

2024 MEHA Beatification Director's Report

Meadowhills Estates owns and maintains over 40 acres of commons area, of which, approximately 32 acres are mowed. This report is a summary of the maintenance work and improvements done in 2024.

Mowing—Charles Hill (former resident) has had the mowing contract for many years. Mowing is done weekly through July 1 until typically, the weather dries up and growing slows down. For the remainder of the season, we schedule the commons every other week at \$750 per cut and the road frontages only on the off weeks at \$275. The price remained the same for this year. This year, we budgeted for extra cuts in case we had a wet year like 2023. And did we ever....!! We tried skipping a week in August and it looked like a hayfield. The grass never really went dormant this summer and didn't slow down growing until mid-September. We went back to weekly and it's looked well maintained. Charles also edges the sidewalks a couple times per year (something previous contractors did not do).

Tree Maintenance—It's been a busy year! Our Fall 2023 trimming work got bumped out into January due to weather. Highlights from that project include trimming over the play structure and trimming low hanging trees along the pathways. We had 4 instances of storm damage that was too limited to call out a tree service. **Jill Hemingway and I** cut up fallen limbs and either bundled them for yard waste pickup or dragged them into the woods. This was done on 4 occasions (Central commons, North Commons, 9 and Halsted behind fence) to facilitate mowing or improve the appearance of damaged trees.

We had one wind storm in August that brought down 2 trees. The maple by the play equipment has already been removed by a contractor. The large Box Elder in the North Commons will be removed in the fall trimming project.

I have plans for one more round of tree trimming this year in November/December. I will be surveying the grounds this week to prepare a quote package for the work. For disease prevention concerns, this cannot be done until after the first good freeze.

Finally, one Service Berry tree was removed from the south bike path due to a homeowner's request so that they could landscape differently. Jill and I moved it to the play area near the tire swing and cleaned up deer damage.

Entrance Flower Beds—The entrances have been maintained for several years by **Cathy Rapp** and other volunteers. 2023 was Cathy's last year, but she arranged for a neighbor, college student Ian O'Donnell to mulch and plant the accent flowers this year. **Mike Gazzarari** has offered to maintain the beds next year.

I'm proposing a project to revamp the beds in 2025 as it appears that the Boxwood bushes, which are foundational plants to the beds, appear to be dying due to boxwood moth. Volunteers to develop a plan would be appreciated.

Sprinklers—Irrigation system for the beds was opened in the spring and winterized last week by Dave Oswalt (he installed the system 20-25 years ago when he was the mowing guy).

Play Structure Mulch—Engineered Wood Fiber mulch was blown in to the play structure, tire swing area and small climbing monuments area. 60 cu yards of mulch was installed in under 2 hours by Superior Ground Cover at \$50/yard. **Greg Hemingway** solicited bids and coordinated.

Picnic Table Refurbishment—We have 5 picnic tables in the park that were approximately 40 years old. The tops were quite weathered, but the heavy-duty galvanized steel tube frames were in great shape. **Randy Shul and Greg Hemingway** refurbished the tables with new treated lumber seats and tops and new fastener hardware. The refurbished tables were repositioned to better facilitate use. **Curtis Kaisner** stained the tables after the lumber had dried sufficiently. Total cost was about \$125 per table, roughly 1/6 the cost of a replacement of like quality.

Benches—After carrying it in the budget for years, we got 2 new benches for along the path. **Dan Clunis** did the research for finding attractive recycled plastic benches. **Curtis Kaisner** pinch hit for Dan on taking delivery and assembling the benches. Dan was busy as their firstborn decided to arrive early! Thanks to both of them for the nice addition.

Fence Power Washing—**Lauren Tyll** took on finding a contractor to power wash the white vinyl fence along the North and East sides of our subdivision. No easy task since there's no water available out there. Thank you Lauren for letting them fill their water tank at your house. It's approximately 20 years old and was looking dingy in some areas from dirt and lichen buildup. It's looking much better now!

Little Library—A "Little Library" box was proposed for the commons by **Linda Shul** (she will maintain it) and subsequently approved by the Board. **Linda and Randy Shul** have installed the Little Library at the triangular intersection of the commons bike path. Linda has since had a book party at her house to generate a book collection from neighborhood women. Check it out!

Entrance Lights—**Dan Clunis** has worked with the City and DTE for the last 2 years to get LED lights for our entrances. He's reviewed multiple options for aesthetics, light patterns, etc. The lights were finally installed this summer. Great job Dan!

2025 Projects, Beautification Concerns:

Playground maintenance—Swing maintenance, seats and chains as needed, fill ruts with sand, install mats and blow in mulch (swings and slides). Would be a good spring project for a few guys (mulch would be contracted).

Entrance makeover as noted above.

Address overgrown commons areas where trees were removed.

Plantings in street right-of-way blocking visibility

A couple strategic tree plantings to replace trees on their way out.

Greg Hemingway, MEHA Beautification Director

October 16, 2024