

Homestead Farm Landscape and Irrigation Update
June 21, 2011

Landscape & Irrigation Project

Project Objectives:

1. Renew the irrigation system to reduce the cost of repairs every year
2. Reduce water usage and save money with improved control system and new landscaping that requires less water
3. Maintain or improve the esthetics of the neighborhood

Completed to Date:

Phase 1:

- Bluegrass turf was removed from the south side of Fremont and the area along Holly south of Fremont. The south side of Fremont received new shrubs, trees and mulch. The rest of the Phase 1 area was re-seeded with fine fescue grass.
- The new shrubs, trees and mulch have taken very well, with the exception of the corner at Grape and Fremont, where the mulch is sloughing off. This small area will be reworked with ground shrubs and new mulch in the next month or so.
- The new fescue seed was laid in late fall 2010, which did not provide enough time for germination before winter set in. As a result we have a lot of bare dirt spots where the fescue did not germinate. We have reseeded a second time, which should eliminate the bare spots. If not, then a third reseeding will happen.
- This area also has a lot of weeds, which are pretty unsightly right now. Once the fescue grass establishes itself, the weeds will be pulled or killed with chemicals. However, we need to wait for the fescue grass to get stronger. This should happen in a few weeks.
- As part of Phase 1, we also replaced all lateral irrigation pipes under the area described above, along with more efficient spray nozzles. And, new controllers and a weather station were installed to improve control of the entire irrigation system.
- The irrigation control system is still not working as designed, so you may see watering in the rain still and other poor uses of water. We are working with the manufacturer to correct that as soon as possible.

Results:

- We have spent or authorized spending of only about \$2,700 YTD for repair of the irrigation system. This compares to more than \$10,000, on average, in prior years.
- We have reduced water use by about 14% versus last year. This is WITHOUT a fully functional control system, as noted above. We expect that number to be closer to 20% once the control system is operating as

designed. This represents a savings of more than \$5400 per year to the HOA.

- We have a very nice and attractive shrub bed on the south side of Fremont that requires much less care than the previous bluegrass.

Phase 2:

- Phase 2 will be started only if and when Phase 1 is completed. Completion of Phase 1 is defined by a fully operating control system AND green, mostly weed-free grass in the re-seeded areas. This may be as soon as August of this year.
- Phase 2 will be comprised of the following elements:
 - Replace all lateral irrigation pipes under the area described below, along with more efficient spray nozzles. Same as Phase 1.
 - Remove bluegrass turf and re-seed with fine fescue grass in the area along Holly. Same as the area re-seeded on the south side. We've learned a few things about doing a better job of this as a result of Phase 1. The biggest learning is to seed earlier in the fall or spring so the seed germinates and establishes itself quicker.
 - Let the area on the sloped hillside, north of the 'creek' go natural.
 - The reason for this transition is that that hillside uses a high percentage of our water right now, since it literally just runs down the drain. It takes a lot of water to keep bluegrass green and healthy on a steep hillside, and it is prone to dieing in difficult winters like this past one. In fact we had a couple of large patches die this winter, as most have noticed.
 - We know lots of neighbors are concerned with the tall grass, dead grass patches and 'weeds'.
 - Some of the 'weeds' are actually small trees that will be allowed to grow naturally and create more of a wooded area (eg, aspens and maples) Others that are truly weeds will be pulled or killed with chemicals over the next week. That will become a regular part of what the landscape crew will do. Other than that, this area will not be watered or mowed going forward.
 - The transition from manicured bluegrass lawn to 'natural area' might be difficult for a while because of what everyone is used to seeing there. However, the end result will be similar to what that area looks like at the east end right now, which was allowed to 'go natural' many years ago. It has all the tall vegetation and trees that the rest of the area will eventually have.
 - The bluegrass between the creek and the sidewalk will stay as is.
- On a related note, the dead patches of grass on the hillside north of the creek will either be mulched and shrubbed as an extension of the existing shrub beds or re-seeded with bluegrass seed. This will happen within the next couple of weeks.