

## **President's Newsletter, May 10, 2021**

### **Fellow Cedar Cove Homeowners,**

**HOA Annual Meeting:** With COVID restrictions relaxing somewhat, we have decided to hold an annual meeting on Thursday, June 10, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at Capitol City Christian Church, 7800 Holdrege Street. They have reserved the Student Chapel for us. This is a very large room so it will be easy to maintain social distancing if that is a concern. The church requires meeting attendees to wear a mask to and from the room. Masks may be removed once attendees are in the meeting room. Park in the west parking lot and use the west doors to enter. Please plan on attending.

**Board of Directors:** The Board of Director positions are currently President, Dan Nissen; Vice President Don Stevens, and Members Ken Cousino, John Knudsen, and Jim Kinkennon. Members Dan Nissen, Ken Cousino, and Jim Kinkennon's terms were to be complete in April 2021. Don Stevens and John Knudsen's terms are complete in April 2022. There will be an election at the June 10 meeting for three new board members. Please consider putting your name in the hat for a board position.

**Lawn Care/Weed Control:** As you know we have a new lawn care provider. The contract with Jason's Lawn and Landscaping ran through March 31, 2021. We started discussions with Jason's in November 2020 as he had informed NAI/FMA and the board that his costs would be going up. Jason's offered a proposal of \$4,500 per month for a four step lawn care system, up from the previous \$4,000 per month. This price included snow removal and was spread over all 12 months. At this point, the board asked NAI/FMA to go out for competitive bids. We received four bids in February 2021. All four bids were higher than Jason's and none of them included snow removal. The board elected to stay with Jason's but asked him for a proposal for a six step fertilization and weed control program as there had been several complaints about lawn appearance and weeds in 2020. Jason's came back with a proposal of \$4,750 per month (spread over 12 months) which the board accepted. Jason then came back with another proposal to use TruGreen's six step lawn care program. Jason would do the mowing and TruGreen would apply the fertilizer and weed control. This increased the cost to \$4,950 per month. This proposal was accepted by the board.

On March 31, board members received an email from NAI/FMA stating Jason refused to sign the new contract and we needed to find a new lawn care provider. The email contained an attachment with bids from four new lawn care providers none of which did snow removal. I decided to contact Jason directly and get his feedback. I did not have Jason's contact information but found it via an internet search and left Jason a voice message the evening of March 31. Much to my surprise Jason called me back Thursday, April 1, and was very cooperative and open. Basically, there was a lack of communication between NAI/FMA and Jason. Jason told me his final bid was valid through March 15 as this was when his bid from TruGreen expired. This also gave Jason time to fill out his crew for the summer. The March 15 expiration date was not noticed by NAI/FMA and they did not get the new contract to Jason until a week after the expiration date. Jason knew we had gone out for other bids as one of the bidders in February was a friend of his and had told Jason he was bidding Cedar Cove HOA. Jason did not contact NAI/FMA on March 15 and assumed he did not get the contract. Jason informed TruGreen he did not have the job and accepted a different job to replace our HOA. I asked Jason if he would reconsider and still take on Cedar Cove. He said it was too late as he had already accepted the other job and did not have the crew or equipment to do both.

I then asked Jason if he knew any of the other four companies that had just bid our HOA. Jason said we would not be happy with Bidder #4 (lowest price). Jason said he knew the owners of Bidder #1 and #2 (highest bidders) and either would do a good job. Jason also mentioned Bidder

#2 did not have the crew or equipment to do Cedar Cove all in one day and had already asked Jason if he would share the Cedar Cove mowing with him if he was awarded the job.

On Thursday evening, April 1, I called someone I used to work with as I knew his son had a lawn care business. I asked if his son would be interested in our HOA and was told yes. Chad Duncan of Duncan Enterprises called me on Friday, April 2, and offered to meet with me to look over our HOA yet that morning. Ken Cousino and I met with Chad and toured the HOA. Chad informed us he had degrees in agronomy and finance from UNL. Chad identified many varieties of weeds and explained his five step process for fertilization/weed control as we moved through the HOA. Chad submitted a proposal Friday evening.

All five board members met Saturday afternoon, April 3, to review the five proposals and make a selection. Bidder #4 was not recommended by Jason and we had also found negative reviews on line so we ruled him out. Bidder #3 had also bid the four step process for lawn care in February and the six step lawn care in March and the bids were identical. We did not have much faith in his attention to detail so we ruled Bidder #3 out. Bidder #2 needed help from Jason to do our HOA so we ruled him out. This left Bidder #1 and Duncan Enterprises. We knew nothing about Bidder #1 and Chad Duncan had impressed both Ken and me with his knowledge and experience. The board unanimously voted to go with Duncan Enterprises even though his was the highest bid. There have been many complaints annually in the past about the state of our lawns and we believed Duncan Enterprises to be the most qualified to bring our lawns back into shape. That being said lawn quality will not improve overnight. It will take time. Please be patient.

I contacted Chad Duncan on Saturday to let him know the board had decided to go with him and he asked if he could mow on Monday, April 5. I then emailed NAI/FMA on Saturday to let them know who the board had selected. I also called NAI/FMA on Monday and asked them to give Duncan Enterprises an Authorization to Proceed letter so he could begin mowing that very day. We went from no lawn care provider on March 31 to having our yards mowed on April 5. All of this occurred over the Easter holiday weekend. A special thank you should go to Chad Duncan and the board members for accomplishing this over a holiday weekend.

**Snow Removal:** We will now need to find a new snow removal contractor as well. Of all the bids we received in both February and March only Duncan Enterprises also does snow removal. However the current contract with Duncan Enterprises is only for lawn care. Finding a new contractor will be a challenge as most providers charge per snowfall and costs depend on the snow depth. For example, the 14.5" snowfall we had on one day last February would have cost the HOA \$12,000 to remove. This is basically what we paid Jason's for the entire winter season which had nearly 50 inches of snow.

**2021 Budget Proposal:** The 2020 year end financial summary previously posted on the HOA website showed we had an operating deficit of \$4,295 at the end of 2020. Water costs and sprinkler repairs were much higher in 2020 than in 2019 and are the primary causes for the 2020 deficit. Assuming water and sprinkler repair expenses similar to 2020 levels and Jason's notification of increased costs for lawn service, the board incorporated a \$10 per month increase in HOA dues effective February 2021.

Now plugging in Duncan Enterprises estimate for lawn care and estimating snow removal for one 2-4" snow (\$2000) and one 4-8" snow (\$3500) in December we still estimate a deficit at 2021 year end. **Long story short, another to be determined dues increase should be incorporated no later than July 2021 to account for this new anticipated shortfall.**

Submitted by Dan Nissen, President, May 10, 2021