

THE CASCADE

SEPTEMBER 2012

Board Members

Brian Pearson
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Tim Lafferty
(Treasurer)

Shane Adam
(Director)

Jeff Mottle
(Communications
Director)

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Photograph by: Gary Wagner

Care of City Parks Unaffordable

By Brian Pearson

Table of Contents

Care of City Parks Unaffordable	1
2013 Budget Overview	3
What We're Working on Next	5
This Fence Belongs to You!	6
A Community Association is Not a Residence Association	7
AGM	11

The Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association (CRORA)

WEBSITE

www.cascadesroyaloak.com

The Cascades parcels of land consist of the areas at the west end of Royal Oak Way, a strip on Rocky Ridge Road and the Royal Oak Point Park. There are no pieces of land that we own at the eastern end of our area. In order to make the whole area more attractive we looked into improving the care of the City Parks. Comments from many residents seemed to support this idea.

Over the Christmas break I started putting together detailed maps of Cascades properties and City parks and wrote a preliminary Request for Proposal so that we could approach the City with our ideas. After several meetings with City Purchasing (Contracts) and writing this proposal in their "legalese" we were ready to go out to tender. We selected many companies from the list of City approved contractors, and the RFP was made public in the first week of March.

The bids were received on March 16th and we were disappointed to receive bids from only three companies. We were also disappointed to find the lowest price was \$140K and the highest was almost \$260K.

"Could the Cascades afford even the lowest price? Unfortunately we'd only be able to afford that for a few years until inflation made it unaffordable."

We suspected that the lowest price was "low-balled" to get the business and we might find ourselves with creeping expenses.

Could the Cascades afford even the lowest price? Unfortunately we'd only be able to afford that for a few years until inflation made it unaffordable. Since the City will only permit an association to take over parks care "ad infinitum" we would soon be in very big trouble. The decision was that we should cancel the RFP and think again.

The idea is gone but not forgotten. In the future we could look into reducing the scope of such a contract by taking on only the care of the boulevards in our area; or reducing the frequency of the specifications we had established.

Care of City Parks Unaffordable (continued)

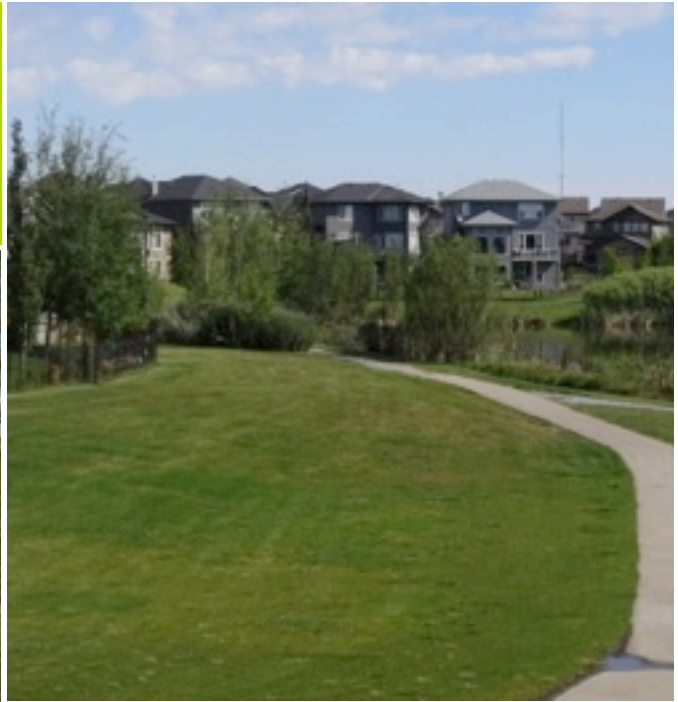
By Brian Pearson

We now had to re-group and rewrite the RFP in our own terms and describe only the Cascades areas for care as our maintenance contract with Green Acres was up for renewal. At the last AGM a motion was made to put all contracts out to tender this year to ensure we were getting competitive and high quality bids. This took another month and a half to get bids from our own selection of contractors, score the bids and finally select Prairie West to whom we awarded the contract. After preparing a contract and making some last minute contract negotiations we had a contract in place on May 28th and work commenced shortly thereafter. The final contract price was \$55,912 including GST.

Unfortunately, despite working on the landscape contract RFPs and bids for five months, the landscape care was late in starting due to the added rework.

In addition to this delay, we made the decision to repair the waterfall and pump system and requested estimates from five well experienced waterfall companies. This also took approximately six weeks to get a contractor started. It was worth the effort since the pump system is now designed properly, and the contractor comes around to clean the waterfall fairly frequently (and brings soap suds dispersant). Alongside this repair work we also had the water supply and irrigation system sorted out to be fully operational. We are anticipating that these systems will not require any more major repairs for quite a few years to come.

“Unfortunately, despite working on the landscape contract RFPs and bids for five months constantly, the landscape care was late in starting due to the added rework.”



Photographs by: Jeff Mottle



ASSOCIATION FEE INCREASES
Incremental fee increases are predicted to start in the future to accommodate revenue shortfalls for infrastructure upkeep and operating costs.



Photograph by: Jeff Mottle

2013 Budget Overview

Fee Increases will be coming

By Tim Lafferty

The proposed Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association 2013 budget is attached for your review.

The purpose of the budget is to:

1. Provide realistic revenues and expenditures forecast for the Resident’s Association.
2. Measure the financial operation of running the Association against the forecast.
3. Identify potential future cost constraints (limitations) for known projects, activities and other one time operational expenses.

See proposed budget 2013 on page 4

Reserve Fund Study

A Reserve Fund study was completed to determine resources needed to meet future budgetary and infrastructure expenses.

The purpose of the study was to identify funds needed to be set aside (reserve fund) for the repair, restoration and replacement of common area infrastructure. These are usually classified as major expenses to an Association.

To ensure we maintain the financial health of the Residents Association, future reserve fund studies are to be completed every five years.

When properly done, reserve fund contributions offset larger irregular expenses. As an example, included in this year’s proposed budget are these expenses: “Infrastructure Maintenance & Projects”.

At this time, we do not require additional resources as previous years revenue surpluses are available to complete these projects. We do however expect revenue shortfalls at some time in the future based on the study of our aging infrastructure, resulting in incremental increases to Association fees.

The time frame has yet to be determined for fee adjustments as the Board is continuing to prepare a Reserve Fund plan to address this prospect. We will have a finalized plan at the next annual meeting.

The proposed budget below has not been approved, but will be before the AGM on November 20, 2012. If you would like to comment or provide feedback, please email: contact@cascadesroyaloak.com

Cascades in Royal Oak Association		
2013 Proposed Budget		
REVENUE		Revenue
Membership Fees (\$200 x 840 Households)		\$ 168,000.00
Interest Income on GIC's etc.		\$ 2,000.00
Total 2013 Revenue		\$ 170,000.00
* COSTS		
Utilities	Expenses	
Water, Electricity - Subtotal	\$ 5,469	
Landscape Maintenance		
Miscellaneous Site Landscape Maintenance Costs	\$ 5,000	
Cascades Landscape Care & Snow Removal	\$ 62,739	
Tree/Shrub Replacement	\$ 2,000	
Community Flower Enhancements (Pots)	\$ 2,400	
Waterfall Maintenance	\$ 5,245	
Subtotal	\$ 77,384	
Infrastructure (Property) Maintenance & Projects		
Waterfall Repairs / Upgrade	\$ 5,000	
Asphalt Repairs (Reserve Study)	\$ 5,136	
Electrical and lighting repairs	\$ 5,305	
Subtotal	\$ 15,440	
Administration Fees		
Management & Admin	\$ 27,810	
Online Fee Payments @ 60% Participation (3.5%)	\$ 3,528	
AGM costs (Rental, mailing etc.)	\$ 4,120	
Office Supplies	\$ 3,090	
Communications (Newsletter, Website, Storage)	\$ 11,440	
Subtotal	\$ 49,988	
Professional Service Fees		
Lifecycle Study (every 5 years - next one 2017)	\$ 0	
Legal Fees for Delinquent fees - (see Recovery)	\$ 9,396	
Yearly Audit	\$ 3,640	
Yearly Insurance	\$ 1,768	
Subtotal	\$ 14,804	
Community Engagement		
Association Barbecue & Family Fun Day	\$ 2,000	
Total Costs	\$ 165,085	
Delinquent Fees - Cost Recovery @ 4%		\$6,720
2013 Surplus		\$ 4,915
Reserve Fund Allocation	TBD	
* 3% Increase in Costs from 2012		

What We're Working On Next

By Jeff Mottle



Photographs by: Jeff Mottle

New Security Measures

The new lights, cages, cameras along with new warning signs have already been ordered and we expect them to be installed by the time this newsletter reaches your door.

With the later than expected start this year many projects were delayed, but a lot is underway behind the scenes. Many of us on the board have spent hundreds of hours working on everything from site visits with contractors, RFP preparations, contractor selections and communications with the community to name just a few. It's actually surprising how much work it is to maintain the association and its properties.

As one of the newest members of the board I realized when I signed up there would be an amount of work to get done, but I have to admit I certainly did not realize just how much work it would be. Granted this year was a bit of an anomaly sending all of our contracts out to tender and trying to get our properties back to the shape they need to be in after years of neglect by our previous contractors. We desperately need more help, so please contact us or volunteer for the board on November 20.

We've been improving communications this year as well so we can keep everyone up to date with our progress and projects, but it's sometimes hard to appreciate all of the things that go on behind the scenes. I wanted to take this opportunity to provide a list of a few of the things we're working on now.

Lighting Repairs and Security

As many of you have read from our emails sent to registered users on our website, we have endured a lot of vandalism on our properties this year. In late 2011 we repaired many of our lights around the waterfall only to have them completely destroyed by vandals again this spring. After meeting with our lighting contractors, we'll be beefing up the lighting with upgraded LED systems and wire security cages to hopefully prevent further

vandalism.

We'll also be installing security cameras around the waterfall to deter the repeated dumping of soap into the water pools and to catch anyone on our properties. This summer we've been hit four times by vandals dumping soap into the water. The new lights, cages, cameras along with new warning signs have already been ordered and we expect them to be installed by the time this newsletter reaches your door.

After our last email, many of you contacted me asking why we continue to spend money on our water feature and suggested we shut it down and replace the water with dirt and plants. As this is such a prominent feature in our community and our namesake, we as a board can't make this type of decision on our own. If you feel strongly about this one way or another, we urge you to attend our AGM on November 20 to voice your opinion. A majority vote by the community is the only way such a decision could be made. The cost to convert the waterfall would be approximately \$25,000 plus annual maintenance and care.

Reserve Fund Scheduled Maintenance

This year we conducted a reserve fund study to schedule and budget for maintenance on our properties for the next 25 years. Some of the repairs being quoted now include: having the decorative fence above the retaining wall and our garbage bins partially powder coated to remove the rust; Refinishing benches and signs to ensure they last for the foreseeable future; and next year's scheduled asphalt repairs.

Reserve Fund Study and 2013 Budget

With the AGM just around the corner, the board is working on finalizing the 2013 budget and how we accommodate the funds required for the reserve fund. We've included a preliminary budget into the newsletter for community review and feedback, but we continue to work different scenarios and determine the best options that will allow us to



delay the incremental fee increases as long as possible.

New Mulch & Trees

This fall we'll be planting six Colorado spruce trees to replace trees that have died over the years. Most of them will be along Rocky Ridge Road. In the spring we'll also be adding new mulch to all of the beds and tree wells on our properties. We opted to wait until Spring due to the late start this year.

Updating and Improving Internal Documentation

Once the the majority of our work for the summer is done we'll be shifting some focus towards documenting internal processes and association administration. This will ensure future boards will have a very detailed handbook of information. While we've been lucky to have a number of



long term board members to maintain continuity, we need to ensure that future boards can operated seamlessly There is a lot of work on that front, so I anticipate it will be done over the next 6-12 months.

AGM Preparations

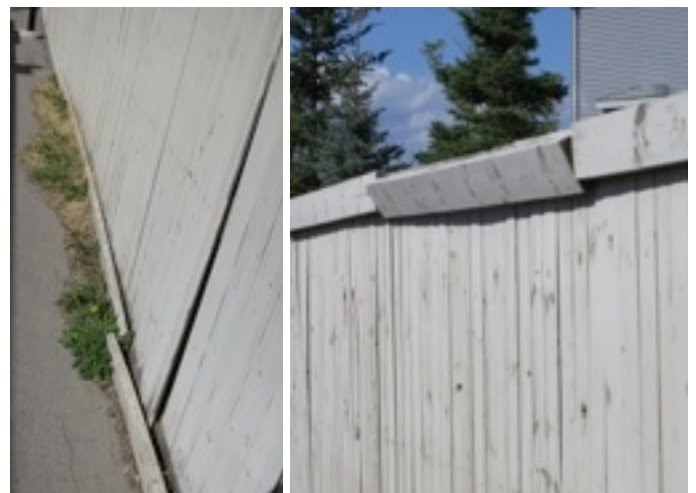
We have a full fledged multimedia presentation planned for the AGM. We want to really take this year's meeting to the next level and ensure everyone fully understands what the board does, the decisions we've made and what is planned moving forward. We hope you'll take the time out of your busy schedules to attend on November 20. More details will be forthcoming in the AGM mailing approximately 1 month before the meeting.

This Fence Belongs to you!

By Jeff Mottle

Over the past few years the maintenance of public facing fences in Royal Oak has been brought up and it was discussed again at the last AGM. As a board there is unfortunately nothing we can do as all of these public facing fences, including those along the walkways and along Country Hills Blvd. and Rocky Ridge Road, are on private property.

We wanted to take this opportunity to let everyone know that if you do own a property in the Cascades that has one of these developer built fences, they do belong to you. It's up to you to maintain these fences on both sides. One of the residents in the area is the Manager on Duty at the Home Depot in Beacon Hill. He has generously offered to provide homeowners wishing to repaint their fences with a discount. For more details, please email us at: contact@cascadesroyaloak.com



Photographs by: Jeff Mottle

A Community Association is Not a Residents Association

By Jeff Mottle

There are often two things that residents misunderstand about the Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association (CRORA). The first is mistaking CRORA with the Rocky Ridge Royal Oak Community Association (RRROCA). The second is overestimating the properties we are responsible for. The vast majority of the green spaces located in the Cascades belong to the City of Calgary, not CRORA. As a result there is very little we can do to improve the maintenance level. Here is a bit of information to clarify the confusion.

In the map below, CRORA properties are denoted in orange. All other properties are owned and maintained by the City of Calgary. To report issues with their care, please call 311 and file a complaint.

A Residents Association is run by volunteers who govern the way in which the annual fees are spent to maintain landscaping and cleanliness of the specific area controlled by the residents association.



In Rocky Ridge and Royal Oak there are as many as ten different Resident's Associations that were established by different developers, at the urging of the City.

The reasons the City feels that this is important is that a Residents Association, with its annual fee income can better define and control the needs of the residents in enhancing the landscaping care and cleanliness.

They can drive the levels of care to a much higher standard than the City can maintain. In some communities of the City, for example Citadel, where a Residents Association was not established at the outset, the Community Association tries to provide this

enhancement by way of Special Tax. Residents Association fees are somewhat more palatable than any form of Tax.

For example the Rocky Ridge Ranch Association that owns the Residents' Association site and building on Rocky Ridge Boulevard is not related to the Community Association and is open only to residents who live in that local area.

CRORA vs RRROCA

Taken with permission from Royal Oak May 2009 Newsletter

A Community Association is an association of volunteers who represent a whole community in matters pertaining to issues that affect the overall appearance, safety and traffic ways that the city entrusts to the community association.



The pathways marked above are on or adjacent to CRORA owned properties and snow is cleared as part of our regular property maintenance contract.



Attachment E. City Owned Snow Removal Paths

Although these pathways and sidewalks are city owned, the Residents Association currently pays our private contractor for snow removal on all of the above marked areas as the City currently does not clear any of these areas

A Community Association is Not a Residents Association (continued)

Your Rocky Ridge Royal Oak Community Association is a small group of volunteers who meet regularly and work constantly to:

- a) Address and fix residents' concerns
- b) Review and adjust Development Applications
- c) Watch out for environmental concerns
- d) Run kids and community programs
- e) Provide insurance for supported sport and area usage activities
- f) Communicate area and city usage issues to the residents
- g) Represent the community to the outside world
- h) Communicate with Ward 1 Alderman, the Member of the Legislature of Alberta, and with the Member of Parliament.

Please note that the City communicates overall area issues directly with the Community Association and does not necessarily recognize Residents Associations as the "voice" of the people.

One question we are frequently asked is "If I have already paid my fees why should I pay another Community Association membership so that I can involve my family in the fun things?"

The simple answer is that Residents Association's fees on the title of your property, often hundreds of dollars, are in no way connected to the Community Association. The Community Association membership fees, \$30 dollars for the first year and \$10 per annum thereafter, are entirely voluntary.

If you enroll your child in a sports program in this community you must have membership so that

insurance coverage is assured. If you join the Community Association voluntarily because you want to afford the association the operating budget to give good government representation, then we thank you.

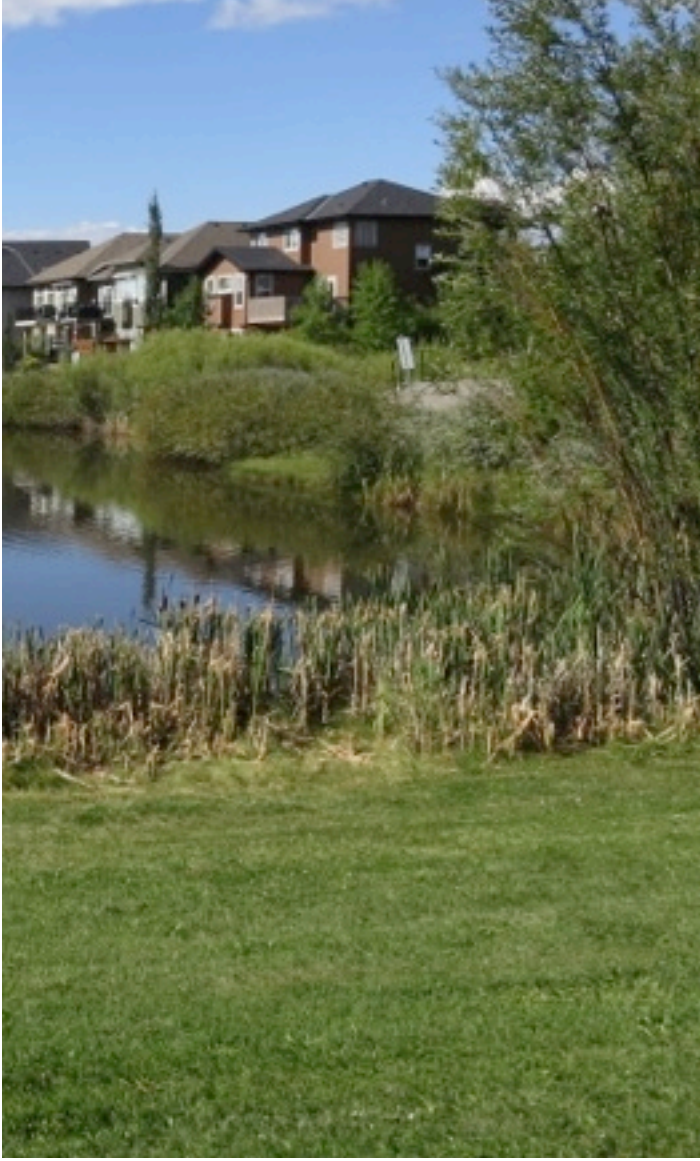
CRORA Responsibilities

Your \$200 annual fees go to the following:

- 1) Maintenance of the waterfall feature at the West Entrance
- 2) Maintenance of all CRORA owned properties (watering, maintenance, landscaping)
- 3) Snow removal on walkways during the winter
- 4) Utilities (water and electricity) for all CRORA owned properties
- 5) Insurance for our properties
- 6) Christmas Light installations at the West Entrance during the holiday season.
- 7) Association Management company fees. (The Association management company takes care of annual fees collections, resident communications, overdue fee collections & associated legal fees, coordination of communications, sub-contractors for property maintenance, taxes, corporation filings etc.)
- 8) Communications (Newsletters, Annual General Meeting and all of the hard costs for printing, paper, postage etc.)
- 9) Reserve fund for future long term maintenance of our properties.



Photographs by: Jeff Mottle



The 2012 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The 2012 Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association Annual General meeting will take place on Tuesday November 20, 2012.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend so we can meet quorum again this year. More details will be coming in October with the finalized 2013 budget and exact location and time for the meeting.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

CONTACT

We've updated our contact information

Effective April 1, 2012 the contact information for the Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association has changed. Please update your information and be sure to send any annual fee payments to our updated address. (Please note: payments sent to our old address will still be received, however there may be a slight delay in processing your payment)

The Cascades in Royal Oak Residents Association
C/O Condominium First Management Services Ltd.
Suite 810, 839 5 Ave SW
Calgary, AB, T2P 3C8

Phone: (403) 299-1810

Fax: (403) 299-1813

E-mail: contact@cascadesroyaloak.com

PLEASE REGISTER ON OUR WEBSITE. Registering your email will allow us to communicate important and timely information to you. Just click on the "Resident Website Application" link in the main menu.

<http://cascadesroyaloak.com>