

## **Common Area Planning Committee - Overview Report**

The Common Area Planning Committee began in spring of 2007 as an effort by a very small group of interested homeowners working to understand our land's nature and how this might affect our management of it. We read books from the library, explored internet web sites, and visited the Allen County drainage and stormwater engineering offices. We developed a survey for inclusion with the 2008 dues notice, to gauge the concerns of homeowners; survey results were tabulated in spring 2008. We culled information from the KDCA Board of Directors meeting minutes as far back as available. All these efforts led to the development of the following vision and mission statements for the committee.

### **Vision Statement for Kensington Downs Grounds**

Our commons grounds are a series of areas which simultaneously control and store storm water; provide a backdrop for homeowner's personal gardens, as well as pleasant views to those passing through the area; buffer our houses against wind; augment our play space; and help us connect to each other and to the adjacent communities.

### **Mission Statement for Common Area Planning Committee**

The committee will assist the elected Board of Directors with the following:

1. Promoting co-operation between homeowners on mutually beneficial projects.
2. Ensuring the accessibility of all commons for the enjoyment of all homeowners.
3. Educating homeowners about management strategies, and our individual and collective responsibilities.
4. Gathering information from government agencies, private non-profit, educational organizations, and commercial vendors.
5. Executing homeowner-approved projects to improve the common areas.
6. Maintaining a safe environment.

Two articles were published in the neighborhood newsletter (October 2007 and July 2008), with information believed helpful to homeowners for the management of their own lots. In the same vein, a list of library books for recommended reading was also developed and will be posted on the KDCA web site.

We numbered each zone of the common areas (there are eight) and assigned each a working name. (See attached map.) We noted distinctive features or functions of each zone and any problems which have been raised by homeowners adjacent to that zone. Some problems are common to all lots and zones, such as compacted soil left by building equipment; and some are shared by a few lots, such as standing water after a heavy rain or with the spring thaw.

In the spring of 2008, we identified several pine trees along Welshire Blvd. which were later removed because their growth was stunted by the underlying soil type. Also, they were crowding the canopies of the adjacent deciduous trees which were doing well. At the same time, we made suggestions for improving the appearance of our entrance on

Maysville Road (Zone 1) without spending large amounts of budgeted funds. Several diseased shrubs and a crowded tree were removed, and we suggested the planting of perennials for color. A question was raised at the 2008 Annual Meeting concerning the total number of trees at the entrance. To answer that question, committee chairperson Jackie Chen went to the entrance and counted 95 trees remaining along Maysville and Welshire. About 60% of these trees are struggling pines; others are deciduous species.

During the summer of 2008, with the Board of Directors' approval, a survey of the pond common area was completed to establish the distance between homeowners' property and the water's edge, and the width of the pond's access easements. The survey revealed that there are two points of general access to the detention pond: (1) a path, 7 to 14 feet wide, branching off the common area behind KD Villa lots 72-74 and running between the end of Greymoor Drive and the cider mill on Maysville Road, and (2) a ten-foot wide strip of land between lots 222 and 223 at the end of Scarlet Court. In addition, a study of the plat maps confirmed the presence of access easements between lots 11 & 12 and lots 91 & 92 on Welshire Blvd. leading to Bullerman Terrace (Zone 2), and between lots 98 & 99 on Kerrigan's Way leading to the north end of Greythorn Drive in Kensington Downs East. These easements are not readily visible because the developer never installed sidewalks.

In the fall of 2008, we met with the six homeowners who live around common Zone 3 (Willow Bottom) to begin the process of addressing standing water issues which have long been present in this area. We received many helpful comments from these homeowners. During 2009, only one project was undertaken. We worked with Fort Wayne City Utilities on their city-wide storm drain marking efforts. Volunteer labor was recruited from the KD neighborhood, and City Utilities provided instruction and all the materials for this project.

We hope to develop "a master plan" for all the common areas, which reflects homeowner input plus the committee's research. Three master plan goals have surfaced to this point.

1. The plan should foster better control of storm water movement, in addition to promoting the water infiltration into the ground for better overall landscape health.
2. Our land management protocols should produce net gains for our association rather than strictly consume association funds.
3. We should seek partnership with organizations willing to share the costs of implementing our plan, especially at points where their interests intersect with ours.

We will continue to seek homeowner input for ideas related to accomplishing these goals and for project suggestions which apply to any or all of the eight common area zones we have identified. However, at this point, the committee does not have an efficient method for collecting this information and we are open to suggestions for how this might be done.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jackie Chen  
Common Area Planning Committee  
(report filed - November 12, 2009)

[illegible]**Zone 1 continued**

## Bullerian Creek

## Zone 5 - Oxford Green

## Zone 6 - Derby Grove

## Zone 7 - Villa Path

## Zone 8 - Kensington Pond