



Sycamore Springs News

September 2006

Board Meeting Highlights

There was no formal HOA Board meeting in August. Following are highlights from the July HOA Board meeting held July 17:

- High-speed DSL is now available from Qwest. The hook-up fee is \$26.99
- A motion was made and passed to reinvest our \$25,000 CD together with \$15,000 from the Reserve Fund into a \$40,000 11 month CD.
- Still having problems with the Street Sweeper, and the Groundskeeper. Both Al Johnson and Amelie Anderson will be working on correcting.
- New vegetation guideline: A motion was approved to amend the Design Guidelines to provide that any plant or tree on private property that exceeds 25 feet in height must be removed by the homeowner.
- New design guideline: A motion was made and approved to amend the design guidelines' provision for set-back limits on side yards by (a) adding "except for walls" after the word "structures;" and (b) adding a sentence to the effect that the minimum side yard set-back for walls be 25 feet. The previous side yard set-back was 50 feet.
- Sycamore Hiking Trail: The HOA Board is still considering if it would be advantageous to connect to the Sycamore Canyon Hiking Trails System.
- RV Storage violations: Homeowners have 30 days to comply from the date of violation notice.
- Erosion Control update: Approximately \$6000 has been spent on rock and backhoe work thus far. A motion was made and approved to compensate Geoff Mann for his work by waiving the second payment (\$300) of his annual assessment fee.

Next HOA Board Meeting: September 18, 2006 7:00pm at the American Legion. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend; there are lots of important issues to be discussed.

Newsworthy

Community Clean Up

Thanks to everyone who turned out for the annual community clean up back in July. Community Affairs provided coffee and donuts. Even though most of the construction in the community is over, there was still plenty of litter and debris to collect. It was suggested that we move this event to a cooler time of year and then we wouldn't have to get up so early, so the next clean up will likely be scheduled in February or March. No excuses now for "sleeping in"! It was also suggested that we include the Common Areas in our next clean up which is a great idea.

Community Speed Limit – Speed bumps ahead!

The speed limit on roads in the community is **25mph**. Because there have been so many complaints about speeding traffic, the HOA Board is beginning to discuss the option of installing speed bumps. Nobody likes speed bumps, but they do work to slow traffic. **So, if everyone can slow down to 25 mph, we can avoid those nasty, noisy speed bumps.**

New State Law takes effect Sept 21, 2006

The 2006 Arizona Legislature created several changes with respect to the way community associations operate in Arizona. The new laws will take effect September 21, 2006 and are found in House Bill 2824, 2205 and Senate Bill 1007, 1055. To retrieve copies and review these bills, please visit <http://www.azleg.state.as.us/>.

HB 2824 Section B-Administrative Adjudication of Complaints: has created the most interest and publicity as this bill now allows homeowners the right to have an administrative law judge hear their complaints regarding disputes between them and their HOA. Previously, homeowners had to resort to expensive litigation in Superior Court. Filing a complaint still costs money--\$500—but is significantly less than what it would have cost. For more information regarding this process visit www.azoah.com/hb2824 or call 1-602-542-9826.

New Vegetation Guidelines

Trees that are planted as part of homeowner's landscaping and that grow beyond 25 feet tall must be removed according to the recently approved amendment to the Design Guidelines. So, once a tree hits 25 feet tall, homeowners will be required to remove the tree or prune it below 25 feet. Following is a list of trees that commonly grow taller than 25 feet: Blue Hesper Palm, California Fan Palm, Date Palm, Mexican Fan Palm, Queen Palm, Aleppo

Pine, Arizona Ash, Arizona Cypress, Chinese Elm, Chinese Pistache, Colorado Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Cottonwood, Honey Locust, Jacaranda, Oak, Ponderosa Pine, Willow Acacia, Shoestring Acacia, Silk Floss tree, Indian Rosewood, Coolibah, Afghan Pine, Italian Cypress, Mexican Ebony, Texas Honey Mesquite, Chilean Mesquite, Evergreen Elm. Please take note if you have any of these trees in your yard. Reported tree heights will vary depending on the reference source, but they are all very close. This information was taken from Arizona Gardener's Guide, by Mary Irish and Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert, developed by the AMWUA Regional Water Conservation Committee. This is not a complete list of trees that grown in this zone. Horticulturalists say to give a tree less water to slow growth. Eventually, however the tree will reach maturity and may have to be removed.

Community Calendar

Book Club: The next book club gathering is scheduled for Tuesday, September 5th. Plan to meet at 11:30 at Tina Testa's home, call her at 393-8215 for directions. New comers **always** welcome.

Weekly Kickboxing: This group meets each Tuesday evening at 6:30pm at Christine Leach's house. Michele Rouch, who is a past kickboxing instructor, leads the group. Please call Christine for directions and details: 762-1097.

Second Annual Holiday Home Decorating Contest

It is not too soon to start gathering ideas for the Holiday Decorating Season. There were some beautiful and uniquely decorated homes last year and judging was tough, but Community Affairs is up to the task once again. The community looked so festive last year, appreciated and enjoyed by all.

Holiday Progressive Dinner

Community Affairs is busy planning our next Holiday Progressive Dinner. The event will be scheduled for a Saturday evening early in December. We are looking for hosts for this event. If interested please call Linda at 762-1387 or email linda-elling@cox.net.

Neighborhood Courtesies and Comments

Dog walkers: Another reminder to **please** pick up after your pets. Send correspondence to linda-elling@cox.net

Community Reminders

Scorpions: Did you know that most people and kids get scorpion bites from stepping on them barefoot? With the heavy monsoon season we are having, there are lots of scorpions and other dangerous creatures in your courtyard and even in your house, so have your slippers handy.

Violations: If you happened to have received a notice for RV or other type of violation, **the clock is ticking**--you have thirty days from the date of notice to comply!

CC&R Update

A new feature is being added to the Newsletter that will highlight different sections of the CC&R's and the Design Guidelines. Complete copies of each of these documents are available at the HOA website: www.sshoa.info. Thanks to Al Johnson, Architectural Control Committee Chairperson (ACC) for submitting the following article.

THE ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE

Al Johnson

The Architectural Control Committee is the only committee mandated by the CC&Rs and is responsible for approving all construction, design modification and landscaping. Currently, there are four members on the committee. Two are also members of the Board of Directors. The committee is not elected, but is appointed by the Board of Directors. The authority and responsibilities of the ACC are detailed in Article V of the CC&Rs and the Design Guidelines. What this committee does not do is make periodic site inspections or send out violation notices.

Since most of the lots are either built on or are already under construction, approved prior to the formation of the current committee, the typical task we have had is to review plans to build walls, swimming pools and landscaping. Our contract architect first reviews new construction plans. As you might guess, it's impossible to cover every plan in the CC&Rs that a homeowner might conceive. Therefore, the CC&Rs give the ACC "broad discretion" in deciding whether or not an alteration or modification is in "harmony with the natural surroundings".

The bottom line is that the committee reviews each plan and a decision is reached based on the guidelines in the CC&Rs and Design Guidelines. Every homeowner who is planning any construction or landscaping should read these documents before submitting a plan. If you are wondering if you should submit a plan, my advice is to do so. It's very easy, and provides a record of the work on file with the association.

The plan does not have to be complicated or to scale, but it should accurately reflect where on the lot the construction is to take place and what materials and paint or plants are to be used. The homeowner should include the building envelop, setbacks, and building height, at a minimum. Plans usually are approved quickly, if the committee has all the information we need to make a decision. If we have to request additional information, this delays the process.

The simple form for submitting your plan can be obtained from our property manager, Amelie Anderson, 648-6730, or downloaded from our web site, www.sshoa.info. The plan should be submitted to Cadden Community Management. If you are using a contractor, your contractor can supply you with a copy of his plan, particularly if building permits are required. Once your plan is approved, usually within a few days, your project can begin. If anyone has any questions or comments, feel free to email me at LAWMANAJ@MSN.COM.