

CAPISTRANO BAY DISTRICT
AGENDA REPORT
April 24, 2012

Managers Reports

ITEM J.2

Community Entry Area Maintenance Report

MAINTENANCE of LANDSCAPING

Many of our plant varieties are performing poorly and it is due to a variety of factors that appear to be a combination of the following:

1. Too much/too little watering – both can result in that yellowish dead look – the soil looks dry but if you scrape the top layer it's mostly damp below – this is the nature of clay soil – there is disagreement with Bemus that things are being underwatered but they have spread around a layer of mulch to help with moisture retention in the soil just to be sure – this also has a pleasant appearance.
2. Sprinkler timing – should always be set to run the shortest time possible but still keep things alive and green – could be a possible cause of that yellowish dead look.
3. Sprinkler head locations – a large leafy plant can block the spray to other nearby plants or the original layout in some areas is just inadequate to begin with – this MUST be evaluated and corrections made.
4. Wrong varieties for our climate and proximity to the salt air and wind – many of our tropical plants will never do well in our location – there is disagreement on replacement choices - this is complicated by the desire to maintain that 'tropical' theme. In the new parking lot area, the hibiscus looks a bit yellowish on the side facing Beach Rd. but if you step through to the back side you are treated with a beautiful lush green wall of hibiscus – this is a perfect example of salt air and ocean breeze burning the leaves.
This is NOT a function of improper care, the hibiscus (with the exception of 2-3 bushes that are mysteriously dying) is completely healthy and the condition should disappear as the weather turns warmer.
5. Insect infestations – this can only be treated with pesticide spraying and certain additives into the soil around the base of effected plants – this is a costly process and is a direct function of contractor maintenance and follow up but is considered an 'extra' cost to the District. However, the contractor must bring this to our attention when it is time to spray and Bemus has been somewhat remiss on this maintenance item.
6. Lack of adequate maintenance service – There has been a decline in maintaining an acceptable level of service for our project. We can remain with Bemus and press them for better service or give the work to another contractor. In discussing the scope of work with other local contractors it appears that Bemus has grossly underbid/underestimated the amount of work necessary for our project and this is also by Bemus's own admission.

Bemus is aware that we are considering a change of contractors and they don't want to lose the business. They have admitted that a lot of the problems with our project are due to the fact that they have underbid the work. My concern is that the District cannot continue chasing a poor-performing contractor. In view of this I have asked Bemus to look at their contract and give us a

(Landscape Maintenance report continued):

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new quote for monthly service – a slight increase may be all it takes to move this up to a more acceptable level. I have invited Bemus to our Board meeting to explain themselves in the hopes we can reach a workable solution. I can work well with any landscape contractor, including Bemus, as long as that contractor is keeping up with their end of the agreement

If we can reach a solution with Bemus on the maintenance issue then I would recommend we assign them this current project of plant selection and replacement that I am not progressing with. Part of the problem with having me make the decision on plant selection is that I'm not a botanical specialist and there is no recourse if my selected varieties don't survive. On the other hand, if our contractor handles this then they are responsible for the results.

By Board meeting time I will have proposal numbers from two outside contractors that can be used to compare with Bemus.