

RHOA Environmental Committee Meeting
Initial Meeting 2-3-13

Present: Mary Hart, Bonnie Diamond, Gerald Clark, Patti Berkovitz

Members/Volunteers:

Berkovitz, Patti
Bianchi, Lisa
Clark, Gerald
Coffsky, Terri
Diamond, Bonnie
Epstein, Sherry
Greenwald, Keith
Hart, Mary
Heywood, Elizabeth
Levick, Fred
Passantino, Erika
Shir, Laura
Solomon, Kaethe
Elsea, Nancy
Larson, Chris

***Note: Feedback and answers, from Reed Haggard and Board members, to questions posed by the committee are in Red Font.**

A significant amount of the hour spent discussing the traffic islands. Neglect was a pointed perspective. Little knowledge that Reynaldo Rivera had at one time been contracted to maintain the islands.

A proposition was made for the RHOA, even at this stage, regarding the traffic islands and circles:

- If individual homeowners, or a group of homeowners, desire to maintain an island, or traffic circle, then they:
 - Contract with the RHOA that they will maintain such with a set amount of money from the RHOA for the year.
 - Receipts are submitted to Sloane Neiman, RHOA Treasurer
 - The amount of money would be the same for any island, **except maybe for the main entrances.**
 - ◇ Probably should have two standards:
 - one for those islands that are on major "border" streets like Riverside, Heards Ferry and River Valley, and
 - All other islands/traffic circles.
 - **Low maintenance, low water.**
- Otherwise, the RHOA will be responsible for all traffic islands and circles throughout the neighborhood.
 - **The RHOA could support a low cost upkeep "professional", if needed.**
- **Ideal for our committee to work together to develop standards and budget for all; (as the landscape experts).**
- If a homeowner or homeowners, who has/have taken responsibility for a traffic island desires to no longer take responsibility; they are required to give the RHOA a two week notice.

- If the RHOA deems that said homeowner(s) are not fulfilling their agreement to maintain the island, or traffic circle, in an appropriate manner congruent with the other traffic islands, then the homeowners are given a two week notice that they need to improve the island, or the RHOA will take over the responsibility.
- The neighborhood would look better if there were more of a consistent theme throughout.
- Every island should be as environmentally sustainable and friendly as possible.
- No need to pull up plantings but moving forward, all plantings should need minimal work, drought tolerant, etc...
- Flowers at the main entrances, but otherwise, lean towards environmental sustainable landscaping.
- Preventing erosion should be factored into all islands and circles.

We generated the following questions for the RHOA Board.

1: Who owns the traffic circles, islands that are throughout our Neighborhood?

2: Who owns the right-of-ways?

Patti told us that 30 feet from the center line of a street in either direction is owned by the City of Sandy Springs.

3: Where are right-of-ways throughout this neighborhood?

4: Do you have an official map of this neighborhood and its' borders?

Colin Lichtenstein the HOA VP and Zoning expert, came up with the following:

1. The Right of way is the strip of land between the road and the property boundary along the street frontage.
 - a. The City owns it and uses it for running utilities and sometimes for additional street widening.
 - b. The width will vary according to the particular street but a good rule of thumb would be a setback of about 10'-6" from the back of curb.
 - c. It will always be behind any telephone poles on the sidewalk. I see some homeowners believe that they own the land up to the curb and the lawns continue right up to the curb, which is OK although the City does have the right to dig up the area.
 - d. Some owners have actually run their fences within the right of way, which is of course illegal.
 - e. Mailboxes can, and must be close to the curb and therefore are allowed within the right of way.
2. The streets are usually owned and maintained by the City unless it is a private road.
 - a. I am trying to find out more about the traffic circles and Islands. My guess is that they are also owned by the City although it is common for the neighborhood to maintain these.
 - b. As soon as I can find out more information I'll forward it.
3. There's a map of the neighborhood on the website www.riversidehoa.org (left column under documents).

Action: Sherry needs to contact Mary Jo Winer to inquire exactly what traffic island(s) the Riverside West Garden Club choose to maintain.

Action: Mary Hart will canvas RHOA neighborhood placing a little note on mailboxes to inquire if anyone is interested in maintaining an island or traffic circle, as well as invite their interest becoming involved with the Environmental Committee.

Discussions:

Concept for a mission statement:

- We have an opportunity to promote awareness of our Environmental resources and protect them which will enrich the lives of all neighbors and enhance property values.
- That Earth Day should be a product of the Social Committee but the Environmental Committee could possibly offer to secure environmental vendors, such as shredding companies or composting educational groups that might enhance the Environmental Educational aspects of the Earth Day.
 - Up for further discussion but the brunt of the work would be the work of the Social Committee.
- Opportunities for committee members to contribute to RHOA Environmental Committee as well as possible involvement from others; such as:
 - Facilitating communication among our RHOA regarding environmental friendly initiative; ex:
 - Nancy Elsea has a book of Environmental Neighborhood ideas that could by a committee member to send out periodic Environmental tips.
 - Canvassing,
 - Organizing,
 - Gardening in one of the islands,
 - Facilitate communication between the City and the RHOA regarding the all issues impacting our watershed; be it storm drains, creeks, development and the downstream impact.
 - Welcome ideas and interests from any members.
 - Facilitate environmental initiatives with children of all ages throughout our RHOA.

Action: Motion made for Sherry Epstein to be Chair of the Environmental Committee with Bonnie Diamond the Vice-Chair. Passed by those present.

Note: Sherry Epstein is open to anyone else who would like to take on this role. I am glad to volunteer but do not want to deprive someone else of this opportunity if they would like to Chair the committee.

We met for one hour.