

September 29, 2014

MEMORANDUM TO : Mark Heshfield  
President  
Canal Run Homeowners Association, Inc.

FROM : Bev Russo  
Chair, Street Light Move Task Force

SUBJECT : Report on proposal to move street lights

### **BACKGROUND**

At the February 17, 2014 meeting of the Canal Run Homeowner's Association (HOA), the Board of Directors voted to establish a task force<sup>1</sup> to take a look at the feasibility and cost of moving a small number of streetlights from the newer section<sup>2</sup> to the original section<sup>3</sup> of the community. Specifically, the task force was asked to designate the specific lights to be moved and their new locations, after determining which lights were not necessary because of the coverage from existing lights. The task force was also asked to give an estimate concerning the total cost of moving the lights.

The original section of the community was not designed to have electric street lights and was instead given gas fired lights for each property, many of which were subsequently removed because of the high cost of maintenance. Subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> The Chair of the Task Force was Board Member Bev Russo and other members of the task force included Bill Ogden, Kevin Cole, and Sean Ivusic. Fellow Board Members Mark Hershfield and Tom Wellock assisted with the preparation of this report.

<sup>2</sup> The newer section is defined as the single family homes located on the left hand side of Lockhouse Dr. as an individual enters the community through the entrance on Point of Rocks Road (Rt. 464).

<sup>3</sup> The original section is defined primarily as the homes built in the late 1990s, but also includes newer homes on Ferry Hill Ct., Canal Run Dr., and Brookshire Run Dr. Therefore for the purposes of this report, original section includes Ferry Hill Ct., Brookshire Run Dr., the unlit part of Canal Run Dr., and Misty Hollow Rd.

sections, however, were designed to have electric street lights. The costs of maintaining the street lights will account for over ten (10) percent of the total budget of the HOA when all of the new lights are installed. All individuals in the community pay for the cost of the street lights. Many view street lights as items that increase home values and provide added safety to the community.

The community was asked to weigh in on whether the Board should look into moving street lights as part of the ballot questions at the 2013 September Annual Meeting.<sup>4</sup> The “annual meeting survey” was meant to gauge the interest of the community in pursuing a street light move. No estimated cost data was included with the proposal. Seventy-four (74) percent of the community responded that they wished for the Board to “seriously consider” this option.

Based on the number of transformers located in the original section and the fact that placing street lights in the immediate vicinity of a transformer is the least expensive option, the task force looked into moving nine (9) street lights. The recommendations below are based on an analysis of the light generated by all sixty-eight (68) newly installed lights as well as an analysis of the location of the transformers in the original section.

## **WHICH LIGHTS SHOULD BE MOVED FROM THE NEW SECTION?**

The task force spent a significant amount of time discussing which street lights should be moved from their current locations. The task force focused on the amount of lighting in the areas and had to wait until the vast majority of the street lights were put in service to move forward with recommendations. Since as of the date of the issuance of this report, not all of the new lights are in place, the task force relied on both visual observations and the official map for where the lights will eventually be located in making its recommendations.

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<sup>4</sup> The specific question read “In the near future, the Canal Run developer will be installing street lights in the newest sections of the community. Areas of the original section were never designed by the developer to have electric street lights and are currently without them. This creates a difficult situation for the HOA as a whole. According to a local expert, the number of street lights going in the newest section is excessive. It is possible, once the new street lights are installed to have experts analyze the place of the new lights and transfer the excessive lights to the unlit sections. This would require the use of reserve funds in order to place proper wiring to move the light poles. Are you open to the HOA seriously considering this option?”

Essentially, the task force members made personal selections of which nine lights were to be moved (in order of preference) and, after conferring with each other, determined the top nine to move. The analysis was a subjective one and the preferred method due to the timeframe for producing the report.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to evaluating where the lights were needed, task force members took into consideration other criteria. For example, some members believed corners are the most important place for lights because corners provide access for people, pets, and bike crossings, all while avoiding vehicle traffic. As with any guiding rule, however, there were exceptions made when there were two lights very close together across a narrow road. Below are the nine lights selected by the committee to be moved to the original section.<sup>6</sup>

- (1) 4005 Violets Lock Ct. – Street lights currently exist on both sides of the entrance to this circle. What makes this particular light even less necessary is the fact that there is a third light located directly across the street from it.
- (2) 1720 Fletcher Dr. – This small island on Fletchers Dr. appears to have too many lights around it. There is another light on the other side of the tiny court as well as a light directly across the street from this one.
- (3) 1637 Fletchers Way – The entrance from Fletchers Dr. to Fletchers Way is one of the most illuminated areas with four lights very close to each other. Due to the existence of two lights on the corner, the task force recommends removing the first light in on Fletchers Way.
- (4) 1736 Fletchers Dr. – Oddly two street lights were constructed on one island entrance (there is one on the other island entrance). Due to the existence of

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<sup>5</sup> If a thorough analysis were conducted, it would include luminescence values for each light and a plot of luminescence radii for each street light. Intersecting radii would then be the determining factor for which street lights to move. Such an analysis, however, would have been costly and the task force was not given a budget to perform its duties.

<sup>6</sup> During the street light review process, multiple task force members also took a look at the lights that have existed in the community for years and noted that several were not needed. Since the task force review was strictly limited to the sixty-eight new lights based on the annual survey question and the motion establishing the task force, those lights are not included in this list. The task force recommends that a future Board conduct an analysis of those lights to determine if any can be eliminated when the ten year service agreement expires on those lights on October 29, 2017.

light just past the island, the task force recommends that the second light on the island be removed.

- (5) 1801 Rileys Court South – The task force focused on this court because it had three lights at the end vs. the three other similarly sized courts had (such as Rileys Court North). This light was selected, because it is not currently in and the court is sufficiently illuminated.
- (6) 4003 Paw Paw Circle – No two lights are located closer than the two lights at the end of Paw Paw Circle. Because of their close proximity only one light is needed to light the bottom of the court. The task force selected the light located further from the nearest light for removal.
- (7) 1612 Fletchers Way – The corner of Fletchers Way and Conrads Ferry is currently illuminated by one light with another close by. The task force considered the current lighting to be sufficient and therefore recommended the removal of the light that has not been installed.
- (8) 4005 Lock Tender Court – The task force considered lights at other courts, but noticed that this court had four lights while similarly sized courts (such as Rileys Ct. North and Pennyfields) only had three lights. The task force recommends removing the additional light to make it match the other similarly sized courts.
- (9) 1618 Fletchers Way – The task force noted the cluster of five lights at the top of Paw Paw Circle. Due to the symmetry at the entrances, the task force decided to move the light that was not needed to illuminate the entrance to the court.

As mentioned above, the task force looked at many options of lights to remove.<sup>7</sup> The task force met to determine the exact nine lights to move. All the decisions listed above were unanimous.

## **WHERE WOULD THE LIGHTS BE LOCATED IN THE ORIGINAL SECTION?**

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<sup>7</sup> Specifically individual members considered moving lights at the following additional locations: 1721/1723 Fletchers Dr., 1715 Fletchers Dr., 1717 Fletchers Dr., 1616 Fletchers Way, 1813 Rileys Ct North, 4002 Paw Paw Circle, 4001, 4000 Violets Lock Ct., 1703 Fletchers Dr., 1705 Fletchers Dr., 4003/4005 Pennyfields Court, and 4000/4002 Lock Tender Ct.

The task force was extremely limited in where lights could be located in the original section due to cost concerns. The most inexpensive placement of the lights meant putting the lights directly in front of the existing transformers as such locations would require the least disruption of the existing area and require the least amount of wiring. Therefore, the proposal is for the nine (9) transferred lights to be placed directly in front of the existing transformers. The company retained to put in these lights will fully restore the area leading to and from the transformer.

The task force located nine (9) transformers in the original section, which are identified by a large green box. There is one transformer on Misty Hollow Rd., one on Brookshire Run Dr, two on Ferry Hill Court and five on Canal Run Dr. Task force members measured the distance between the transformer and the sidewalk to assist in the cost estimates in the next section.<sup>8</sup>

## **WHAT WOULD THE COST BE FOR MOVING THE STREET LIGHTS**

The expense of moving street lights is essentially divided into two components, the conduit/trenching work and all the additional work. A Potomac Edison representative was contacted for a price estimate for the move along with an individual with Brandenburg Electric Co.<sup>9</sup> The estimates included two options, one is to place the street lights on the grass next to the sidewalk and the other for to place the lights on the median across from the sidewalk.

The Potomac Edison representative indicated the cost of their end of the work would be approximately \$5,500 if the street lights were placed short of the sidewalk and an identical \$5,500 if they were placed on the other side of the sidewalk. This cost includes labor to remove and reinstall, as well as new wire. The representative noted that Potomac Edison still owns the equipment per the original agreement, so the HOA would not be permitted to move the lights on its own.

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<sup>8</sup> The measurements were as follows for the potential lights: (1) 3805/3807 Misty Hollow Rd. - 14'10, 2) 1725/127 Canal Run Dr. - 5'6, 3) 4305/4307 Ferry Hill Ct - 6'0, 4) 4308 Ferry Hill Ct - 6'7, 5) 1722/1724 Canal Run Dr. - 5'2, 6) 1730/1732 Canal Run Dr. - 8'1, 7) 1749/1751 Canal Run Dr. - 4'0, 8) 1760 Brookshire Run - 4'5, and 9) 1746/1748 Canal Run Dr. - 3'4

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Magaha is an employee of Brandenburg Electric. There would likely be other companies involved in bidding for the job. His company was used because of the ease in obtaining an estimate.

The representative for Brandenburg Electric indicated that the cost of their end of the work would be approximately \$5,500 if the street lights were placed short of the sidewalk and \$8,100 if they were placed on the other side of the sidewalk. The cost involves providing the conduits, pull ropes, and raking and seeding the area where the conduits were installed to ensure it is restored to original condition.

The total cost of the project would therefore be approximately \$11,000 if the street lights were placed short of the sidewalk and \$13,600 if they were placed on the other side of the sidewalk.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The task force recommends that the Board vote on a proposal to move nine (9) street lights to the original section, because the community has expressed an interest in pursuing this and the lights that are recommended to be moved will have a negligible impact on the lighting in that section. The vote, however, should not take place until the remaining street lights are installed, as the plan cannot be implemented until the original work order is complete.

The task force has no recommendation as to whether the lights should be placed on one side or the other of the sidewalk as that is a cost specific question that the Board would be in the best position to gauge whether it is consistent with the finances of the community. The task force also recognizes that the designation of lights to be relocated could be changed by the Board considering this issue, which is why additional possibilities were explored.