



ELITE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES, INC.

NOTE FROM YOUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

September 1, 2024

As we send out our nomination forms for yet another annual meeting, it is a perfect time to put some thoughts out to everyone in the community. It is hard to believe that we have been managing Reflections for over a decade. Over these years, many positive strides have and continue to be made. We continue to focus on not only year-to-year operations, but also further developing the Association's long term strategic plan that focuses on capital spending. We work with the board to keep priorities in line and things moving forward.

Here is a quick summary of some of our strategic planning items:

Insurance Premiums Drastically Increase

- This has been the story of 2024. The HOA was dropped from their insurance carrier and placed in the non-standard market. This increased annual insurance costs by close to \$600K. The increase was handled through reserves in 2024.
- We were able to achieve a \$150K reduction in annual costs but insurance premiums will remain 4x our 2024 budget projection heading into 2025. We are working on the 2025 budget where insurance premiums will likely be split between reserves and operating. Please keep an eye out for the budget mailing later this year.
- This situation has caused closer consideration for each scheduled project. In 2024, we delayed asphalt maintenance and concrete replacement/repair. Our budget meeting will dictate what projects we can tackle in 2025.

Operating Fund Items

- Develop multi-year landscape restoration plan focused on areas of poor drainage and boundary areas. Each year this has received a \$10-20K investment.
- Continue mulching of common areas. We are currently completing focal points every year (estimate cost of \$5K) and all common areas every other year (estimated cost of \$20K).
- Continue with turf restoration on a prioritized basis. Each year this has received a \$10-20K investment.
- Continuation of long-term vendor relationships in order to keep costs controlled during periods of high inflation. This includes items like landscaping, alarm monitoring, and building maintenance.

Reserve Fund Items

- Finished all retaining walls on the property over a 6-year period. All wood walls were replaced with block walls that were engineered for proper drainage. These walls should provide superior longevity in comparison to the wood walls.
- Start completing concrete and asphalt repairs/replacement on a prioritized basis. We expect a driveway replacement program to begin in the next few years. Concrete will be replaced on a case-by-case basis. The Association is currently considering 8-10 locations.
- Siding replacement continues this year. At the conclusion of 2024, we had 29 of 49 buildings completed. The future schedule is to be determined.



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Summary of Completed and Ongoing Strategic Items

- Mailbox replacements and focal point landscaping (2011-2012)
- All exterior light fixtures replaced (2015-2016)
- All roofs, gutters, and downspouts replaced (2011-2017)
- All exterior painting and needed wood replacement (2015-2019)
- Pond restoration and new fountain (various stages from 2012-2018)
- Pond slope restoration (2021-Current)
- Retaining wall replacements (2016-2023)
- Drainage repairs (2013-Current)
- Concrete replacement (2016-Current)
- Face brick repair / replacement (2011-Current)
- Siding and wood trim replacement (2022-Current)
- Painting and wood replacement after siding work (2022-Current)
- Tree pruning cycle and removals/replacements (Annual)
- Plant health care program for mature trees (Annual)

Owners continue to face their own expenses including deck staining and restoration, concrete patio replacement, window and door replacement, and landscaping costs around the units. *As a reminder, all exterior work requires a modification form be completed and board approved prior to the project starting. This helps ensure a level of uniformity is achieved throughout the property.*

With specific regard to landscaping, the Association will remove dead plants in your planting beds, but will not provide plant replacements, dirt, and mulch. The planting beds can be easily improved with a small investment from the homeowners. There are drought tolerant perennials and shrubs that are available for low costs at the big box stores such as Home Depot, Menards, and Lowes. Additionally, most areas can be mulched inexpensively by purchasing a few bags of mulch or having a contractor install mulch. Mulch should be brown in color to match the mulch installed by the Association in the common areas. The fall is an ideal time to plant shrubs and perennials. Finally, you can email us to request “no touch” flags from the landscaping company if you do not want them working in your beds. Fall clean-ups take place from October through November and plants without winter value are cut back during this time.

Each year, the Association invests considerable money into the turf. Our soil is low in certain nutrients, so we have worked with Hartman on additional fertilizations as well as fall core aeration. On this note, we ask all owners to repair any pet damage around their units. We also ask owners to repair areas where they have driven off the driveways and damaged the turf. The Association retains the right to repair and charge back any blatant damage to turf areas.

We appreciate owners and tenants continuing to take pride in the property. As one can see above, we all have our list of responsibilities. All these aspects are important to property values and the overall long-term health of the community. There are still too many violations for pet issues and garbage cans left out. Owners and tenants should read through the rules to make sure all are complying at all times. The rules are a simple read and are located on the Association’s website at www.reflectionsathiddenlake.com. We also send out newsletters (plus this management update) each year that provide helpful reminders to



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prevent unnecessary violations. Last item, please do not speed in the community. It is dangerous and we have walkers and small children. Safety is always most important!

Please make your best efforts to take pride in the community and your individual ownership at Reflections at Hidden Lake. We are making our best efforts to help make the community a great place to be, but we need all owners and tenants to contribute and play a part. What this means is that you should be courteous to your neighbors by keeping the outside of your unit free of clutter, leashing and picking up after your pets, helping beautify your landscaped areas around your foundation, and generally be a good neighbor.

Final note, the most efficient way to communicate with your manager is via email or through our website at www.elitemgt.net. This allows us to fully understand your issue(s). Owners typically attach pictures along with their explanations. We can then submit this information directly to the appropriate contractor.

Please check out the attached Elite Management update regarding some upcoming technology advancements and payment processing changes.

Elite Management Associates, Inc.

Other HOA Notes:

Facebook Page and Community Events

Association Board member Annie DeVries has created a Facebook Page for the community. For those interested in joining, please click the link below:

[Join the RHL Community Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/reflectionsathiddenlake)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/reflectionsathiddenlake>

Contact Information

Is your contact information on file with the management company current? Are you receiving email communications from the property manager? If not, please send a quick email to bkovel@elitemgt.net with the updated info. Additionally, if you are renting your unit, please ask your tenants to submit their email address and we can add them to the distribution list.

News and Updates from the City of Darien

Be sure to continue to visit the City's website for regular updates at www.darien.il.us. They provide press releases and regular updates on all city projects. Also, Darien Direct Connect is the city's newsletter. You can sign up directly on the website.