

SPAN

A periodic newsletter for owners of *The Bridge*
March 2016

Return of the Newsletter

In order to provide more information on activities at The Bridge, the Board wants to revive this newsletter. Board president, Lisa B. Jones tricked me into volunteering to write a few issues. In a weak moment, I (Huck DeVenzio) agreed to it. Lisa causes me to have weak moments. That's a problem I have to work on. My problems aside, we hope to distribute a newsletter approximately every quarter, or when news warrants. They will be sent to owners, who are asked to forward relevant news to renters.

New Management Company

A new management company, All-In-One Community Management, was hired in December to oversee operation of The Bridge, and to take care of those activities that would be difficult for owners to handle. The Board felt that they would be better able to meet our needs than our past managers.

If you would like to see what they say about themselves, you can visit their website at www.allinonemgmt.com. Incidentally, you can also go there to view our covenants and bylaws and access the Exterior Modification Request form. From the home page, click on "Communities" in the left-hand box and scroll down to Bridge at Mill Pond. Soon we hope to post newsletters and possibly Board meeting minutes on the site.

Our primary representative is Ms. Debbie Pelfrey, who you may see checking regularly on the condition of our community. Please contact Debbie or anyone at All-In-One with issues regarding The Bridge. (dpelfrey@allinonemgmt.com or 678-363-6479)

Annual Meeting

On February 23, our annual homeowners meeting was held at Smyrna Community Center. Nine owners were present, and three others were represented by proxies.

After introductions and assorted meeting necessities, there was a discussion of issues, a review of 2015 improvements, and announcement of plans for 2016. These three items are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our Board is down to three members, its minimum limit by our bylaws, but no one at the meeting wanted to serve. That includes me, but my excuse is that I already put in four or five years on the Board. If you would like to get involved, let someone on the Board know. You have to listen to complaints, but (1) they usually are not directed at you, (2) it does not require much time, (3) you get to know some neighbors, and (4) you

influence what happens in our community.

Following the non-election of Board members, we discussed specific needs of The Bridge and how we might meet them. The wisdom of imposing an assessment was brought up; while no one wanted one, there was general agreement that an assessment could be worthwhile if it funded work that enhanced our neighborhood and helped in selling homes. We adjourned after about one hour and 15 minutes. Since no one offered to buy me a beer, I went home. (It was either that or try to play basketball against some energetic teenagers at the Center.)

Review of 2015 Improvements

More improvements were made than I remembered, and some were significant. During the course of 2015 we conducted two rounds of tree trimming, laid new sod in places, improved drainage, installed new gutters on all buildings, built a new roof on the mailbox kiosk, repaired permanently (we hope) the water leak under the mailboxes, filled potholes, and hired a new termite exterminator who installed more baited traps. There was also landscape work – spreading of mulch and planting of flowers -- done by volunteers on the Landscape Committee. (If you aren't going to volunteer for the Board, how about helping the Landscape Committee?)

We have been following the recommendations of the “reserve study” developed by a contract firm in late 2014. Which leads to...

What's Ahead

There is always more to do than there is money available, but we are trying to tackle the needs outlined by the reserve study without getting too distracted by everyday matters, which are important but can siphon off funds for bigger projects.

The Board is investigating options for painting all buildings. Though needed for both maintenance and beauty, painting would be a major project and impossible without a sizable assessment. One alternative is to paint exterior surfaces on two or three buildings per year. A more desirable choice may be to delay overall painting but proceed with power washing walls and painting and sealing the trim. That may be possible with no assessment or a small one. Quotes and recommendations are being obtained.

Another item on the priority list is repair of the dip in the road on the edge of our bridge. No doubt there will also be opportunities for planting flowers and spreading mulch.

Also under consideration is a community social event. We haven't tried that for a while. We'll have to judge interest in a pool or block party.

Two Biggest Problems

Our reserve fund has grown over the past year, which is really good news for us, but we continue to have two lingering problems: the amount of money owed to the HOA by delinquent owners and the percentage of rentals.

Although we have made some progress in both areas and the new management company thinks they can help with each, the delinquency is hindering us in making some repairs and the high number of rentals exceeds that allowed by our own bylaws. If we could get the money owed to us, we could pay for work that would improve the neighborhood without need for an assessment. Once we get these issues under control, our properties will become more desirable to residents, real estate agents, lenders, and potential buyers.

Pool Keys

To minimize liabilities and outsider use, a new entrance system is going to be established for the pool. Its gate will have a lock that prevents entry without a key. This spring, keys will be issued to all owners who are up-to-date in their payment of fees. Only they and their guests are permitted to use the pool.

It is requested that such owners not allow others to enter the pool area and to inform minors without accompaniment that they need to have an adult present. These steps are not an attempt to be nasty or exclusive, but to limit pool use to those qualified to use it and to protect us from costly legal problems should an accident occur..

Be Neighborly

At the annual meeting, owners complained of un-neighborly actions, or inactions. The Bridge is our home. We live, see, hear, smell, and walk here. Eventually all of us will sell our units. It's not only courteous but practical that we think of our neighbors – and ourselves – when on the grounds. In that regard, please:

- ...park with consideration of other residents
- ...discard waste properly in the compactor, and only proper wastes
- ...be quiet at night
- ...control noisy dogs and unruly children
- ...clean up after pets
- ...do other things that you know you should

Newsletter

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