

# Planting The Seeds For a Beautiful St. Charles

By Lisa K. Adams

**T**he center median as well as north and south banks and the Dunham Road entrance area into Fox Chase Boulevard were established around 1971 when the Hunters Woods and Aintree subdivisions were constructed.

The builder at the time had developed the entry areas and landscape along the median and then ownership was turned over to the City of St. Charles. In the late 1980's, builders developing the land west of Aintree Road were not required to extend the Fox Chase Boulevard parkway. Aintree Community Association maintained the shrubs, flowers, and landscape beds in the median for over four decades, but stopped in 2006 due to budget constraints. The median area became overgrown with weeds and unsightly shrubs, an eyesore to the community.

In October of 2010, a group of concerned volunteers banded together to create The Fox Chase Boulevard Median Foundation, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt public entity. This formalized their grassroots efforts to maintain the median that is such a prominent fixture on the East side of St. Charles.

In March of 2011, the Foundation entered into a license agreement with the City of St. Charles that allowed them to proceed with a comprehensive plan for renovation and beautification of the median. This plan incorporated plant life that was both tolerant of the harsh median environment and would be beautiful for years to come. The Foundation relied solely on voluntary contributions from residents in the Fox Chase neighborhoods to complete a multi-year transformation of the median.

"This project is an excellent example of the good things that can be accomplished through the grass roots efforts of those who care about their community," added Ms. Connie Thullen, Foundation President at that time.

Although the grass areas are maintained by the Public Works Department, maintenance is limited to mowing and refuse removal. Additionally, the City plants and maintains the flowers at the entrance and is responsible for the trees.

With the landscape restoration completed, the Fox Chase Boulevard Median Foundation is primarily focused on maintaining, improving, and beautifying the center median areas of Fox Chase Boulevard from the stone pillars at the Dunham Road entrance to Winner's Cup Circle.

Their priorities include:

- Weed control in landscape beds
- Pruning of shrubs/bushes
- Weed control/fertilizer for grass areas
- Replacement of existing plants (impacted by weather, new variety)
- Edging and mulch for existing landscape beds
- Replacement of aging tree groves in partnership with the city of St. Charles

The annual maintenance cost can be five to seven thousand dollars



per year, depending upon the level of care. An additional reserve fund has been established to cover tree grove replacements. The Median Foundation continues to rely on voluntary contributions from Fox Chase residents to fund this ongoing maintenance.

Residents are proud of the sixteen-foot equestrian bronze statue at the Dunham Road entrance sculpted by Clemente Spampinato and installed in 1973. At that time it cost over \$80,000, which equates to about \$250,000 in today's dollars. The statue belongs to the St. Charles Park District and has been a part of the neighborhood for over forty-five years and is listed in the Smithsonian!

The sculpture was placed in its current location originally to protect it from vandals and accidents. Although many residents would prefer a more prominent placement, the cost of moving the statue is prohibitive. The Park District is planning to improve the lighting and add a plaque to the statue this spring.

As the Fox Chase Boulevard Median Foundation plants the seeds for another beautiful season, they are looking for volunteers. Those who enjoy gardening and are invested in the beautification of St. Charles are welcome! They are always seeking ideas and suggestions to improve the Median areas. For more information about the Fox Chase Boulevard Median Foundation visit [foxchaseblvd.org](http://foxchaseblvd.org).

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