

**Willowgate on the Fox River  
Homeowners Association**

**Homeowner's  
Maintenance Manual**

# **IMPORTANT**

**Your Board of Directors along with the Architectural Control Committee and the Landscape Committee have prepared this manual to facilitate understanding of (1) the allocation of exterior maintenance between the Association and homeowners, and (2) the process by which changes to architecture or landscaping can be made.**

**Before making any changes to the outside of your unit, please consult this helpful publication. In some cases the Architectural control committee or Landscape Committee will provide names of contractors and approved products, once you have made the required filing for a change.**

**From time to time you may receive additions to this manual.**

# THE WILLOWGATE MAINTENANCE MANUAL

## Landscape

We live in a community that is known for its beautiful and well-maintained landscaping. Our property values depend on maintaining this landscaping. All living landscaping surrounding units, whether in limited common areas or common areas, is overseen by the Landscape Committee who then reports to the Board of Directors. The Landscape Committee is charged with the responsibility of keeping costs within a limited budget each year.

### A. Watering

Watering during the annual summer drought requires a community effort to keep our plants healthy. We encourage homeowners to put in an irrigation system at their own expense. The Landscape Committee will recommend that homeowners water valuable trees and shrubs during a drought. We will only pay others to water in an extreme drought. We will not water the grass, since it recovers without any damage when it rains. If homeowners without a sprinkler system know that they will be away during the summer for more than 10 days, we ask that they arrange with a neighbor or friend to water around their unit, if possible.

### B. Regular Landscaping Maintenance at Association Expense

1. Timing of Regular Maintenance. The Willowgate Homeowner's Association contracts with a landscape contractor to maintain the landscaping of the common areas of the development. To assure quality and completeness in the maintenance the contract spells out exactly how often the grass is mowed, how often the shrub borders are edged, etc. (This schedule is sent to the homeowners each spring.) Since our landscape contractor works for the association rather than individual unit owners, owners are reminded not to direct the contractor or workers or make requests of them of any kind. Please direct any requests or suggestions to the landscape committee through our property manager.
2. Communication of requests regarding landscaping. For us, there are multiple steps before any work is done.
  - a. The WRITTEN request goes from the homeowner to the management company. The management company's email address is [almacondo@interaccess.com](mailto:almacondo@interaccess.com). Please copy the original request to the landscape committee chairs at [grannydienst@yahoo.com](mailto:grannydienst@yahoo.com) and [Imbohlke@ix.netcom.com](mailto:Imbohlke@ix.netcom.com)
  - b. The management company forwards the request to the Landscape Committee.

- c. The Landscape Committee looks at the shrub, tree or area and decides on a course of action.
  - d. If the Landscape Committee agrees with the homeowner that the request is within the Association's responsibility, which is usually the case, the landscape committee asks the management company to get a bid for the work.
  - e. The management company asks one or more contractors for a bid. The homeowner is free to obtain their own bid from a third party contractor to do the work and submit to the landscape committee and management company for approval.
  - f. The contractor looks at the shrub, tree or area and sends a bid for the work to the management company.
  - g. The bid for the work is sent from the management company to the Landscape Committee.
  - h. The Landscape Committee decides whether the budget will allow for the work to be done and authorizes the work in writing to the management company if the work is approved.
  - i. The management company notifies the contractor that the contractor's bid is approved.
  - j. The contractor schedules and completes the work.
- This explains why there can be such a lag between a homeowner's request and the work getting done. (Of course, weather can also affect the timing of the work being done.)

3. The Landscape Committee requests that you put all requests in writing to the management company with a copy to the Landscape Chairs. We will no longer process verbal requests until the written version is submitted. Also, the time to plant is May-early June in the spring and September-October in the fall. Planting is not successful in July and August heat. Any requests to plant between late June and August must either wait until fall or have the firm commitment of the homeowner to water carefully and to take fiscal responsibility for that plant if it should die from the summer heat.

### **C. Landscaping Change at Homeowner's Expense**

1. Any changes that the homeowner wants to make (at their own expense) to the current landscaping must be presented to the Landscape Committee, using an Application for Landscape Change form. The Landscape Committee will approve or disapprove the work or refer it to the Board. Since this process takes time, please allow at least several weeks for this process.

2. The Landscape Committee will only approve the use of low maintenance, native species (indigenous to our area) to be added to what is already planted. Therefore holly, rhododendrons, azaleas and roses are some of the species that will not be approved. (Homeowners wanting to plant any of these species may be granted special permission by the Landscape Committee on an individual basis,

providing they agree to take total financial responsibility for the plant and to care for the plant themselves.)

3. Annuals and perennials may be planted by the homeowner in keeping with the character of Willowgate. Any new or expanded perennial garden requires committee approval.

4. As the property ages, plants can become overgrown and unattractive, even if they are carefully pruned every year. The Landscape Committee does not have the budget to relandscape shrub borders. We appreciate the homeowners' financial support in paying for their improvements, thereby helping to keep our monthly fees in check.

## **APPLICATION FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE**

**(Use this form for improvements at Owner expense, not regular maintenance requests that are sent to ALMA)**

Before any change to existing landscape can be made by an individual homeowner, he or she must obtain permission from the Landscape Committee. Since this process may take several weeks or longer, please fill out this form and return it to ALMA with enough lead time before your project is planned. Since some plans may involve approvals by both the Landscape Committee and the Architectural Committee (such as a new patio with new plantings around it), please allow enough time for this.

Use this form for approval of any changes to the trees, shrubs, and flower gardens surrounding your property. For example, if you wanted to replace three spirea shrubs (because you didn't like them) with three yews.

1. Please describe the change you are requesting. Include the dimensions of the project, a diagram and the plan, if a landscape designer is working with you. If you plan to do the work, please include a clear sketch of the scope of your plan. A photo would be helpful.

Homeowner  
Address  
Date

## Architectural

### A. Regular Maintenance at Association Expense

1. Association maintenance obligations are scheduled and distinguished from Homeowner maintenance obligations in the enclosed *WILLOWGATE MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS* schedule. Please check this schedule before making a service request for maintenance to ALMA Property Management, Inc., our property manager.

### B. Architectural Change at Homeowner's Expense

1. Our CCR's require that any change that the homeowner wants to make (at their own expense) to the current architecture must first be presented to the Architectural Committee for written approval, then to the Board for written approval. The "current architecture" includes any change or alteration to the exterior of the unit or any structure around it including awnings, fences, walls, antenna, etc.

2. Please use the *APPLICATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL CHANGE* form for your requests and send them to ALMA Property Management, Inc., 890 E. Higgins Road, Suite 154, Schaumburg, Il. 60173. Request additional forms by calling ALMA at 847-517-4400.

# WILLOWGATE MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS

## HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

**Homeowners are responsible for their respective units in all areas not covered by Association responsibility including but not limited to the homeowner items listed below.**

	Responsibility	Comment
1	Air Conditioners & Furnaces	Interior & Exterior components
2	Appliances	Includes garage door opener
3	Brick, stone, wood, metal borders ****	Part of unit landscaping
4	Cable & wireless TV transmission	
5	Casualty Loss covered by Insurance	
6	Chimney Caps ****	
7	Door bells & button	
8	Drywall repair due to roof leak	
9	Electric dog fences	
10	Electrical Interior	
11	Electrical outside service	
12	Exterior mounted objects ****	ie. Hose hangers, flag mountings etc
13	Fireplace, interior flue	
14	Foundation leaks/cracks	
15	Garage floors	
16	Gas / electric / water service	
17	Ice damming/ ice sickles	Any damage to building and/or roof
18	Insulation	
19	Irrigation systems ****	
20	Lighting, exterior fixtures ****	
21	Mail boxes	Locks and keys
22	Patio, Sliding, Storm & Screen Doors ****	
23	Patios & Walks leading to and from ****	All aspects of patio design
24	Plumbing Systems	Includes outside spigots
25	Roofs * & ** & ****	See Notes below
26	Screening for porches ****	
27	Skylights ****	
28	Sump pumps including piping	
29	Telephone service/lines	
30	Transoms and door side lights ****	
31	Watering ***	See Notes below
32	Willful, wanton conduct; negligence	
33	Windows ****	
34	Wrought iron ****	On or adjacent to unit

See Notes on accompanying sheet.

# WILLOWGATE MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS

## ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Comment
1 Brick & wood exterior bldg. surfaces *	
2 Driveways *	Sealing, repairs, replacement(---yrs)
3 Entrance Pillars, etc. *	
4 Extermination of external pests	ie beavers not termites
5 Fences maintain & replacement	Cedar, split rail, lattice, entrance wrought iron
6 Garage Door *	
7 Gutters & Downspouts *	Cleaning, repair, replacement
8 Landscaping service	
9 Mail boxes. Provide/maintain	
10 Main Entrance Doors *	
11 Plants, shrubs, trees *	
12 Ponds, bridge and stream pumps	
13 Rain water drainage	
14 Retaining walls *	Part of original site development
15 Roofs * & **	See Notes below
16 Sidewalks and stoops *	
17 Snow-Sidewalks, stoops and driveways	After 2" snowfall
18 Snow-Street	2" snowfall-salt only at entryway
19 Street/Gutters/Lighting	Repair & Replacement
20 Vents & Stacks *	External
21 Wall enclosures at unit entrance *	
22 Watering ***	See Notes below

### NOTES

- \* Association responsibility is limited to a standard of ordinary wear and tear. Ordinary wear and tear does not include negligence, willful or wanton conduct or excessive wear and tear by the owner, his or her family, guests or invitees, or from fire, wind, rain, lightning or other insurable casualty or for any reason other than ordinary wear and tear. Example of "any reason other than ordinary wear and tear" includes but is not limited to defective or inadequate materials, design, construction, or installation of the original component.
- \*\* Roofs. Owners who obtain the mandatory Architectural Committee and Board approval prior to completely replacing their building roof (both units) for "any reason other than ordinary wear and tear" are entitled to have the Association pay the roofer an amount that is the depreciated amount for the unit roof being completely replaced. Owners who only partially repair their roofs for "any reason other than ordinary wear and tear" must also obtain Architectural Committee and Board approval and are responsible for all costs involved in the partial repair.
- \*\*\* Watering. Owners are encouraged to install irrigation systems at their expense. Since paying to water the entire property during a drought is very expensive, please assist the Board by watering the valuable trees and shrubs around your unit once a week for one hour during a drought (usually in July or August - at least two weeks without rain with temperatures above 80). It is not necessary to water the grass, as it will recover when it rains.
- \*\*\*\* Architectural Committee and Board approval required for any change visible from the outside.

# APPLICATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL CHANGE

Designed to create due process for the homeowner and due diligence for the Board.

## I. PLEASE REVIEW YOUR REQUESTED CHANGE USING THE ATTACHED "ARCHITECTURAL CHANGE CRITERIA" .

The "Architectural Change Criteria" is the standard that both the Architectural Committee and the Board will use to act on your request. This criteria is based on the terms of Articles II, VII, and XI of the Willowgate Covenants. Maintenance responsibility for each approved change is the responsibility of the applying homeowner by signed agreement.

## II. DESCRIBE THE CHANGE YOU ARE REQUESTING (INCLUDE PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS):

INCLUDE PHOTO, DIAGRAM OR OTHER PHYSICAL REPRESENTATION.

## III. MAIL OR FAX THIS APPLICATION TO ALMA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

The Architectural Committee will:

- ◆ review your request
- ◆ contact you and any affected homeowner to set a meeting if approval questions arise
- ◆ make a recommendation to the Board.

The Board will:

- ◆ review the committee's recommendation,
- ◆ contact you and any affected homeowner to set a meeting if approval questions arise
- ◆ make a final determination and notify you in writing whether your request is approved or denied.

Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_

Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# ARCHITECTURAL CHANGE CRITERIA

A. **ARTICLE II: PROTECTION OF THE PROPERTY:** (“Yes” is required for 1,2,and 3.)

Is the requested change,

1. Consistent with the original development and existing approved changes?

Comments, including specific examples:

Consistent?  Yes  No

2. Proper considering such things as size, shape, color, number of items, damage to property, visibility of the requested change.

Comments:

Proper?  Yes  No

3. Tasteful considering the Willowgate architectural theme?

Comments:

Tasteful?  Yes  No

B. **ARTICLE II: PROTECTION OF EACH OWNER:** (“No” is required for 1,2,3 and 4. “Yes” is required for 5.)

Would this change,

1. Depreciate the value of the Property?  Yes  No

Comments:

2. Create an improper use of the surrounding Property?  Yes  No

Comments:

3. Be haphazard and inharmonious?  Yes  No

Comments:

4. Interfere with property setbacks from public and private streets or interfere with adequate free spaces between structures?  Yes  No

Comments:

5. Provide adequately for Willowgate to be a residential town home subdivision of the highest quality and character?  Yes  No

Comments:

C. **ARTICLE VII: COMPLIANCE WITH “USE” PROVISIONS**

Is the proposed architectural change in compliance with 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.8 and 7.9?

Yes  No

Comments: