



Fall 2014 (November)

www.oakbluffestates.com

HOA ANNUAL MEETING 6:30 PM Open, 7:00 Start

By now you should have received the official announcement of our Annual Meeting which starts promptly at 7:00 pm at the Golf Club meeting room, our usual location for this meeting. As there is voting for board members at that meeting, it is important that 29 households are represented physically or by proxy.

In addition to what is on the agenda, we will talk about possible changes to a few of the deed restrictions. These include fence height, fence type, and non-permanent sheds. The latter includes the prefab types, in plastics or wood, that sit on raised platforms rather than a concrete slab, and have no electricity or water running to them. These are controversial issues, and it is appreciated if the members can present the pros and cons in a meaningful fashion so that the board can make appropriate recommendations for changes, if any, next spring.

Also, the assessments are being raised, but the increase will only affect you if you pay after January 31, 2015. The existing rate is \$290. The new rate will be \$315. If you pay by January 31, 2015, the rate is the existing rate of \$290. The rate jumps to \$315 for payments made on or after February 1, 2015. This increase will not affect those who routinely pay their assessments on time, and hopefully provides an incentive to others to pay in a timely manner.

PICTS FROM THE FALL FESTIVAL, OCTOBER 18, 2014



Look for an extended edition of this newsletter, with a photo essay of all that was accomplished this year, on the website.

27+ VOLUNTEERS ADD THE EXTRAS TO YOUR HOA

There was a blossoming of volunteers this year. They were involved with the following. If we missed your name, we are very sorry in advance!

Social Committee: Headed by Janis Delman with assistance from Lisa Treuper, Doreen Kittrell, Katherine Smith, Donna Allen, Dale Ricklefs, Ella Jez, Betty Napoli, Lou Ann Woodall, and Claudia Harbart. We saw a July 5th parade, a great Fall Festival on the land, and the pumpkin carving contest. Coming up, we have the Christmas lights judging and the December 14 family Christmas party held at the Forest Creek Golf Club. Over 200 homes were visited to obtain information for the directory.

Common Areas Committee: The newly formed Landscape Committee vetted and recommended the best bid to the Board. They are finalizing plans for upgrades to three of the medians. Members include Jim Bond as Chair, Andreas Schreyer, Vicki Boriack, Justin Tanner, and Donna Allen.

Yard of the Month: The committee selected yards between April and September. The members included Becky Margolies, Chair; Pam Capelli, Carol Christal, Paul Margolies, and Lou Ann Woodall. Visit the following link for photographs and descriptions of each winning yard. The site also includes a form that describes the judging criteria.

http://oakbluffstates.com/yard_of_month.html

Architectural Control Committee: Members include Jana Dahl, Dennis Sustare, Dale Ricklefs, and Janis Delman. They reviewed about 28 requests for architectural and fencing placements or approvals and shed variance requests. To expedite your requests when spring comes around, the busiest time of the year, be sure to study the guidelines and the form located at:

<http://oakbluffstates.com/docs/ACC/accRequestFormJuly201.pdf>

The Board: Current: Dale Ricklefs, Chair; Justin Tanner, Vice Chair; Donna Allen, Treasurer; Jana Dahl, Secretary; Janis Delman; Lamar Urbanovsky. Others: Linda Cook, Ella Jez.

This year, we also had several ad hoc and single person committees:

CR 123 Property: The committee reviewed the property, studied its legal description and the special warrantee deed, cleared the land from fallen trees as a result of the September 2012 floods and the drought, vetted a few proposals on the use of the land, and made recommendations to the board. Mike Moore, Beverly Nord, Donna Allen, Jana Dahl, and Dale Ricklefs served on that committee.

Home Landscape Committee: Claudia Harbart and Dennis Sustare drafted the guidelines for homeowners who want to reduce watering of their lots by planting water efficient plants. The board approved the document, which can be found at:

http://oakbluffstates.com/docs/Xeriscaping_Guidelines_Approved_July_2014.pdf

DCCRS Revision Team: Lamar Urbanovsky (chair), Michael Wayne, Russell Kampfe, Janis Delman, and Dale Ricklefs made recommendations to the board on suggested changes to the existing DCCRs, which will require a 65% passage by the HOA members. The board is vetting the document and discussing implications of the recommendations by the committee.

Bylaws Revision: Donna Allen reviewed the Bylaws and is currently working with the board to fine tune some provisions. A 55% passage rate is required.

Mutt Mitts: Beverly Nord diligently works on replacing the mutt mitts. Please remember to clean up your dog's mess. NO ONE is paid, or has volunteered, to do this for you. We just provide the mitts.

Website: Leaving the best to last— Nancy Durant. Thank you for your great responsiveness and excellent layout and ease of use of our website!

THREE POSITIONS OPEN ON THE BOARD

There will be three positions open on the board. Janis Delman and Dale Ricklefs are not seeking office again. You received, with the announcement of the meeting, a form that asks you to name up to three potential board members, sending the names on to the Nominating Committee. Please send the names to a board member before the November 12 board meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor as well.

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT TWO YEARS

It is with mixed emotions that I announce to you that I will not seek another term on the HOA board. The past two years have been rewarding as managing change is what I like to do, and change has been your Board's *modus operandi* during this time. We

- Replaced the previous property manager with RealManage
- Created guidelines that allow for xeriscaping or water wise planting
- Standardized the ACC process and posted a document describing that process
- Cleaned up the 14 acres that we own on CR 123, particularly removing downed trees
- Managed an ever changing board
- Improved communication with the HOA through a great, current website; increased use of Constant Contact beyond announcing social events; and two newsletters (there will be four next year)
- Took a stab at revising the bylaws
- Continued to work on the DCCRs, asking for more community input on potential changes
- Held a Town Hall meeting to gain input on the DCCRs, Bylaws, CR 123 property use, and home landscaping
- Created a directory, requiring one-on-one contact with 2/3 of the HOA membership (Thanks Janis and Donna for spearheading this individual initiative!)
- Held a National Night Out on the official day
- Revitalized the Fall Festival (Way to go Lisa, Doreen, and your crew!)
- Reformed the Common Areas (Landscaping) Committee and began plans for redoing the medians, which should come to fruition in January /February 2015
- Maintained older on-going traditions such as the July 4th parade and the Christmas dinner (2013)
- Reviewed about 23 ACC requests in 2014, a significant jump from 10 in 2013
- Grew community volunteerism from 6 board members and roughly 10 regular volunteers at the start of 2013 to 6 board members and over 21 active volunteers by the end of 2014.

Though we had two board members move out of the community in 2013 and two members step down in 2014, we continually improved as we got to know each other better and each person found his or her niche.

My personal life has changed. Since my election as an HOA board member, I was elected onto the board of my church, and then elected an officer; rejoined the Round Rock Community Choir; began service as the Chair of the UT School of Information Advisory Council, a member of the UT Development Board, and a member of the Texas Exes Advisory Council; and started taking art courses. Busy!

I feel the community is in good hands. There will be challenges as the board is still relatively young in terms of board longevity. All members were new in January 2013. No one remaining on the board served a full year in 2013. And, we have a new RealManage property manager, Candace Sparks. I hope each of you continues to support these hard working volunteers and staff! You can do this by volunteering!

Dale Ricklefs, President 2013-2014

CLEANING UP YOUR PROPERTY IS A YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITY

We have a lovely neighborhood. And it could certainly be more lovely by fixing these elements around your home, if applicable. The HOA board is enforcing the DCCRS.

Fences: Leaning, broken, decaying fences detract from an otherwise lovely neighborhood. They also make for unhappy neighbors. Consider sharing the cost to replace your neighbor's ugly adjacent fence. Only submit an ACC request if you are replacing the fence with a different appearance, materials, color, or height. An exact replacement? JUST DO IT!

Maintaining your house's exterior: This is not an inexpensive proposition. Consider doing it in stages, such as point loose or missing mortar one year, add new siding the next year, paint fascia and other trim a third year if needed. A little bit at a time makes it palatable.

Yard waste, removal of dead plants and trees: The board will enforce the removal of dead plants and mowing of weedy lots during the winter. Please ask your local nursery on the best methods to make your plants winter hardy. Sometimes you have to cut back a plant before a freeze to spare the roots!

Swimming pools: It is early to think about this, but check with the city first to find out if and when they will provide pool permits. Before committing to a pool, ensure that you review the requirements in the ACC guidelines referred in this newsletter.

Sheds: At the current time, sheds are not approved unless they meet the guidelines clearly spelled out in the DCCRs. The ACC will be reviewing sheds out of compliance over the next few months.

Below is the most frequent question made by those who want a variance from the DCCRS. In some cases, the request is made after the work has already been done. Not following the restrictions can be costly.

Q: I want to add (fill in your choice: a non-conforming fence, shed, garage, second building) but you're telling me I cannot do that, but I see these types of structures in our subdivision. Why can't I do this?

A: In some cases, there were approvals by previous boards. In other cases, homeowners just did it and did not ask for approval, and no one caught it. These situations grew over time. However, in legal training the board learned that there is a threshold where compliance cannot be reasonably enforced due to too many homes being out of compliance. Likewise, there is a minimum threshold where the DCCRs can be enforced and the Board would likely win a challenge in court.

Bottom line— do you want to live in your deed restricted subdivision and follow its restrictions? The discussion continues...

YOUR 2014 BOARD

Dale Ricklefs, President
Justin Tanner, Vice President
Donna Allen, Treasurer
Jana Dahl, Secretary
Janis Delman, Director
Lamar Urbanovsky, Director

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Social: Janis Delman
Architectural (ACC): Jana Dahl
Common Areas: Jim Bond

PROPERTY MANAGER

RealManage, Candace Sparks
oakbluff@circmail.com

HOA NEWS

www.oakbluffestates.com

Constant Contact (an email based newsletter)— sign on through website

Facebook page- The Facebook page is not considered official communication. However, neighbors use this to communicate with each other. When requested, the HOA Board will respond to a question related to a policy, procedure, or activity. The website, Constant Contact, this newsletter, community meetings, and information from RealManage constitute official communication outlets.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384227548332961/>