

**IMPORTANT UPDATES ON LANDSCAPING & WATER CONSERVATION —
— AN INVITATION TO JOIN US FOR DISCUSSION JUNE 29 at 6:30pm**

To: All Menlo Commons Residents
From: Dag Forssell, Eve Murto, John Loughlin
Date: Monday, June 27, 2022

This door drop message
is the same as the email.

Hello all,

This is a quick update about the next “Landscape Interest Group” meeting on Wednesday June 29 at 6:30pm, which is focused on hearing ideas from the Menlo Commons residents on how we can be more water wise with some practical conservation efforts. It will also update on significant work that has already been initiated by the Board. We had our first informal group meeting 3 weeks ago, and agreed to come together again for a live meeting on June 29 to discuss landscaping and water conservation this year. All are invited, feel free to join us. And we’ll keep you posted on thoughts and decisions.

LANDSCAPING DISCUSSION MEETING:

Wednesday June 29 6:30pm — outside by the Commons Room

UPDATE ON BOARD ACTIVITY

The Menlo Commons Board has already adopted big moves on the water conservation front. In May 2022 the City of Menlo Park, upon the advice of water conservation agencies, declared an edict to bring watering down to twice a week. Menlo Commons thus reduced our landscape watering from 4 days to 2 days a week at that time. Plus the timing has been shifted from early morning to late evening to minimize evaporation. The plant boxes outside the windows have been cut back to a careful timing as well, to keep the flowers alive. We are actively assessing the impact on the entire property at this time, to see how the plants and trees can survive and thrive with the new, significantly reduced water levels.

ASSESSMENT — HOW IS OUR LANDSCAPING DOING WITH THE CUT BACKS?

Trees are not showing additional stress

- Note there are 4 trees that were stressed before drought conditions. Several outside the Building B garage are in distress. An arborist has suggested changing the watering techniques. (Will get more updates on these trees to you, as well as one other on the property).

The bushes are doing fine for the most part

- A few that are in very sunny positions are a bit dry
- Those with some shade are doing just fine
- The bush by the pool area that died has been chopped — let’s discuss

The low groundscape and ivy is surviving well.

The flowers by the entrance to driveway are surviving well.

There are 3 grassy lawns in the courtyard and they are starting to dry out in areas that get a lot of sun. The areas that have more shade are doing much better. Let’s discuss options.

The plants in the 5 stone planters outside the Commons Room are stressed. Let’s discuss, perhaps hand watering is a great option on those.

DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR JUNE 29 MEETING — “SHORT TERM” IDEAS

We’d like to focus our discussion on short term landscaping and water conservation ideas for what is left of 2022, assuming the current configuration of our landscaping.

We welcome your input regarding:

- 1) Ivy (our major landscaping) — keep green or let stress?
- 2) Big lawn
 - a. Let dry out?
 - b. Keep green (figure out how to get some more water from other sources)?
 - c. Other?
- 3) Small lawn by gazebo (rectangular)
 - a. Let dry out?
 - b. Keep Green
 - c. Other?
- 4) Side lawn by pool
 - a. Let dry out?
 - b. Keep green (estimate much of this will survive)
 - c. Other?

(Our gardeners estimate the lawn can survive if it gets 3 days of watering instead of 2. Creative ways to get some other excess or overflow water to here?)

- 5) Major bushes (if one or several die, what do we do?)
 - a. Leave spot empty/hole/ gap?
 - b. Replant?
 - c. Consider other drought-friendly bush in that spot / depends on location and look
- 6) Use of tanbark / chips on earthy spots
- 7) Pool — ways to minimize evaporation
- 8) Flowering Plants, such as Al's Garden and Planters outside the Common Room
 - a. Shift to hand watering rather than sprinkler?
 - b. Volunteers to water?
- 9) Flower Boxes — (note: we already reduced water level)
- 10) Other?

NEXT MEETING — JULY 18

WE WILL EXPLORE NEW IDEAS FOR MENLO COMMONS — LONG TERM

Join us Monday July 18 at 6:30pm outside the Commons Room.

We'll cover our short term water conservation ideas, and where we are with those.

But then, we'll open it up to long-term vision and thinking. Bring your ideas for Menlo's long term landscaping future, or just sit back and hear some alternatives. Dreaming of small or large changes that might help with our conservation efforts? Now is the time to surface your ideas. Don't be shy. We'll likely discuss them over the next several meetings...

Several residents already have ideas ... bring a sketch or just verbally share your ideas. No pressure.

** If you want to show what you have in mind, please take a copy of the one page landscape view of the property and sketch out your ideas on the page, then bring it to the next meeting. If you are out of town and will miss the next meeting, feel free to give your sketch or ideas to Dag so he can scan, print and share your idea with the rest of our group, or email (a scanned copy) to him. **