

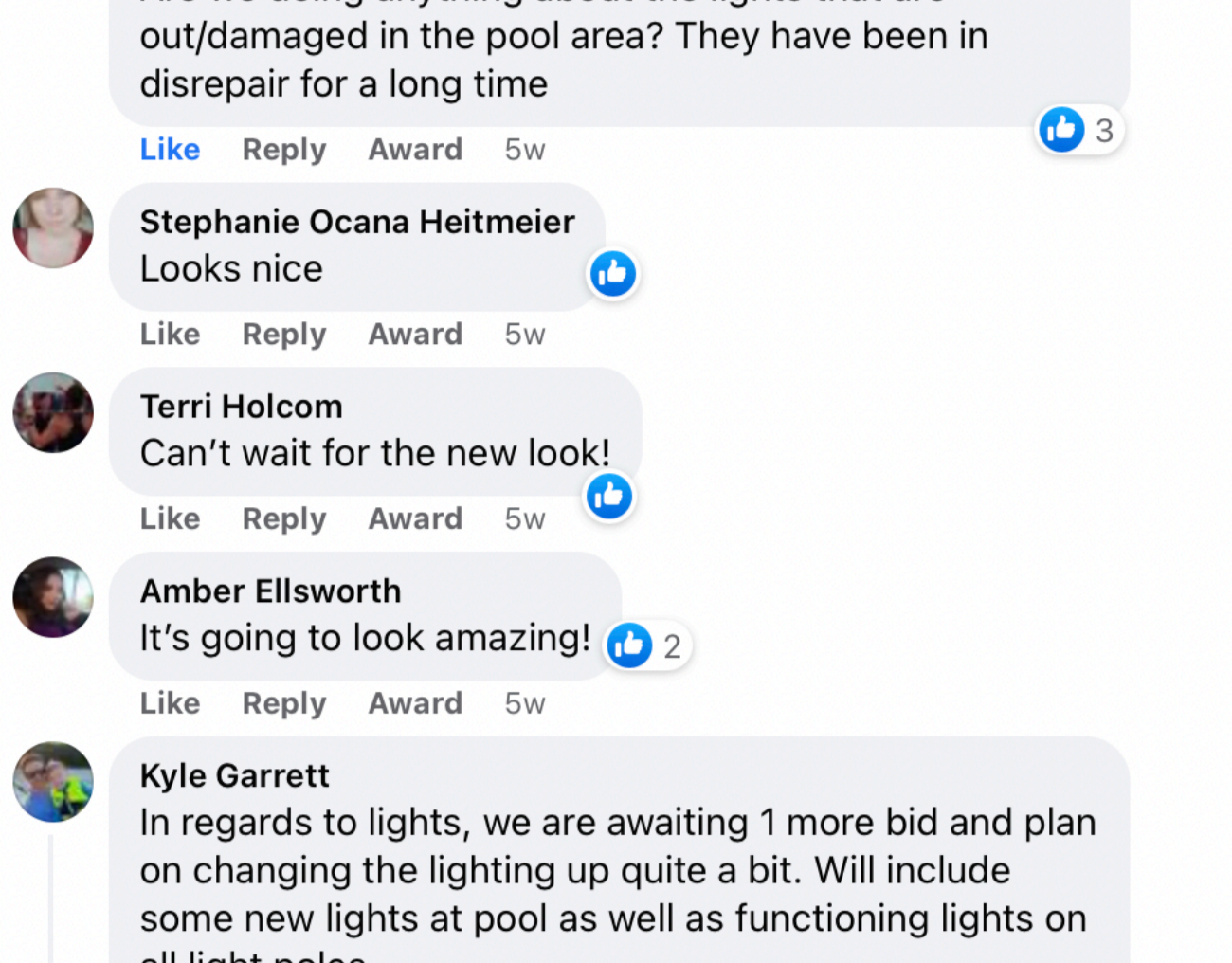
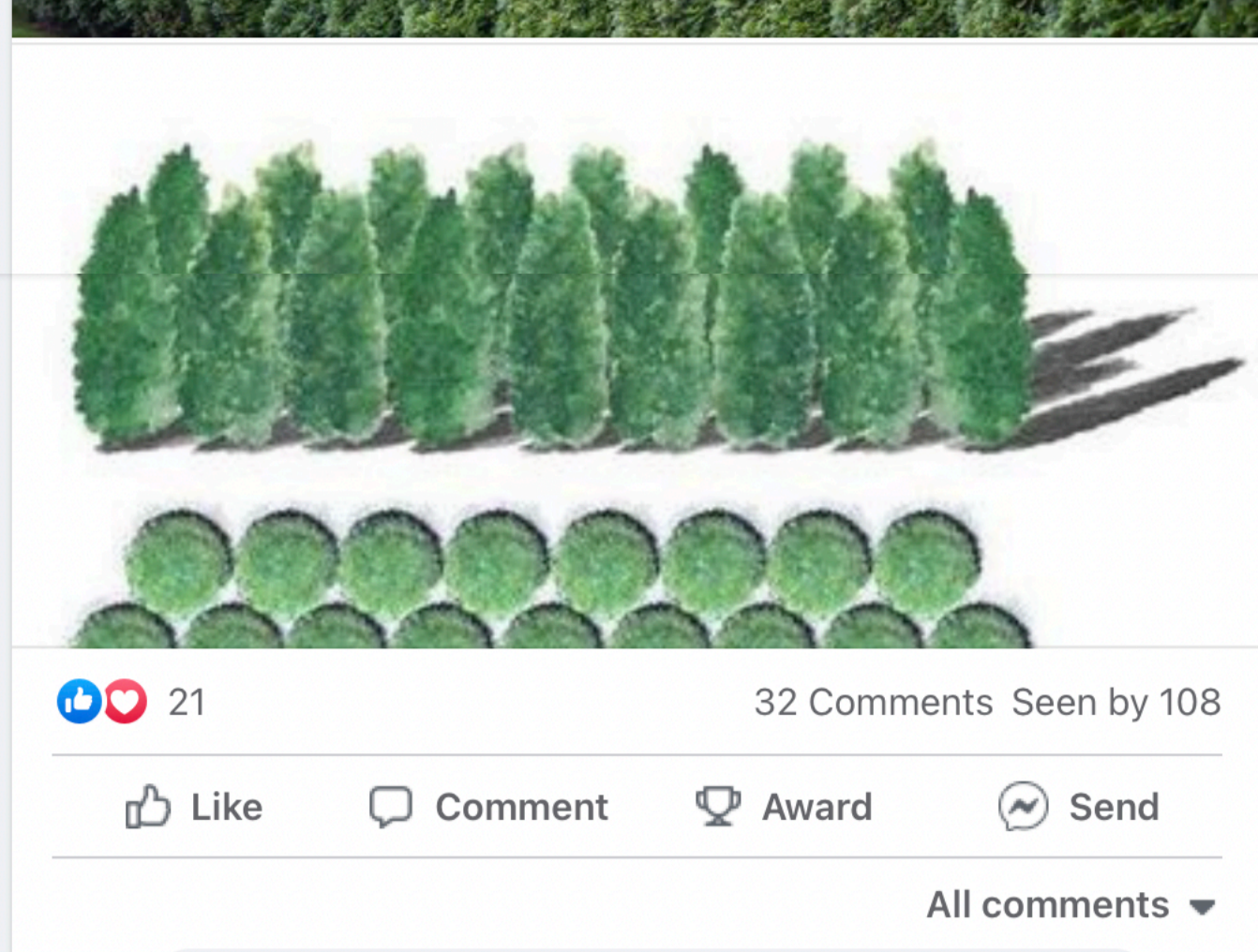
Michael Barron Admin · March 9 · 🌍

Hi Friends – The HOA and ARC Team will be starting a large project that will enhance the neighborhood along our main road Bluffton Springs Drive. As most are aware, the Leyland Cypress trees (52 of them!) have worn out their welcome and need to be removed. We have delayed this for a few years by trimming them, but the time has come to remove these overgrown 40-foot trees. The tree and stump removal will start next week on Tuesday the 15th and should last 7-9 days. This will include bringing in fill dirt. Please bear with us as we work through this part of the project.

Once these have been removed, we will bring in the new trees that will bring a much cleaner, elegant and nicer feel with emerald green arborvitae that will align the road replacing the Leyland's. The plan is to have it completed by the end of March.

Thanks for your patience while we work through this project!

Below is an example of what these trees look like and how we are installing them in a staggered approach.



👍❤️ 21 32 Comments Seen by 108

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All comments ▾

Moira Leach Kelley
Are we doing anything about the lights that are out/damaged in the pool area? They have been in disrepair for a long time
Like Reply Award 5w 3

Stephanie Ocana Heitmeier
Looks nice
Like Reply Award 5w

Terri Holcom
Can't wait for the new look!
Like Reply Award 5w

Amber Ellsworth
It's going to look amazing!
Like Reply Award 5w

Kyle Garrett
In regards to lights, we are awaiting 1 more bid and plan on changing the lighting up quite a bit. Will include some new lights at pool as well as functioning lights on all light poles.
Like Reply Award 5w 7

Moira Leach Kelley
Kyle Garrett thank you!
Like Reply Award 5w

Hannah Cooke
Kyle Garrett love seeing this plan. Thanks for this update.
Like Reply Award 4w

Christy Slocum
This is so great! Thanks to everyone who has worked on this!
Like Reply Award 5w 2

Judy Lee
Thank you! Looking forward to it.
Like Reply Award 5w

Amy Boring Chupp
That's going to look great. Thank you!
Like Reply Award 5w

Amy Chapple
That's awesome. Thank you!
Like Reply Award 5w

Hannah Cooke
Looking forward to the facelift!!
Like Reply Award 4w

Greetson S.N.
Thanks for the update **Michael Barron**. Last time when the trees were installed Mr. Ben told us that current trees will grow only up-to 6 to 12 feet . But it grown more than 12 feet (40 feet) height . Can you please advice on how long these new trees will grow .
Like Reply Award 4w 2

Michael Barron Author Admin
Greetson Great question, these will grow up to 15 feet tall and 4-5 feet wide. This is why we picked these so they do not get like Leylands or a thuja green type tree for a much cleaner look.
Like Reply Award 4w Edited 5

Greetson S.N.
Michael Barron Thanks for the details .
Like Reply Award 4w

Denise Shopland Crull
This is going to look great! Thank you to everyone who is on the HOA board for all you are doing for our neighborhood!
Like Reply Award 4w 2

Ben Love
This looks like a significant financial undertaking. Could whoever is currently managing the finances for the HOA Board please share with us how much this cosmetic project is costing the homeowners association? Is it also possible to confirm that the work is being applied to common areas only? Thanks.
Like Reply 3w

Michael Barron Author Admin
Ben The cost (\$37,250 Kyle is the Treasurer) and budget was discussed at our annual HOA meeting along with other projects to enhance our community. Also, it was to replace a like for like tree replacement to keep with the standard that we currently had with the other trees.
Like Reply Award 3w Edited

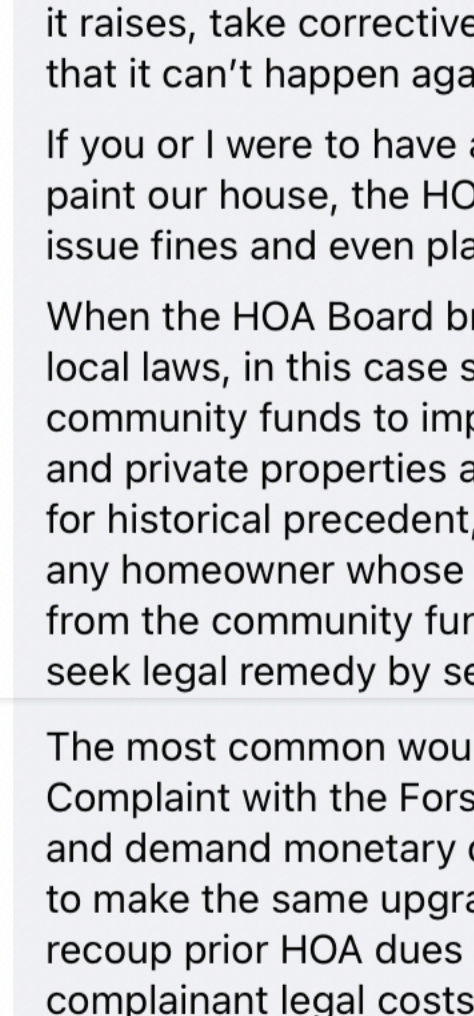
Ben Love
Thanks **Michael Barron**. **Kyle Garrett** can you confirm that two or more quotes were sourced for the contract work and that this cosmetic project is to cover common areas only?
Like Reply 3w

Michael Barron Author Admin
Ben Yes, we got 4 quotes for the project. The trees replace the privacy wall that was established by the Leyland cypress's that will encompass common area and lots that are the association maintenance responsibilities.
Like Reply Award 3w

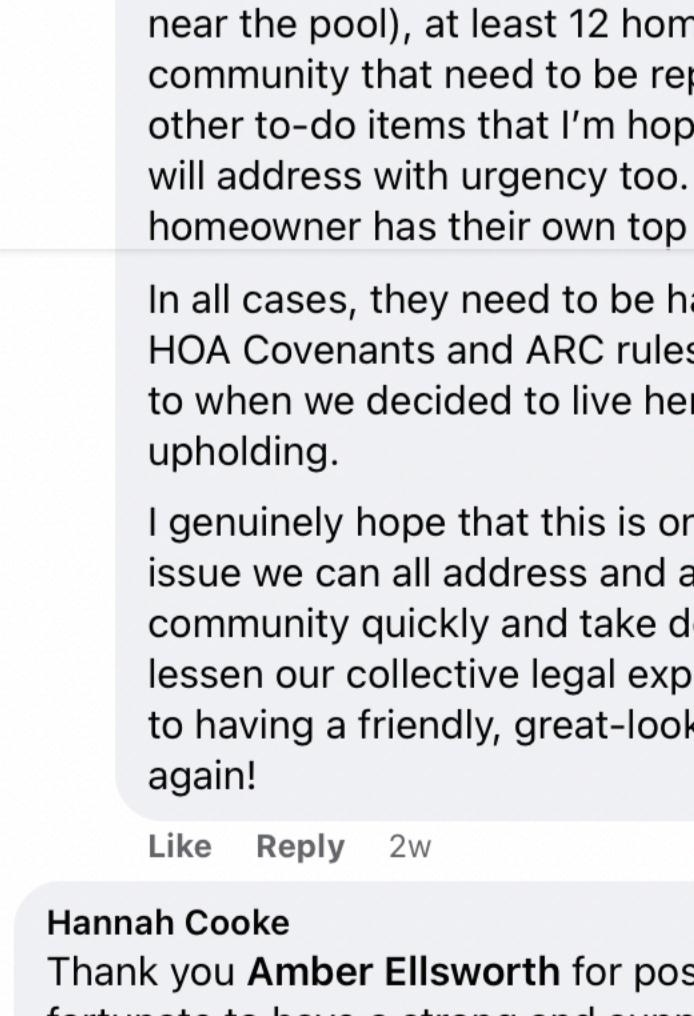
Ben Love
Michael Barron **Kyle Garrett** Thank you **Michael**, but I need someone on the HOA Board whose property doesn't stand to gain direct or indirect value from this expensive cosmetic project to confirm whether or not this project covers only common areas. **Kyle Garrett** or other HOA Board members - can you confirm that only common areas are covered in this project cost?
Like Reply 3w

Ben Love
At the risk of sounding like the grumpy old guy here; those of us who've been here since the start of the neighborhood remember the issues and challenges that came about when Ben (not me, another one!) put these trees in back in 2011.
Only 13 of the 52 Leyland trees, the 13 trees that were planted in common areas, were paid for by the HOA, with the remaining trees and installation paid for by the residents of each property. It is against the HOA laws for the HOA to pay for items on homeowner's property. The total cost for the 13 trees was ~\$990.
There's a thread in this Forest Broke from around May 2011 that has all the discussion and arguments on the topic that I recommend reading.
Can we please pause any further work on this cosmetic project until it can be clarified that the part of the project that is paid for by the HOA is being done on common areas only or with agreement and full financial coverage from homeowners benefiting from the cosmetic changes?
Like Reply 3w 2

Ben Love
Some neighbors have asked me how to find the original thread. A search for "leyland" and filter by date to 2011 will show the post from **Sharon McDaniel Mitchum** on May 11, 2011. If that isn't working, attached is a screenshot I just took of the post and first responses.
Like Reply 3w 2



Ben Love
As a follow up to yesterday's inquiries, attached is a drone image taken earlier today with the property boundaries superimposed to illustrate the area that the HOA has responsibility for and areas that belong to property owners.
Note that only the area highlighted in green is common area and covered by HOA, which is also the location of the original 13 trees paid for by the HOA. Areas highlighted in red are the architectural and financial responsibility of each of the respective homeowners. Given this, can the HOA Board please confirm that the costs for removal of the existing trees in private properties is being financially covered by each of the homeowners involved?
Like Reply 3w 2



Amber Ellsworth
Having only been here for 5 years, we were not around for the install of the initial trees or their purpose and who was financially responsible. We do, however, agree with the HOA board on the removal and replacement of these trees. They are the first thing you see when you come into our neighborhood and that first impression makes a huge impact on all of our home values. These trees were over grown and causing a danger to the kids/dogs we all walk down the sidewalks and the drivers sight lines down the main road. I doubt the HOA board, or any of its volunteer members, made this decision based on personal gain. But it feels like one of our board members is having their motives and honesty called into question because his family's property happens to be on the main strip. This has also been spoken about in HOA meetings. Why were the concerns not brought up then? We thank and support the HOA board and ARC team for their volunteer service to our neighborhood.
Like Reply Award 3w 4

Ben Love
Hi **Amber Ellsworth**! Thanks for replying. While I'm disappointed that the minutes for the Annual HOA Board meeting weren't shared with the community - common courtesy to those homeowners who could not be present - and puzzled on why the ARC didn't raise red flags on this project when it was reviewed, especially given the 2011 precedent for the same cosmetic work, my concern here is not anything personal but one of concern for legal risk that can impact us all.
I trust that the volunteers who give their time to the HOA Board and ARC are well-intentioned and want to do the right thing, and we all rightfully appreciate the commitment they give to maintaining our neighborhood. I do not believe anyone is questioning the ethics or character of any homeowner here.
However, this recent cosmetic project has left our community exposed. Any checks and balances in place have failed. We need to address the issues it raises, take corrective actions, and make sure that it can't happen again in the future.
If you or I were to have a broken mailbox or not paint our house, the HOA board and ARC can issue fines and even place a lien on our homes.
When the HOA Board breaks the Covenants or local laws, in this case seemingly using HOA community funds to improve both common area and private properties and without consideration for historical precedent, this opens the door to any homeowner whose property didn't benefit from the community funds now being able to seek legal remedy by several available means.
The most common would be to file a Civil Complaint with the Forsyth County Court system and demand monetary damages, compensation to make the same upgrades on their property, recoup prior HOA dues paid and cover complainant legal costs.
If more than one or two homeowners go down this path, the fees, fines, and legal costs would quickly drain the community funds. It is improbable that our HOA liability insurance would cover costs from such an egregious breach of the Covenants and rules.
Those trees were ugly, and I agree that these needed to be fixed. There are several other serious safety issues we also need to be addressed (e.g., exposed and unprotected electrics on two light poles in the common area near the pool), at least 12 homes in the community that need to be repainted, and several other to-do items that I'm hoping the HOA Board will address with urgency too. I'm sure every homeowner has their own top 10 list too!
In all cases, they need to be handled within the HOA Covenants and ARC rules that we all agreed to when we decided to live here and pay towards upholding.
I genuinely hope that this is only a short-term issue we can all address and agree on as a community quickly and take definitive action to lessen our collective legal exposure and get back to having a friendly, great-looking neighborhood again!
Like Reply 2w 3

Hannah Cooke
Thank you **Amber Ellsworth** for posting. We are so fortunate to have a strong and supportive Board!
Like Reply Award 3w

Moira Leach Kelley
I believe Ben brings up good points that must be considered. I don't believe we can pay for trees that aren't on HOA property with HOA funds. Yes those trees needed to be addressed but we are getting into property rights too.
Like Reply Award 3w Edited 2

Gijun Lee
Thank you for letting us know!
Like Reply Award 2w

Xama Patel
I agree that these trees had to be replaced to not only make forest broke look beautiful but to avoid any unfortunate events/ damage etc as a lot of people/ kids walk by . As far as any concern or question regarding to finance can be handle in a meeting if needed rather than directly questioning anyone's intention or loyalty. **Michael Barron** is a great person who goes out of his ways to do many things to make this neighborhood beautiful and safe. To Ben's point, I would say arrange a meeting if needed to sort this matter out.
Like Reply Award 2w 4

Joe Nakanishi
I'm all for neighborhood improvement, but I think **Ben Love** brings up a lot of good points. So \$37,250 to do this? Is that total (removal and installation)? If so wondering why we're doing this since the entire 2022 Landscaping budget is only \$13,450. This is nearly 300% of the entire annual landscaping budget.
I for one don't think HOA funds should be used to improve private property. Regardless of the board's intent, this doesn't look good.
Like Reply Award 1w Edited

Dennis Holcom
Appreciate your feedback and we understand everyone has their own opinions on what is best for the community. The best way to make an impact is to be involved in the community and possibly serve on the board. All board positions are voted in by members of the community. As our community ages there will definitely be projects that need to be considered. The cost of the projects will definitely vary and need to be weighed in order of importance. If you have interest in serving on the board, elections in October.
Like Reply Award 1w

Write a comment...