

**TOLLGATE ASSOCIATION  
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22046**

**Minutes of the Tollgate Association Annual  
Homeowners' Meeting**

Sunday, November 14, 2004

**Attending:**

Tom Smolinski, Edie Smolinski, Julie McNamara, Terry Zawacki, Bill Arthur, Charles Murray, Marie Murray, Kevin Stephenson, Mark Kaye, Marcia Dougherty, Bob Donaldson, Cindy Donaldson, Ed Bronikowski, Ella Lyons, Gayle Phillips, Garry Sauner, Chuck Connor, Pat Franklin.

**Proxies:**

There were 12 proxies.

**Location:**

Home of Bob and Cindy Donaldson, 118 Tollgate Way.

**Meeting time:**

Meeting called to order by President Tom Smolinski at 5:39 p.m. Tom said with the proxy and those attending we had a quorum.

**Newcomers:**

Social Committee Chairman Ella Lyons introduced newcomers to the street in 2004. They are Chuck and Marie Murray, Ed Bronikowski and Julia Bayze, and Eric Kirschner and Rachel Talamonti.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Bob Donaldson said the association should end the year with a net worth of \$12,044.

Major expenditures for the year were:

Landscape contract	\$19,100
Concrete drive and walkway sealing	8,200
Pruning	4,676
Gutter Cleaning	3,770
Repair and paint iron fence	2,140
Brickwork repairs	1,680
New Trees	1,508
Electricity	1,010

Bob said the board is adding aerating and seeding for every home to the landscape contract with Flores next year, instead of just seeding in bare spots as was done this year.

He anticipates a lower pruning budget in 2005, although the projected budget of \$500 for tree removal would be low if any large tree needs removing.

Gutter cleaning for each home is now paid for by the association. The fall cleaning will be done Nov. 29, and everyone should leave back gates open and control dogs for the workmen, Smolinski said.

Homeowners unanimously approved the 2005 budget.

#### Social Committee Report:

Social Chairman Ella Lyons thanked everyone for their help and participation for the year's progressive dinner and the fall picnic. The Christmas Party will be Dec. 12, and she is looking for a host home. She mentioned that traditional outside decorations on Tollgate are a white candle in each front window.

#### Landscape Committee and Tree Committee report:

Bob Donaldson, chairman of the Tree Committee, reported also for Kathy Doherty, chairman of the landscape Committee, who was out of town.

The landscaping is in pretty good shape, Bob said. Trees are a concern because many of them need more water. Tollgate has about 200 trees, which add to the ambience of the street. The trees also add 5 percent to 20 percent of value to each home, making the trees on the street worth \$811,000 to \$3.2 million based on the assessed value of the homes, he said. Many trees are surrounded by concrete, asphalt, and driveways, meaning they don't have enough surrounding ground to feed them water. Bob said the residents need to do something to make sure trees get more water. A sprinkler system might be the answer, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

#### Architecture Committee:

Chairman Garry Sauner outlined the procedure for exterior changes to Tollgate homes. The changes must be approved by the Architecture Committee. A form for requests is on the Tollgate Web site, [www.tollgateway.org](http://www.tollgateway.org).

#### Old Business:

Tom Smolinski noted that additional projects completed during the year were the placement of new signs at the entrance saying, ``Dead End'' and ``No Parking Here to Corner.'' The hope is the signs will deter would-be cut-through drivers and parking at the entrance, which makes it difficult to get into or out of the street.

The association also has replaced two of the street lampposts and two fixtures.

Two major items need resolution, Tom said: the drainage problem behind units 106, 110 and 112, and the aging streetlights. The streetlights will be discussed under new business.

Drainage: The board and others have contacted three landscape companies and two sewer contractors about the problem. The cheapest bid for the work was about \$7,000. Some contractors won't even do the work, Tom and Bob said.

Tom said one contractor said the problem didn't seem to be erosion from water, but maybe from workmen who have been in that alley recently. He said the problem should be fixable with some minor landscaping and placement of rocks. Tom said he inspected the area during a recent hard rain and noted no flooding. Therefore, the board decided to try to fix the problem ourselves with landscaping - mostly sod and rocks.

Bob Donaldson said if this solution doesn't work, then we will perhaps have to spend some money to fix the problem. Mark Kaye, one of the affected owners, said, "The only way to know if it works is to do it."

There was no vote, but general consensus to try our own solution to see if it works.

Another old issue: the Cherry Street renewal project. Tom Smolinski said we had assumed the project was at a standstill after one of the Cherry Street owners died. Now, Tom has learned that the Falls Church Planning Commission is about to have a hearing to consider construction of six homes on the street. Tom said he would attend the hearing to learn more about the project and what property is involved.

#### New Business:

Street lights: President Tom Smolinski said the streetlights on Tollgate Way are aging, and the wooden posts on many of them are beginning to rot. The fixtures also are deteriorating and aren't repairable.

Architecture Committee Chairman Garry Sauner described black aluminum poles and fixtures that have been selected to replace the posts if the members wish. The cost to replace the street lamps will be about \$12,000, said Treasurer Bob Donaldson. The association could ease the hit by replacing a few lights at a time. But if the association decides to replace the lights all at once, we could dig

into reserves and probably not require a special assessment, at least for now.

Homeowners said they see the lights as a safety issue. Chuck Murray suggested replacing the lamps all at once. Kevin Stephenson moved to replace the lamps all at once, and if the reserve fund is depleted at the end of next year a special assessment be levied to replenish it. His motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Sprinkler system: The problem of watering trees would be solved by a sprinkler system, Bob Donaldson said. But such systems are expensive. He has received proposals ranging from \$46,000 to about \$30,000. These call for many sprinklers and might be scaled back to save money.

The association might obtain a five-year bank loan to pay for a sprinkler system, Bob said. To ease the blow we could drop the gutter-cleaning contract. Also, we might use a special assessment.

Members discussed alternatives, such as hiring water trucks, but that, too, is expensive. A sprinkler system would require a new city water meter, a hook-up fee, and maintenance. There is no more financial cushion to back financing of a sprinkler system.

The consensus was for the association board and the tree committee to continue to research the issue of watering and sprinklers. There was no vote.

#### Nominating Committee:

Homeowners elected Marie Murray and Ed Bronikowski to the board for 2005-2007. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.