

# Hammocks Community Association Inc.

Minutes of the Landscaping Committee Meeting  
January 17, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Clubhouse and ZOOM

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Landscaping Committee was called to order by Pete Cabrera at 7:05pm

## 2. Determination of a Quorum

Members Present:                 Pete Cabrera  
  Frank Perez  
  Elaine Arratia  
  Ricardo Rodriguez

## 3. Proof of Notice of Meeting

Anthony Serrone advised that Management posted notice for the meeting on all the bulletin boards throughout the community and on the association website on Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## 4. Old Business

- No old business

## 5. New Business

- **Pete Cabrera** – So you gave us a proposal of \$356,000 for the tree trimming. I see that you have had a proposal in the past for tree trimming so we were trying to find out how we can fit what we need from you into our budget
- **Fernando Toledo** – The proposal was something that Jean Carlos asked with the understanding that we were to be here every day. We wanted to give you a figure to go by. There is no need for us to be here every day. This is the same proposal that we have given you to start off with. The good thing with us is that our office is nearby. We can go dump our trucks and keep working. Other companies have to drive to the dump and dump their trucks. It lets us produce more for the neighborhood. In that \$1450 we have included giving you an additional truck so we will make less trips to dump them. The problem is that the trees haven't been trimmed for so long. The Hammocks has close to 2,000 trees in total and once they get into order, where we would like them to be, they could be trimmed every other year. The first trimming we cleared for the vehicular traffic. The majority of trees are very tall. We need to do some structural cuts and bring them down. When we are working on the upper part of the canopy, we can't produce as much. Once that second round is done, we can do less trimming. That proposal was for us to be out here every day. We are trying to prepare all the trees to not go down in a storm.
- **Pete Cabrera** – At this point, you have done some or all the roads and the trees around the lake and around the clubhouse. You have been self-motivated on that; you haven't gotten any direction for that. So, our next step is to look at the road and see what's needed such as the ones on 104<sup>th</sup>, you cut them, but you cut them at 8 and 4 and they were still hanging. Where do we go from here? How do we go about the cost because I am not comfortable with you doing whatever and then giving us a bill. I would like to go around the neighborhood and give you directions. Is that something we can do with this cost?
- **Fernando Toledo** – That's what I would like to do. To go back to the date palms, they haven't been given fertilizer and they have a deficiency. The more limbs that you take off the worse it is for the tree.

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We will do whatever you want but it might not be good for the tree even though it is the look you are going for. We do have two arborists that work for the community that are very hands-on, but we did not want to harm the tree. We would love to go around with you guys and then you tell us where you would like us to go and work.

- **Frank Perez** – I have talked to some of your guys as they are working and asked them what area are you doing today? I thought the direction was coming from FirstService Residential but now I understand it was coming from you.
- **Fernando Toledo** – Yes, we were trying to do what was more dangerous and what would go down during a storm.
- **Frank Perez** - Now that we are the representatives, we would like the instructions to come from FirstService Residential or the Landscaping committee.
- **Fernando Toledo** – That works better for me because I am looking from area of concern but of course I want to give you what you want.
- **Frank Perez** – Since I am asking you to understand how you work. I would like to talk to you about equipment. We mentioned 104<sup>th</sup> street where there are palmetto palms that are overgrown.
- **Fernando Toledo** – Those are Washingtonian palms.
- **Frank Perez** – Do you have the equipment to handle those?
- **Fernando Toledo** – The problem with those is that when you cut those leaves they fall and could go into the main street. So, we have avoided doing that because we don't want to put the street in danger. If we have your go ahead for that. Can we do it, of course, but that is the issue. We can do it another way to put the leaves in the bucket, but we will produce less doing it that way.
- **Frank Perez** – What are your normal work hours?
- **Fernando Toledo** – We try not to make noise until 7:45am – 8am in the morning. We start at 6 in the morning at our shop. We try to drive around and pick things up until 7:45pm.
- **Frank Perez** – Is it Monday – Friday?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Monday – Saturday. Again, with those high trees we wanted to do it later in the year, when the kids were out of school.
- **Pete Cabrera** – So, you got no direction from FirstService Residential?
- **Fernando Toledo** – We have come up with our suggestions and brought them FirstService Residential. They don't know the property like we do because we are out there every day.
- **Pete Cabrera** – so what I am seeing from the tree trimming, up until November we paid about \$267,00 which is about \$24,000 per month. If that is over 12 months, it is about \$291,000 and will be over budget of \$187,000. So, you would do your work, give the bill to FirstService Residential and they would pay for it.
- **Fernando Toledo** – Correct, we would send to FirstService Residential.
- **Pete Cabrera** – So that is something that needs to change. We need to have communication from us to you or from us to FirstService Residential to you to all be on the same page. On proposal from last year it talks about the daily rates, contractor qualifications, scops of work ANSI A-300
- **Fernando Toledo** – that is the standard of cutting trees. They are guidelines of how to prune trees and cut grass.
- **Pete Cabrera** – Then it talks about cleaning canopy, raising the canopy, reducing the canopy, trees close to structures, and then head cutting and not removing more than 25% of the tree.
- **Fernando Toledo** – Canopy is the top of the tree making and we focus on making air pockets in the tree. You can do that with the bucket. The main thing is the 25% as we can only do 25% at a time. It is for the health of the tree so we cannot do everything we need to do for that tree in one cut.
- **Pete Cabrera** – So up until this point, you have been cutting so traffic can go through and lifting the canopy. So what we still have to do is to clean the canopy?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Cleaning is doing dry branches in the canopy which has been done.
- **Pete Cabrera** – what is head cutting?

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- **Fernando Toledo** – The same as the canopy cutting. You have to go down to a lateral branch. The reduction is hard because we have to decide what cuts to make.
- **Pete Cabrera** – What do you mean by an inch?
- **Fernando Toledo** – That is the diameter of the branch which is what we need to focus on.
- **Pete Cabrera** – As for the palm fronds, is the stalk that joins the leaves.
- **Fernando Toledo** – The boots of the palm we will not go all the way down because we will not produce anything but that tree today. Aesthetically, it looks nice but to do all the palms here would take a long time.
- **Pete Cabrera** – If we want that done, you'll give us a price?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Of course, we can do whatever you want.
- **Pete Cabrera** – I just went through Vizcaya, they did the date palms, and they look beautiful. When I used to be here, it used to be beautiful. It is not anymore. I want to thank you for the initiative that you have taken but I want to make sure that you are getting direction.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – I am pretty sure we have a landscaping deficiency do you have a price for that?
- **Fernando Toledo** – We asked if they would like to do that in the beginning and we were told to hold off. We can do it, but it is a lot. The old board just started cutting Ficus hedges everywhere and we did a stump removal and there was about 1700. Ficus's that have not gotten nutrition and we have let the bad ones go to see if they come back.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – On the topic of white fly spray. Would it be more cost effective to spray or to replace the trees with something more resistant to white fly?
- **Fernando Toledo** – It would be more cost effective to spray, for now. If we replace it'll be more expensive but in the long run they would be lower maintenance.
- **Pete Cabrera** – Right now what we have talked about is tree trimming. We are going to go with the old contract for Turf and then we are going to hear Green Wise on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and we will make a decision. However, you are doing the landscaping, which has been great. We have paid, from January to November, \$772,000 so if you extrapolate that it cost about 1 million in landscaping.
- **Fernando Toledo** – there must be extras if that is the case because that exceeds what the contract is for.
- **Pete Cabrera** – So you are doing the neighborhoods. This contract is for twenty-eight cuts per year which is two per month and two more in rainy season. Do you know if you did all 28 cuts?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Absolutely.
- **Frank Perez** – I know that the extra expense could be something such as fallen tree removal.
- **Pete Cabrera** – Where I got that number is from the landscaping line of the budget.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – Part of your contract does include an arborist. I see that as a bonus that we are getting from your contract.
- **Fernando Toledo** – Yes, there is me and another arborist.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – Are there any other specialized persons other than arborists.
- **Fernando Toledo** – We have a supervisor who sprays and cuts with the crew. He is very knowledgeable about trees.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – Does landscaping get done in relation to the bank of the lakes.
- **Fernando Toledo** – As close as we can get with the weed eater.

## 6. Owner comments on agenda items

- **Neomi Rubalcava – Adagio**
  - I want to bring up the strangler trees. It is a parasite tree and unfortunately, they were allowed to grow. If you cut them, you will cut the actual tree. Also, I was confused with the screen shot about 104 with the palm tree. We need to cut them because it is dangerous or for aesthetics.
  - **Fernando Toledo** – For both, looks and you do not want the leaves getting hit by a car.

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- **Neomi Rubalcava** – the other thing is replenishing.
- **Pete Cabrera** – replenishing will be the last thing we do.
- **Lilian Bernal – Heron**
  - I am glad that we have Turf doing the landscaping. Last year on Christmas Eve, they were out there doing their job. There are a lot of dead trees and dying trees. Right here in front of the school, they are in bad shape. One on the west side south of 88<sup>th</sup> street.
  - **Fernando Toledo** – We did provide a proposal for that. The charge is more for that because they are larger and not included in the contract. We can do some with time, we have taken about 5 or 6 down.
  - **Lilian Bernal** – The trees that are dead are a huge liability. Strangling figs – you need to catch them in time.
  - **Pete Cabrera**– We will drive around and plan on those things.
  - **Lilian Bernal** – Regarding huge mature trees. The root system is uplifted. We can mulch up the roots so that no one can trip.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – That is something we can talk about
  - **Lilian Bernal** – if you cut down trees, please try replacing them with natives.
  - **Frank Perez** – has anyone asked you for a proposal for the cost for mulching?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – I provided a proposal for mulch.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – You provided a proposal for fertilizing and one for hurricane planning. Is that proposal with FirstService Residential?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – It is just rates on a daily rate on equipment. We would drive around and see what is most important so we can dispatch crews accordingly.
  - **Ricardo Rodriguez** – I am not sure if this is asking for too much. Do you keep a record or catalog of the trees that you have trimmed?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – No we do not catalog.
  - **Ricardo Rodriguez**– Is this something that you can provide as an additional service.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – I investigated it, and it was about \$100,000. As we start driving around I think we will be more familiar with the trees.
  - **Fernando Toledo** - We have been trying to attack trees that have been going towards houses of residents. This is something that I would like to do when we drive around.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – I want to ask you questions about the map. This map shows what you do and do not do. On Hammocks Blvd., from 147th to Kendall. You have on here that Beckman Coulter that you do not do any of that.
  - **Fernando Toledo** – Their company cuts their own swale.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – How about where it says Lakes of Kendall on Hammocks Boulevard, as you are going past Beckman Coulter.
  - **Fernando Toledo** – That is Gardens by The Hammocks which we also cut for them.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – you mulch that area?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – Yes, we do.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – Going up Hammocks Blvd. past Killian where the McDonald's is. You do not do any of that?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – We do the swale.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – What is the swale?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – between the sidewalk and the street.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – Do you do the trees there?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – Yes, we do the ones that are in the swale.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – You do not do Hammocks Middle School?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – No.
  - **Pete Cabrera** – So you do the swale all the way down to the park?
  - **Fernando Toledo** – Yes.

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- **Pete Cabrera** – Ok so lets look at the other side where Oliver Hoover Elementary is.
- **Fernando Toledo** – We do the parking lot and we do the swale.
- **Pete Cabrera** – Do you do the trees?
- **Fernando Toledo** – On the back where the racquetball courts are we started cutting it but the county came in and said that they have been doing it for a long time.
- **Pete Cabrera** – moving to 96<sup>th</sup> St. who does across from Felix Varella?
- **Fernando Toledo** – The county does that.
- **Pete Cabrera** – in closing, as far as we are concerned for tree trimming, we will look at it on a daily basis to put a cost to it.
- **Fernando Toledo** – it is very tough to give you a proposal. If we drive around ill be able to give you a better feel of why it is so difficult.
- **Pete Cabrera** – What we would do with that we'll go to say, 104<sup>th</sup>, and tell you what we want and you say this is the price and then we will move forward with that. A couple of things in closing, send me the proposal for the hurricane prep, fertilization, and the mulch.
- **Lilian Bernal** – You can use mulch from the dead trees to mulch.
- **Fernando Toledo** – the issue with the mulch is that we need to know where to mulch.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – So the daily rate is \$1,450?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Yes
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – 4-man crew?
- **Fernando Toledo** – It is a 3-man crew which includes a disposal of the debris.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – So, you did the beach, as well?
- **Fernando Toledo** – Yes, we did those and financed the cost at zero percent interest and bought \$60,000 of equipment from you all which was deducted from the beach price.
- **Pete Cabrera** – We are looking at tree trimming and landscaping with Turf and then on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, we are meeting with Green Wise to discuss their tree trimming proposal to make a recommendation to the receiver.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez** – So the \$1,450 is shade and palm?
- **Fernando Toledo** – whatever we do during that day.
- **Neomi Rubalcava** – public radio wants to increase the canopy of the city and have grants. Does anyone have any idea about grants?
- **Pete Cabrera** – County planted all royal palms. I just sent an email and I'll look into it because I have reached the people that are cutting the trees. I will ask them about that, as well.
- **Neomi Rubalcava** – They match up to a certain amount which may be \$100,000. Fairchild Gardens has a goal of having 1 million orchids planted. Maybe we can ask them to plant some orchids.
- **Lilian Bernal** – with regards to the tree canopy, there is an adopt a tree program provided to homeowners. I do not know if The Hammocks will qualify but it is worth looking into.
- **Ricardo Rodriguez**– we do have a requirement of trees that we should have, and we should encourage homeowners to investigate this.
- **Lilian Bernal** – I would like to get approval to remove all the strangling figs in the community.
- **Anthony Serrone** – If we allow one person to start removing trees, we would have to allow everyone to remove trees.

## 7. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm

**Motioned By: Pete Cabera**

**Seconded By: Frank Perez**

**Motion Carries unanimously.**