trash cans in view from the street on none-collection days (storing cans in view). The Board discussed whether to send letters first or just report to Chesterfield. We decided to send letters. Many homeowners complied with the request to store them out of view. However, those that did not comply were reported to Chesterfield Code Enforcement for them to handle since it is their ordinance. We have no control over how Chesterfield handles infractions.

The second component of our enhanced curb appeal drive has been mold visible on houses or white vinyl fences. Twenty-one letters were mailed and most have complied. Some have been reported to Chesterfield to handle.

We feel there is a definite improvement in curb appeal with regard to these two items when driving through the streets. We have made progress, but there is still more improvement needed. The better our curb appeal, the better everyone's home values.

Quick Quiz: MF/CE's Common Grounds
Think you know your subdivision's Common Grounds? Take this quiz and see how you do!

1. Approximately, how many acres of common grounds does MF/CE maintain?

- a. 15 acres
- b. 35 acres
- c. 50 acres
- d. 65 acres
- e. 85 acres

2. Which of the following are locations of MF/CE's designated parks? (*select all*)

- a. at the Baxter/Country Ridge corner
- b. at the Golden Rain/Kingsman Circle corner
- c. on both sides of Fairway Bend near Meadowbrook Way
- d. at the Country Field Dr/Country Field Ct corner
- e. at the Parasol/Country Ridge corner

3. The circles at the end of cul-de-sacs are considered common ground. How many such circles are there in MF/CE?

- a. 7
- b. 14
- c. 19
- d. 26
- e. none

4. Who is responsible for maintenance of creeks in subdivision common grounds?

- a. The MF/CE Board of Trustees
- b. Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD)
- c. City of Chesterfield
- d. St. Louis County
- e. no one

5. If a tree falls in the wooded common grounds, what happens? (*select all*)

- a. it is left to decompose
- b. if it falls in a creek it is cut up and set aside
- c. if it falls on homeowner property, the Board has it removed
- d. if it falls on homeowner property, the homeowner has it removed
- e. it all depends if anyone heard it

Answers:

1) d, 2) a & d, 3) c, 4) a, 5) a, b & d

2023 Subdivision Accomplishments

The MF/CE Board of Trustees were active in 2023. We've listened to homeowner feedback at public meetings in order to prioritize efforts beyond the rudimentary (but vital) collection of assessments and payment of expenses. The categorized list below gives you a sense of the beyond-the-basics work the 2023 Board undertook on behalf of all homeowners:

1. Common Grounds - keeping our 65 (or so) acres of Board-managed property a beautiful, valuable and safe resource for the benefit of all homeowners.

a. Common Ground Spruce-Up Campaign - in Spring 2023, the Board initiated this new program. At five large common grounds, neighboring homeowners were recruited to help Board members do trash pickup and undergrowth cleanup. We hope to continue this successful program going forward.

b. Common Ground Hazardous Construction Removal - The Board identified several unauthorized constructions (bridges, bike ramps, tree forts, etc.) in various wooded common grounds; these represented potential accident risks for which the subdivision (i.e. every homeowner) could be held liable. Board members removed the smaller items. Two thousand dollars (about \$4 from every household!) had to be spent to have larger hazards removed.

c. Dead Animals - With homeowner help, the Board identified and disposed of two dead deer in common grounds.

Continue to the next page for more....

2023 Subdivision Accomplishments continue...

d. Dead Tree Removal/Pruning - The Board tries to monitor common ground trees to identify dead trees that are a hazard to homeowner property. In 2023, the Board removed several dead common ground trees, some at homeowner request, along with pruning where appropriate. There have been some the Board has declined to act on at an arborist's recommendation.

e. Common Ground Dumping - A rehabber dumped large debris into a common ground creek. The Board worked with Chesterfield police to get the rehabber to clean this up, rather than leave the subdivision to pay for the cleanup.

f. Boundary Resolution - The Board was able to resolve a dispute with a homeowner over a fence that the Board maintained was built on subdivision common ground. It was urgent to the Board to resolve the situation because the home was being put up for sale. Ultimately, the fence was appropriately moved without going to court.

2. Neighborhood Upkeep - maintaining property values through standards established by MF/CE Indentures and/or City of Chesterfield Ordinances.

a. Home/Property Improvement Applications (HPIAs) - Since January, 22 HPIAs have been approved: 8 fences, 7 decks, 3 patios, 2 retaining walls, 1 driveway, 1 trash can enclosure, 1 sports court, 1 inground pool and 1 outdoor hearth room.

b. Curb Appeal Campaign - The Board responded to requests in our public meetings to be more active in supporting subdivision indentures and City regulations pertaining to curb appeal. The better our curb appeal, the better everyone's home values. We focused on the legally explicit Chesterfield laws regarding waste container storage (see <https://ecode360.com/35951272#35951272>) and mold on houses (see <https://ecode360.com/35253783?highlight=moldings&searchId=10908830625858406#35253783>). Where homes appeared to have ongoing violations, we chose to send an explanatory letter requesting communication or remediation within 30 days. About 85 waste container letters and 20 mold letters have been sent, most with amicable resolution.

3. Community - supporting friendly, positive and neighborly communication amongst MF/CE residents and between homeowners and their Board of Trustees.

a. Welcome Packets - the Board hand-delivered MF/CE informational Welcome packets to all new residents. This covers 31 home sales in 2023 to date.

b. Neighborhood Events - In conjunction with neighborhood volunteers, subdivision-wide gatherings were held for the first time in years. MF/CE's National Night Out and Halloween Block Party events were well attended success, an indication to the Board that there is resident support for such activities

c. Email List - We now have 111 members - about 17% of households - on the list and receiving emails. This is ahead of our year-end goal. The first supplemental e-newsletter was sent in July, and you're reading the second one now! The email list has also been used to send out reminders for the Halloween event and the annual HOA meeting.

d. Homeowner Letters/Emails - The Board occasionally receives letters from homeowners with concerns about things in the subdivision. We welcome these letters because we cannot see everything that goes on. We've also received emails of support or thanks, which we also appreciate. Hearing both the good and the not-so-good gives us valuable feedback and helps guide our actions.

Continue to the next page for more....

2023 Subdivision Accomplishments continue...

4. Long-Term Planning – looking beyond the next day to provide quality governance today, tomorrow and beyond.

a. Indenture and Rules Review - The Board began efforts to review our 20-year-old indentures and potential creation of Rules; initial funding for necessary legal advice and review were included in the 2024 budget.

b. Professional Growth - Board members participated in three HOA professional growth/development events: the West County Safety Town Hall for trustees, Sandberg Phoenix Law Firm's Town Hall Meeting for HOA board members, and Chesterfield's Biennial Subdivision Trustee Symposium for trustees.

c. Five-Year Budgeting - In preparing the 2024 budget, the 2023 Board adopted a five-year mindset; we expect this vision to better stabilize annual assessment rates while allowing the Board to be more proactive in handling changing expenses in a maturing subdivision.