



Early Summer 2011

SOMERSET NEWS

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Somerset Property Owners Association

Ames, Iowa Est. 1997 www.somersetames.com

A Note from the President

It is not without some trepidation that I assume the role of SPOA President from Bruce Bonestroo. His leadership over the past 3 years as SPOA president, and prior to that as a member of the Board, has been instrumental in helping our association mature and become a well-functioning entity. He led the effort to achieve a stronger grasp on association finances and started some long-range planning activities. I would like to build on that foundation and continue to build a reserve fund for the SPOA in anticipation of large maintenance costs, such as trail and park upkeep, in the coming years. In addition, the SPOA will continue to maintain and make efforts to improve the overall appearance of Somerset to make it appealing to residents and visitors alike. Anybody with ideas or suggestions regarding how to make Somerset a better place to live can contact me at johnstafford@mchsi.com or at 515-708-1296.

New Landscape Service Provider

This season the SPOA has contracted Ames based Property Service Agency (PSA) to mow and maintain the common areas of Somerset. PSA provided a very attractive price for its services. This will enable the SPOA to invest more in the maintenance of flowerbeds and trees throughout the neighborhood and its parks. Please contact John Stafford johnstafford@mchsi.com with any comments, compliments, or complaints relating to mowing services. He will address any issues with PSA to ensure that the property is maintained in the best way possible.

www.somersetames.com includes:

Maps, Covenants, Meeting Dates, Member Directory, Newsletters, Volunteer Opportunities, Meeting Minutes, Social Events, Fence Guidelines, Grounds Care, more.

The website has been designed to allow for groups and associations to be able to add data and information. If you have a group, business or club that would be interested in using the website, please contact us...go to the website and its contact list.

Annual Meeting Held March 8

The Somerset Property Owners Association's annual meeting was held Tuesday, March 8. Two new Board members were elected to replace retiring president Bruce Bonestroo and board member Mark Knuth. They are Rosemary Bulman and Tom Carey, each of whom has signed on for a three year term. The Board thanks Bruce and Mark for their service and careful guidance of the association's business and its growth.

Marc Peterson, treasurer, reviewed the budget, which was accepted. An increase in dues for 2012 was voted on and passed unanimously. The increase will allow the association to accrue some reserves for emergencies and major repairs.

The slate of officers was announced and adopted by a vote of acclamation. They are: John Stafford, president; Nick Lauter, vice-president; Louise O'Donnell, secretary; and Marc Peterson, treasurer.

See the full meeting minutes as well as other monthly minutes at www.somersetames.com.

Sidewalks Are For Everybody

As the weather warms up, outdoor activities naturally increase. Kids are out riding bikes, landscape and gardening projects get underway, and life gets busier in general. While enjoying the outdoors and nice spring and summer weather, please be mindful that the sidewalks and paths in Somerset are heavily used by our residents and visitors. This includes those with visual and physical disabilities that may make it difficult for them to navigate walks strewn with garden hoses, children's toys, and various and sundry items. Please encourage kids and adults alike to make the walks safe and hospitable to all.

Remember, Katie Swalla handles the SPOA's paperwork and answers our phone as well as interfacing with you, the residents. Katie's phone number is 292-0183 or email manager@somersetclubhouse.com

Please note: If you notice a street light that is not functioning, please call City Public Works, 239-5500.

*Somerset Clubhouse
2400 Aspen
Ames, Iowa 50010*

Go to www.somersetames.com for complete meeting minutes and updates.

The Trees in Front of Your House

Every realtor and property owner knows that trees add value. They provide cooling shade and have a dramatic impact on drive-up appeal. In Ames, tree lined streets are a valuable asset in many neighborhoods. Although the trees that line the streets of Somerset are still relatively young and small, it is easy to imagine the graceful tree limbs shading our streets in the coming years.

Trees are an investment that pays great dividends, but only if the trees are well cared for and properly maintained. It doesn't take a lot of time, energy, or money to keep a tree growing and thriving, but if every property owner in Somerset were to make that small investment the entire neighborhood would benefit. Please make the investment in your property and your neighborhood by taking the following basic steps.

1. Maintain mulch around the base of the tree, but not piled up like a volcano against the trunk.
2. Try to avoid damaging the tree trunk with lawn mowers and string trimmers (the mulch helps with this).
3. Water young trees – and all trees in times of drought – to help them avoid environmental stress.
4. Prune branches that are less than 8 feet above sidewalks and 10 feet above the street.

The SPOA partners with you, the homeowner, to make the vision of tree lined streets throughout Somerset become a reality. If each property owner will protect our investment by taking the small and simple steps outlined above, we can all enjoy the benefits of the tremendous value trees provide to our community.

New Park on West Side

A group of neighbors is working on adding playground equipment to the new recreational area on the west side of Somerset between Kingston and Clayton. A block party to discuss the effort will be held at the new park on Sunday June 5 from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own meat to grill, a side to share, and drinks. Tables, chairs, and games are provided.

School District Plans

At this time, the Ames School District is considering creating a sports complex/field on their triangular property bordered by 24th Street and Somerset Drive. This vacant field's drainage was a problem last year during the heavy rains. At this time the District is building a berm to assist proper drainage. The future of the property will be decided in the near future.

Summer Landscape Work

The Board has voted to begin clearing out the arbor vitae which are now growing on the "Commercial Crescent", the slice of land on Stange dividing the street north of Northridge Parkway. The plan is to convert the area to lawn. Watch for the changes!

Under the supervision of Board member Nick Lauter, the park and trail trees will be mulched this summer and the Board has allotted \$1500 for new plantings.



American Side Street, Winter (Camden Drive)