

Frequently Asked Questions from January Budget Approval Mailing

Q: Why are we spending so much to replace the monuments at the front entrance, rather than just repair the existing structures?

A: The existing monuments are built around a wooden frame that has deteriorated to the point that the structures are no longer sound. The cost of repairing the monuments with a solid stone infrastructure would match the cost of new monuments. We do intend to retain the carved stone tablets, with the subdivision name, for use in the new design.

Q: Why will it cost so much to re-do the front entrance?

A: The original entrance design did not incorporate electric to both sides of the entrance (the West light, it was discovered, was being powered by the home directly behind it. It was discovered during the last light replacement). Conduit will need to be placed under the road to carry electric to both sides. At the same time, irrigation lines will be installed to both East and West sides of the entrance, as well as, the center island. This will allow for more choices when it comes to landscaping. At the present we are restricted to more hearty vegetation due to the lack of water (these plants also cost more). An initial estimate, by the Board, of the electrical, water, and construction costs dictate that we budget somewhere between \$20,000-25,000.

Q: Why is lawn service so expensive?

A: The Board accepts bids annually for the landscaping and mowing of the common ground. The bids generally are for the same amount. The Board does not receive a large number of bids as we do not have a very large area to maintain and many landscapers are not interested in the small job. Rising fuel costs over the past several years have contributed to costs. We have instituted a policy with the current landscaper to only mow when needed, not necessarily on a weekly basis.

Q: Why are legal fees so high?

A: Due to the number of liens that we have filed for homeowners who refuse to adhere to the HOA Covenants, legal costs have remained higher than normal. Before filing a lien due process is required, which is expensive. We have managed to recoup our legal fees and the liens collected are providing the funds to allow re-construction of the front entrance.

Q: How do we have street lights repaired?

A: Ameren UE owns the street lights in the subdivision. The HOA is only responsible for the electricity costs to operate them. If you have a light out, please contact Ameren, with the pole number (a plate is attached to each light pole) and report the light as not functioning. Ameren will dispatch a crew to repair the light.

Q: Do we need to lower our HOA Dues since we have so much excess cash to spend on a front entrance?

A: The Subdivision actually operates at a budget deficit each year. The dues, which have never been raised, are not sufficient to cover normal operating costs. However, because of the numerous fines and liens collected from non-compliant Home Owners over the past few years, there are sufficient funds available to make the necessary repairs to the front entrance and cover the operating expenses. Without those fines and liens, the Board would have no choice but to raise the annual dues.

Q: Why doesn't the Board spend the excess funds on street and light repairs?

A: The streets are public roads and are maintained by the City of Dardenne Prairie through a contract with St. Charles County. The street lights are the property of Ameren UE. If you believe the streets are in need of repair, please contact Dardenne Prairie City Hall at 636-561-1718. As stated above, for street light repair, please contact Ameren UE at 800-552-7583.

Q: Why do we want to put a fountain in the pond? That seems like a waste of money.

A: The pond requires that the water circulate or it becomes stagnant. The pond originally had a fountain, but damage by animals necessitated its removal. In order to install the fountain correctly, a special braided electrical cable must be run to the center of the pond.

Q: Why can't we use the funds to construct a sound barrier between the new Page Extension and the subdivision?

A: The cost to construct a sound wall for the entire length of the subdivision border with the highway is cost prohibitive (think hundreds of thousands of dollars). The state has easement rights along the highway which would mean constructing the barrier on resident's property. Once the highway is completed, residents can request a noise study be conducted by the Department of Transportation. If noise levels exceed Federal mandates, a wall will be conducted at no cost to residents or the subdivision.