

## THE VALUE OF GOOD LANDSCAPING

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Have you ever taken a look at the landscaping line item on the budget adopted by the board annually? I mean really taken a look and do you agree that it has been worth the expense and will be worth it for your property values as a whole? Common area maintenance or lack of maintenance affects every home in a community. In fulfilling their fiduciary duty to the Nevada Corporation, directors have the duty to adequately care and make decisions that are in the best interest of the corporation when looking at the maintenance in a community.

The line item in the budget for landscaping is normally a robust part of the budget in Nevada, but the practical purposes that accomplished by good landscaping makes it money that is well spent. Water, especially during a drought, can really help the board in making decisions wisely while still doing the right thing to protect property values.

Landscaping is a long term investment in the community that rewards individual homeowners as well as the association. It can provide visual interest, especially when architectural elements like arbors, gazebos and fences are incorporated. I would love to see an appraisal of a property before and after some major restorations were made. To my knowledge none have been done. Let me know if you know otherwise, please.

The proper installation of landscaping can help direct common-area traffic at times. For example, shrubs planted in strategic locations will help to funnel any pedestrians toward an exit.

Landscaping should help to provide color as well. Flowering trees add color in spring while purple plum trees, evergreens and other colorful varieties provide color throughout the year.

Landscaping can help to stabilize awkward topography. A terraced slope planted with ground cover or small shrubs has a dramatic effect without minimal maintenance issues and helps with erosion control.

Normally, shrubs and trees help to screen unsightly boxes, trash areas or some similar and unfortunate views. They also make really good, while effective, sound barriers and privacy screens.

Developers plant the initial landscaping to look really good to sell homes. Over time, however, the shrubs and trees were really planted too close and need to be thinned to help eliminate root damage and the choking of many plants simply because there is lack of room for growth. After a few years, the board would be wise to consult with an arborist to look at the location and conditional of the common area to make wise decisions. Make sure that when considering the budget for the upcoming year the you have quotes and built in funds to be able to do so.

Do you like the cheery sound of birds in the morning or like to watch the baby quail run around the community? Landscaping creates new habitats for other animals. Some parts of the ground can be untended natural areas where small shrubs and saplings grow, creating habitats for birds, chipmunks and other small animals.

If you feel that landscaping has taken a back stage to other issues in your community why don't you try to step up and volunteer to sit on or chair a landscaping committee that would help the board dramatically when trying to make decisions regarding the property.

Now go out and enjoy the common area and really think about your own property as you are doing so. At times your own landscaping should be refreshed to help maintain and increase your individual property values, which can positively or negatively affect your neighbors as well.