

Grand Lakes Green Committee

Meeting Date: September 14, 2016, 9-10:30am

Committee Members in Attendance: Leigh Anne Goerland, Patrick Friend, Larry Lucarelli

Meeting Minutes

The meeting started at 9am.

Old Business:

Leigh Anne shared the following updates from speaking with Erica Morgan:

- The Green Committee has been added to the September HOA meeting agenda. *Action: Leigh Anne to ask Erica if we can be on the executive session vs. the general session.*
- An email has been sent to Erica for forwarding on to board members Glenn Gesoff and Carlos Ortiz asking if either of them would be interested in being our liaison. *Action: Leigh Anne will follow up prior to the HOA meeting if she has not heard back re the liaison.*
- Erica will inquire with our website hosting company about adding a Green Committee page.
- Other HOAs have utilized electronic surveys before; keeping it short and offering a section for general feedback/comments is helpful. Erica advised to add the survey and social media topics to our September discussion with the board.

Regarding the survey, we feel that an electronic one (via surveymonkey or another tool) will have a greater response rate than a paper one. If timing works out, it might be helpful to leverage an end of year GL mailing and/or meeting to mention our survey. *Action: Leigh Anne to follow up with Erica to inquire how many people are on the GL email distribution list so that we may understand approximately how many households we would miss if we rely only on electronic communication.*

Updates were given on green topics from our last session:

- We reviewed a map of Grand Lakes and Patrick shared information on the GL watershed - it appears that GL has ~4 miles of bayou we back up to and ~27 lakes that drain to the bayous.
- We read an email update from Grace: Grace went by the commissioner's office about the bike signs and bike lanes. The process is to send a letter from the HOA requesting such and the reasons why. If the county commissioner approves the request they send it to engineering to research and review.
- Larry contacted Ft. Bend county regarding a waste collection event. Having a battery, paint, used oil, and antifreeze collection event requires less permitting than a hazardous waste collection event. *Action: Larry will follow up with the county first, and then waste management companies, regarding having a BPOA event. He will also follow up with Best Trash to see if it would be possible for our committee to have a tour of their recycling facility.*
- Leigh Anne shared a list of local businesses that accept goods for recycle, such as Best Buy for electronics and UPS for packing peanuts.

New Business:

We added several ideas to our brainstorming list. All of the ideas are now listed on the last pages of these minutes. *Action: Patrick to find out if the city of Katy has an environmental committee.*

Next Steps:

We would like to discuss the following topics with the Board on September 26th. Target is ~20 minutes:

1. Introductions

2. Provide brief update on our meetings to date
3. Inquire - what green initiatives been undertaken before in Grand Lakes?
4. Request Green Committee Board Liaison
5. Request clarification regarding how committee budgets will be handled
6. Ask for Board thoughts on a potential Green Committee resident survey
7. Share our plan regarding establishing a Green Committee page on grandlakeslife.com
8. Request clarification regarding social media posting and green tips in newsletter process
9. Thank and Conclude

Next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2016, 9-10:30am. At the meeting we will discuss our ideas and vote on which ones we would like to pursue this coming year.

Meeting adjourned 10:50am.

Green Committee Idea List

Idea	Category	Pros, Cons, Questions and Comments
Provide recycling and other tips in the Grand Lakes monthly newsletter and on the website.	Education/Sense of Community	Easy to do
Engage and educate the students that attend Grand Lakes schools.	Education/Sense of Community	What kind of engagement are we envisioning? Alexander has a RAE Green Team, so recommend we work through them. Not sure if Griffin has any programs/committees.
Have a community event to celebrate Earth Day (April 22). Some ideas include: planting trees, providing a community service project for the Girl or Boy Scouts troops in the Grand Lakes neighborhood.	Education/Sense of Community	What kind of turnout have recent GL community events had? Earth Day seems a natural fit for our mission. Potential for collaboration with Events Committee.
Promote TerraCycle (mail in program to recycle normally non-recyclable items - toothpaste tubes, pens, etc.) and FreeCycle (give away items to other people to avoid discarding items in the trash)	Education/Sense of Community	Suggest include as tip in newsletter/on web.
Have an Arbor Day celebration – plant a tree in Grand Lakes (national Arbor day is the last Friday in April but Texas State Arbor Day is the first Friday in November)	Education/Sense of Community	Where are trees in GL needed? Satellite images could provide perspective. What is the replanting policy when GL trees die? Where would we get the trees from?
Link to the green info promoted on the MUD website from our Green page on grandlakeslife.com - MUD info includes rain barrel info, sprinkler checkup info, etc.	Education/Sense of Community	
Get a “deal” on residential solar panels for the residents.	Energy	Solar is still very expensive; unsure of the interest in GL; none of the committee members have experience with solar yet
Investigate cost effectiveness and other factors (e.g. reduction of carbon footprint, cost savings on AC bills) relating to use of white shingles on roofs.	Energy	Likely to face resistance from an aesthetic point in the community; also, impact limited to when homeowners decide to replace their roof.

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Reduce GL's environmental impact in particular on the watershed (Review use of fertilizers, pesticides).	Landscaping Practices	
Promote "Texas Wildscapes" – backyard habitats	Landscaping Practices	Would this be a better fit for the Wildlife Committee to pursue if they so desired? Or perhaps collaborate. None of the committee members have experience with this yet
Encourage native plants in GL common areas to reduce water usage	Landscaping Practices	What plants already out there are native vs. not? What landscaping areas use the most water? - would need to understand to quantify benefit. Could be costly to re-landscape areas if they are not already seasonal. Potential to work with new Beautification Committee. We could work on this on a "go forward" basis - meaning focusing on naturalizing as plants die over time.
Offer uprooted plants to residents on seasonal color changes	Landscaping Practices	Believe Cinco Ranch already does this, could learn from their process.
Work to extend/add sidewalks (for example across bayou on Peek on west side of road) to make for more friendly walking and biking community.	Transportation	
Create a bicycle friendly community with bike lanes and/or signage by working with Fort Bend County Commissioner or TXDOT.	Transportation	What would happen to bike lanes on exit of GL bounds? Potentially expensive to shift lanes.
Promote vanpooling - link on our Green Committee page	Transportation	Suggest include as tip in newsletter/on web.
Clean up trash in the neighborhood - either resident run, boy scouts/girl scouts service project invitations, hire out, etc.	Trash/Recycling	How often is litter picked up along 99 by the county? Could landscaping crews pick up litter as they tend the plants? Litter can become especially problematic along Fry and along 99. What is the greatest cause of the trash?

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Easier access to waste (paints, motor oils, etc.) removal by working with TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality), county, or waste management company.	Trash/Recycling	We have had residents mention to us that they would like to see paint recycled.
Conduct a hard to recycle residential drive (potentially coinciding with GL garage sales - clean out for the garage sale then recycle the items that aren't saleable/donateable) - e.g. electronics, packing peanuts, worn clothes, etc.	Trash/Recycling	Could also post list of local locations accepting these items online.
Add additional trash bins where needed and add recycling bins in Grand Lakes common areas (ex. parks and pools)	Trash/Recycling	Would Best Trash pickup recycle from common area recycle bins? What type of common area recycling bins would we need to ensure trash is not put in them? What locations in GL are in most need of trash cans?
Add a "No Handbills" rule similar to our "No Soliciting" rule to reduce amount of flyers many residents ultimately throw in the trash	Trash/Recycling	How enforceable would the no handbills rule be and who enforces such rules? Currently no soliciting seems to be ignored. Where is no soliciting documented?
Make our community events certified green (like the Chevron Houston Marathon) -- long term goal	Trash/Recycling	Research required. Would involve buy in from Events Committee.
Have a yard waste pickup from a trash provider so that our waste does not go in a landfill and is composted instead	Trash/Recycling	Best Trash previously quoted \$8/month per house to the MUD 4 when Leigh Anne inquired in 2015. Need resident buy in for a program with cost increases.
Investigate curbside composting to avoid food (rotting veggies, fruits, etc.) going in landfills where the nutrients are not returned to the earth in a productive way -- longer term goal	Trash/Recycling	Services of this kind are not common in the Houston area according to Best Trash when Leigh Anne inquired via MUD 4 in 2015. Need to be able to show that residents want this kind of service before proceeding here. Costs to residents. Probably a pilot program needed if we were to proceed. Good green impact, but a more complex effort.
Get info from Best Trash on top 10 items put in recycle bin that they don't accept to bring awareness of our being overly optimistic about what can actually be recycled	Trash/Recycling	

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Review of water usage in the common areas. (time of day, rain sensors)	Water Conservation	
Encourage rain barrels – investigate if there are MUD incentives to a certain percentage of GL homes having barrels	Water Conservation	
Discuss with MUDs adding drought notification signs and/or post on social media what drought stage we are in and what water conservation they recommend to promote awareness among residents of our rainfall status and conservation needs.	Water Conservation	