

THE HILLSIDE NEWS

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6

December 2019

Landscape Master Plan Update

The physical groundwork on the Hillside Landscape Master Plan (LMP) began in earnest on November 18, 2019, when Clark's Landscape started excavating for the sign. Since then, the wall for the sign has been constructed. Basically, all the trees that were to be planted or transplanted, as part of Phase One, are in the ground. LED lighting for the sign, the 3 pines behind the sign, and the birch trees has been installed. We are working with Midwest sign and pushing for the letters, which have been fabricated, to be installed by Christmas.

Clark Landscaping has been diligently working to get everything completed. Timing has been hampered by weather, problems with "Miss Dig" marking the utilities, and the Thanksgiving weekend. Phase One is almost complete, then it's onto Phase Two in the Spring. It will include lawn repair, planting of perennials and other flora, and doing various landscape finishing touches.



Thank You to Dwight Huskey

We want to share that Dwight Huskey will be stepping down as Chair of the Landscape Committee (LC) at the end of this year, but

he will remain a LC member until his term ends on 5/31/20. Dwight has overseen the LMP Phase One implementation and will assist in the oversight of Phase Two. His time, work ethic, knowledge, and character are important to the LC and have been significant in the design, development, and implementation of the LMP. The Board, the LC, and all Hillside residents express a hearty thank you to Dwight for work well done.

Package Delivery Concerns

On 11/30/19 an email was sent out to all Hillside residents about suspicious activity. An unknown person appeared to be driving slowly around Hillside looking for packages on porches. No actual criminal behavior was seen by the reporting resident. There have been no further reports of this type of activity. But it does raise the issue for everyone's consideration.

How do we prevent and protect ourselves from "porch pirates", thieves of all types, and other criminal activity? This time of year, reports of Holiday delivery-related larceny is in the news. Additionally, a number of residents leave town for the Holidays or for most of the winter. I am not trying to start mass paranoia here, but I do want to raise a little healthy awareness. There are things we can do to increase protection for ourselves and our neighborhood.

People have been sending me thoughts and suggestions regarding this. I thought I would share some of them with you. For deliveries, consider having your packages:

- delivered to your work
- delivered to a relative or a friend who will be home
- held at the local post office

- delivered to an Amazon locker or make special arrangements with Amazon for package placement at your home
- delivered to a police station or trusted business (talk to them first)
- held at the shipper's facility and you pick it up there
- require a signature confirmation for delivery
- tracked online, so you can be home for the delivery

Some general crime prevention strategies that have been suggested:

- start a Neighborhood Watch program, check out the National Neighborhood Watch website- <https://www.nnw.org>
- sign up for the Kent County Sheriff's "Vacation House Check" program, see: <https://www.accesskent.com/HouseCheck/>
- install a home monitoring and alarm system

Road Salt

I know that this can be a hot topic this time of year, for Hillside and many other places. There are strong opinions on both sides of the issue. On one side is working to have ice-free and safe roads. On the other side are concerns about cost, road damage, and no matter what we do, there will be some safety risk. How do we, as a community, find the right balance on these issues?

I doubt that we will just watch the snow fall and do nothing or install a road-heating & ice-melting system or all move to Florida for the winter. What should a reasonable group of residents living in 59 condos do?

Sorry, I do not have the definitive "right" answer or pretend to think I do. I do believe that this is one of those situations where you try to do the best you can. It won't be perfect either way, no matter what we do.

The advice of the Board, based on Kent County Road Commission experience, is to

sparingly and strategically use road salt and snowplow more frequently. The main problem is that there is no "perfect product" that is low-cost, environmentally friendly, stays in place, gives traction, and keeps melting the snow and ice, no matter what the temperature is outside. When snow melts it turns to water, seeps into cracks, covers parts of the road, and washes away some of the salt. Then when the water freezes again, it turns to ice, causing all kinds of problems.

So, we have talked with Pepperidge about snowplowing and salting. They will do their best to find the right balance for conditions at the time and based on the weather forecast. If you have questions or concerns about these services, please do not call Pepperidge directly. Rather, call Gerow Management (616-433-9090). This not a perfect system, but it is the best we have developed to date. We want to find ways to improve our snow removal system, but please be civil and reasonable, when calling about these issues.



Changes to Recycling Rules

According to Herrington's Waste website, there will soon be new recycling rules.

"Starting January 1, 2020, the Kent County Recycling Center will no longer accept plastic shopping bags or shredded paper. If plastic bags and/or shredded paper are placed at the curb for recycling, it will be removed and left."

Please visit the Herrington website for any recycling questions or if you want a copy of their recycling guide. From a browser, enter: <http://www.reimagnettrash.org>.

Hillside Happenings - Cathy Downer

Kate Houseman and Craig Wassenaar are once again graciously hosting our annual Christmas party which is being held on Friday, December 13. If you still have your e-mail invitation and have not already done so, please RSVP. If you no longer have your invitation and plan to attend, please e-mail Kate at kwhouseman@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

As they did last year, Dan DeVries and Tom Prus have given of their time putting Christmas lights on the trees at the entrance to Hillside. It looks wonderful and adds to our sense of community! If you see them, please say thank you and tell them how much we appreciate their work.



Hillside entrance holiday lights.

[Photography by Dave Robinson]

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Board Openings

The Hillside Board of Directors currently has 6 members:

- Lynn Calhoun (Treasurer)
- Scott Crosby (HPC Liaison)
- Mike Holton (LC Liaison)
- Dave Robinson (VP)
- Tom Shaw (Secretary)
- Steve Warren (President)

The Board continues to have one open seat. The last membership vote (6/28/17) on this matter designated a total of 7 Board members. According to our bylaws, the Board is authorized to appoint a resident as an interim member, in order to fill a vacant Board position, until the next election.

The term of service for 3 of the current Board members (Dave Robinson, Tom Shaw, Steve Warren) ends after the next Board election. Unless something changes, there will be 4 Board seats up for election at the time of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

If anyone is interested in serving on the Hillside Board of Directors, either now as an interim member or starting next year for a full 2-year term, please contact Gerow or one of the current Board members.

Gerow Management: 616-433-9090

Hillside website: <http://hillside.condos>

Facebook page: Hillside Condo Neighbors

The Far Side - Gary Larson



Ralph Harrison, king of salespersons