

Charleston Court Backyard / Alley Landscape Project

Documentary Record & Analysis

This document consolidates invoices, proposals, execution lists, and email correspondence related to the Backyard / Alley Landscape Project (Phases 1–5).

My intent in assembling this record was to determine the factual scope and cost of the Backyard and Alley Landscape Project after the Board stated that the work did not exceed \$100,000 and that no trees were removed. Those statements conflicted with information and concerns raised by multiple homeowners regarding tree removals, costs, and the resulting changes to their properties. The purpose is to provide a transparent, fact-based record of tree removals, associated costs, and how information was communicated to homeowners.

1. Tree Removal Summary (Based on Phase 3 & Phase 4 Execution Lists)

Court / Area	Tree Type Removed	Replacement (If Any)	Source
Legare Court	Magnolia	Crape Myrtle / Shrubs	Phase 3 & 4 Alley Lists; Board Emails
Murray Court	Magnolia	Crape Myrtle / Shrubs	Phase 3 & 4 Alley Lists
Wentworth Court	Magnolia	Crape Myrtle / Shrubs	Phase 3 & 4 Alley Lists
Radcliffe Court	Alexander / Queen Palms	Shrubs / Approved Trees	Phase 3 Alley List
Courtenay Court	Palms / Misc. Trees	Shrubs / Approved Trees	Phase 3 Alley List
Ashley Court	Palms / Misc. Trees	Shrubs / Approved Trees	Phase 3 Alley List

Based on execution lists and committee recollection, approximately 50–65 trees were removed across the interior/back-alley areas. Magnolias represented the majority of removals, with palms as the secondary category. Not all removals resulted in replacement trees.

2. Cost Itemization – Backyard / Alley Project

Phase	Description	Invoice Date(s)	Amount
Phase 1–2	Initial planting, removals, and irrigation impacts	June 18, 2022	\$49,357.00
Phase 4	Tree removals and replacements (Magnolias, palms)	July 18, 2023	\$22,800.00
Phase 5	Shrubs, hedges, and completion plantings	July 18, 2023	\$53,218.00
Phases 3–5	Irrigation repairs tied to tree work Documented additional Plantings	July 2023	\$9,667.03 \$11,143.90

The total documented cost attributable to the Backyard / Alley Landscape Project, based solely on backyard/alley-related invoice line items and excluding maintenance and common-area/front-yard work, is \$146,185.93. Costs were incurred over multiple years and invoices without a consolidated disclosure to homeowners.

Cost Reconciliation and Documented Supplemental Plantings

Review of the invoices associated with the Backyard / Alley Landscape Project shows that, in addition to the primary tree-removal and replacement work, there were documented supplemental plant installations invoiced separately at various times. These supplemental plantings included trees, shrubs and related materials installed in backyard and alley-adjacent areas.

Irrigation work associated with tree removals and plant installations is included within the respective phase totals and is not presented as a separate category, as irrigation impacts were a direct consequence of the landscaping work performed in each phase.

3. Transparency & Homeowner Impact

The phased nature of the project, absence of a consolidated tree-removal log, and lack of a single comprehensive cost summary made it difficult for homeowners to understand the scope and cumulative cost of the project as it progressed. Email correspondence indicates that many decisions were made at the committee or Board level without a clear, consolidated presentation to homeowners. As a result, tree removals and associated costs were not always apparent until after execution, contributing to homeowner dissatisfaction with both the outcome and the process.

4. Governing Documents and Homeowner Approval Requirements

The Association's Declaration of Covenants limits the Board's authority with respect to landscaping work in backyard or alley-adjacent areas. These areas are expressly designated as homeowner-maintained and are not classified as Common Areas.

Under Article IX (2)(i), the Association's maintenance responsibility is limited to front yards and Common Areas. Separate provisions assign responsibility for rear-yard landscaping and alley-adjacent landscaping to individual homeowners. The decision by the Board to proceed without homeowner approval further indicates that actions were taken beyond the scope of authority defined in the governing documents.

Under the governing documents, projects of this nature—particularly those involving significant expenditures and alterations in homeowner-maintained areas—should have been presented to the membership for approval. The documentary record does not reflect a homeowner vote authorizing this scope of work or the associated expenditures.

The absence of a homeowner vote, combined with the lack of transparent cost disclosure, represents a governance failure separate from regulatory compliance considerations.