



The Grange Homeowners Association

August 29, 2019

Greetings to The Grange residents:

The Grange Homeowners Association continues to work hard to improve the aesthetics of our community; while I have had a huge learning curve this year, I am happy with our accomplishments.

After joining the board, I learned about the GHOA's challenges and that we are unique because of our small membership. This means that we also have a smaller operating budget. Over the past five years, the GHOA board has had some key volunteers that have been instrumental in making this association financially stable. They have done this by performing all of the administrative duties in-house and by developing a solid collections protocol. Their skill sets, knowledge and dedication needs to be recognized as we would not be where we are today without them. Sandor Takats, Don Jones, Sean Brooks, Sean Fraser and Mike Robin thank you!

The GHOA's main objective is to maintain and improve the aesthetics of the community. In the past year we accomplished the following:

- Redesigned our website so that we can better inform our membership about the purpose of the HOA, documents, projects and commonly asked questions. I encourage you to take some time and learn about the GHOA by visiting www.thegrangecommunity.ca.
- Replenished mulch in three additional areas and added them to our landscaping maintenance schedule for next year.
- Yearly landscaping started in May and ends in September 2019. The contract maintained a total of 84 shrub bed areas, 48 maintained weekly and the other 36 maintained on a bi-weekly basis. I am impressed as I walk through our community and wonder if our membership realizes that it is NOT the City of Edmonton but the GHOA that maintains these areas.
- Decorative garbage can covers for the garbage barrels to discourage littering and beautify our neighbourhood will be coming soon. While they were provided by the City of Edmonton, it took time to figure out how to get them.

Administratively, we also made some improvements and these include:

- Developing of a reserve plan that will be finalized this fall so that we can look at expanding community improvements. Currently, our budget has been focused on mulch replacement, developer built exterior fence painting and yearly landscaping. In the future we hope to also include refurbishing and redesign of the community front entry signs and incorporation of flower planters within the community.
- Hiring of a bookkeeper to take over some of the administrative duties. After the loss of some key board members, it was noted that in order to make the board sustainable some of the administrative tasks needed to be transitioned to a paid position. This will ensure consistency and provide us with the acumen required to continue to make solid financial decisions well into the future. It was also discovered that some positions spent over 20 hours per week performing their volunteer role and the success of this HOA cannot be at the expense of our volunteers.

- Changing of our financial institution to better support the board members and the membership. We are now dealing with the Servus Credit Union and they are able to provide us with a tailored service agreement for our small HOA, reduce fees and better personalize service.
- Hiring of Priority Credit Management Corporation (PCM) to handle the collection efforts as of July 2019. All collection costs are paid by the homeowners in arrears and **not** the Association. These terms are defined within our Bylaws. We have instructed PCM to lien properties that do not pay their dues, as well as report the owners to the credit bureau. A lien is a legal security that ensures the current owner pays their share of the debt. This will protect any new homeowners from inheriting debt, as had happened previously. The Board has given PCM 40 properties that each owe more than \$203.00, accounting for approximately \$13,000 of the \$29,000 outstanding fees! The cost of collections is \$112.42 per owner, which is an initial 30 day demand for repayment of the debt. If the owners do not pay within 30 days of the demand, the collection calls begin and a 25% fee assessed on their new balance is added to the outstanding balance. At 90 days from the date of the demand letter going out, a caveat is filed on the title and a charge of \$527.69 will be charged to the homeowner. It is our hope that this will encourage homeowners to pay on time or, at most, after one reminder letter.
- Supporting the Glastonbury Community league as we continue to look at ways to work together to better our communities. While our mandates are different, we have found some common projects. One of the projects being discussed is providing a “Community Bin Event” next summer; this event is to hopefully reduce the garbage too large for regular collections from being disposed of in green spaces, back alleys and yards.

Something to leave you with....

As I was looking through some examples of what to write in my first president’s message, I came across an article done by Beth Lintz and I thought I would share a summary of it.

“We never get a second chance to make a good first impression. Research suggests the adage, “first impressions matter!” I believe this holds true for opinions about our community. Whether it is one second or one minute, most people form their first impression very quickly, and they’re hard to reverse. I believe this holds true for our community as well. We’re all busy and things come up, but there are a few properties that, quite frankly, look unkempt; this reflects poorly on your neighbors and the entire community. It’s regrettable that some homeowners don’t take pride in their properties. Consider taking a short excursion through your neighbourhood and ask yourself how your property compares with others throughout the neighbourhood. What kind of neighbor are you? Maybe you’re someone who never got around to removing some left over construction materials from around your house or you’ve let your lawn and landscaping go? Refuse, tall grass, weeds, and critters roaming through it all is for country-living or a development that is not deed-restricted. Look at your property through your neighbours’ eyes. What do you see, hear and experience? If it isn’t a positive impression, perhaps this year provides the perfect time to start fresh!”

I want to thank all the current board members for their hard work this year. I look forward to continuing on the board and serving the community.

Kind Regards,
Denise Forwick-Whalley