

# Draft Greenhouse Committee Update for the HOA Board

June 4, 2021

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The Greenhouse Committee began work in April of last year, with a focus on cleaning up the area around the building and implementing the first phase of a landscaping plan. The initial Committee budget included funds for mulch, top soil, grass seed, new plantings, and compost.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen financial demands on the HOA, the Committee's budget was suspended just as we were getting started with Phase 1 of the plan. In spite of this, we were able to make progress in several areas, due primarily to the efforts of several community members.

**Mulching** – In lieu of mulch, the Committee arranged for wood chips to be donated from construction sites around the development, most of which came from Dan Grammatico. With the assistance of Matt Kern, Committee members laid cardboard and spread the wood chips in an area around the Greenhouse and on the bank on the eastern side of the building. Wood chips were also spread on the new path that Matt cut leading from the fire pit down to Musgrave Creek, once again with the assistance of other community volunteers. This effort significantly reduced the amount of weeding that has to be done on the grounds around the building.

**Top Soil & Grass Seed** – During the second half of 2020, Matt Kern delivered excess top soil from one of his building sites to the Greenhouse. He then spread this soil in designated areas on the grounds, according to our original plan, and seeded it.

**New Plantings** – Before the 2020 budget was suspended, Committee members were able to acquire a small number of plants from local nurseries, and these were planted in targeted areas on the Eastern hillside. Additional plants were either donated by community members or transplanted by Committee members from their own or others' gardens. New plantings included blueberries, coneflowers, black-eyed Susan, milkweed, Joe Pye weed, various asters, anise hyssop, various sedums, coreopsis, bellflower, brown-eyed Susan, native grasses, and three service berries. Most of these can also be seen on the Eastern hillside. A few patches of mixed wildflower seed have been sewn around the grounds.

**Compost** – No compost has been added to the areas targeted for plantings under Phase 1 due to budget constraints.

**Raised Beds** – Last year the raised beds were allocated to community members on a first come, first served basis. This year, upon recommendations from some community members, we decided to try shared community vegetable beds. They have been planted with tomato plants and several other various vegetables from seed. The herb

beds are doing great and have been thinned with excess transplanted to the hill to expand our pollinator plantings even more.

**Foot Paths / Nature Walks** – In addition to the path that Matt cut through to the creek, another foot path (dubbed the "Fairy Trail" by kids) was completed in a full circle over the winter with the manual removal of multiflora rose and the spreading of donated woodchips. It is now accessible to the south of the greenhouse and loops back up along the creek. Small side trails to the retention pond area from below and above increase access to that space as well. Thanks to the Hoers and Galvins for this.

**Rhododendrons** – In Phase 1 of the original landscaping plan, we were going to move some of the 22 young rhododendrons growing on the hillside between the barbecue pit and the creek. Most of these are not visible from the Greenhouse, and the plan was to move some of them to the top edge of the hill. While the invasive plants that are growing along the edge of the hill have been cut back, we have no immediate plans to move any of the rhodos.

## **PRIORITIES FOR 2021**

In the absence of funding, our plan for 2021 is to make the most of what we have. This includes adding new plantings that may become available from community members who are dividing mature plants in their gardens, or selectively transplanting native plants such as ferns, milkweed, and others from other areas of the Greenhouse grounds or farther afield in the development.

Staying on top of weeding (including trail maintenance) is an ongoing priority for Committee members and other volunteers.

In conjunction with the Social Committee, we will explore pricing on moveable shading options to improve use of the area in hot sun and light rain. Until a roof can be added over the greenhouse, the suggestion has been to install posts with removable shades/tarps during social events.

We would also like to mention that the general area has not been mowed as expected by the HOA's landscaping contractor. The Hoers and Galvins have each been weed-eating some, but it needs a mower along the lower road, and at some point the new grass will need mowing/maintenance.