

Going Green

Someone mentioned to me this week one of their Boards asked about “going green” and that this subject might also appeal or apply to many of our Boards and their communities. In doing research on the subject, I found that going green and energy conservation are really two different things.

Going Green: the pursuit of knowledge and practices that lead to more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible decisions and lifestyles, thus helping protect the environment and sustaining its natural resources.

Energy Conservation: achieved through efficient energy use, in which case energy use is decreased while achieving a similar outcome, or by reduced consumption of energy services. Energy conservation may result in increase of financial capital, environmental value, personal security and human comfort. Individuals and organizations that are direct consumers of energy may want to conserve energy in order to reduce energy costs and promote economic security. Industrial and commercial user may want to increase efficiency and thus maximize profit.*

As you can see from the definitions above, while we might use them interchangeably they are quite different. As a result of the research I started doing on the process of going green, I’ve also realized there are a multitude of different areas that can be modified, upgraded, substituted or changed to facilitate both the conservation of materials, energy and water and contributing to the process of being more eco-friendly. Some of these processes, upgrades or changes apply not only to large scale community or building type changes, but can be embraced by individuals as well.

In the coming months we will try to explore options for both conservation and going green that can have an economic impact on our communities and our way of using, purchasing, planning and assessing both short term and long term ideas for long term financial gain for your association that will also benefit the environment. Some of the topics we will explore include: a plan for replacement of light bulbs that will last longer and waste less energy; improvements in irrigation, the benefits of irrigating for deep watering to promote deep root systems; the benefits of mulching to prevent water evaporation from the soil surface; the right plant for the right location and use of native and indigenous material; and the use of pesticides and fertilizers on an as needed basis as opposed to a set schedule and the benefits for this more limited use.

The cost effectiveness of some of the ideas that we will look at may cost a little more up front; however, from an energy reduction standpoint (reducing your electric bill or water bill) and a maintenance cost perspective (reducing the number of man hours required to change out the bulbs so frequently), the ideas will pay for themselves in a short period of time.

So get ready, we’re going to talk green, as in saving the planet and saving your green (\$\$). Our first article on energy efficiencies will be coming your way the 2nd week in March, with each subsequent “green” article the 2nd week of the month. That way we can bring up other issues, ideas and information that may also be of service to you and your community.

Green Tip: Besides light bulbs, did you know that all appliances have some “phantom” use of electricity even when they are not on? The simple suggestion is to plug multiple appliances into a power strip and to actually turn it off when not in use. A simple, but effective idea.

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia