

Whispering Lakes Ranch Newsletter

A Quarterly Update from the Maintenance Association Board of Directors

Volume 1, Number 1

July 2011

A NEW BEGINNING

Greetings Neighbors! You elected a Board of Directors at the May 19th meeting. The slate of officers is:

President	(2 Year Term)	Steve Glenn
Vice President	(1 Year Term)	Frank Prisco
Secretary	(1 Year Term)	Peter Bauer
Treasurer	(2 Year Term)	Jeff Farmer
Director	(3 Year Term)	Roy Hunter

We welcome you to stop by our community web site at <http://wlrhome.com> and create an account if you're not already a member. There, you can read much more about your community and your new HOA Board of Directors. We also invite you to join us at our next WLR Quarterly HOA Board Meeting to be held on August 1, 2011 at 8:00PM CDT in the HCMS building.

We new Board members rolled up our sleeves right away and got to work. We communicate with each other and with our contracted management company, Houston Community Management Services (HCMS), on issues just about every day, and we have had informal talks of 2-3 hours on all but one Thursday evening so far to discuss problems and take needed actions. Let's touch on a few of the big ticket items.

COMMITTEES

The first committee we are bringing to life is the **Architectural Control Committee (ACC)**, chaired by Roy Hunter. In addition to the construction of several new homes, mostly in Section 3, many neighbors throughout WLR are busy improving their properties. Until now, the Board has been

reviewing all ACC requests – over 20 of them just since our May 19th meeting so we look forward to the help!

Close on the heels of the ACC are our other committees:

Landscape, chaired by Frank Prisco

Go Green chaired by Steve Glenn

Social chaired by Peter Bauer

Finance chaired by Jeff Farmer

We are also creating two ad hoc (temporary) committees:

Deed Restriction Committee chaired by Jeff Farmer:

It is clear that various clauses scattered throughout our Deed Restrictions do not particularly well serve our neighborhood. We therefore are forming an ad hoc committee to draft a rewrite that will better reflect the unique character and high quality of our neighborhood. There are also upcoming changes in state law to consider. This will not be a rush job; it'll take time, a lot of neighbor involvement, and tedious work to adjust our rules while fairly considering the many concerns that will arise. That will be only half task, though. Any change to the Deed Restrictions requires a majority vote of all 310 properties. So we call on everyone to put on your thinking caps and be actively engaged in the process!

Boyd PUD ad hoc Committee chaired by Peter Bauer: This is a group of neighbors who collectively took the initiative earlier this year to look into a Planned Unit Development Overlay that Mr. Sam Boyd requested the city to approve just outside our South perimeter, next to the Centurion Palace. This is a complicated matter, but in essence Mr. Boyd

wishes to develop his land into a tract of warehouses and office warehouses. Once established, our elected Board chose to officially endorse and provide support for the dedicated efforts of what is more commonly known as “the Core Team” to negotiate with Mr. Boyd and city officials toward satisfactory limitations on the character of this PUD. This issue is next scheduled to be on the City Council agenda for August 9th.

Once the Boyd PUD matter has been concluded, it may be worth considering whether or not to transition the PUD Committee into a standing Community Liaison Committee. Most of the land around WLR is yet to be developed and one point of view holds that we should engage with the city and prospective developers to influence that development toward mutual benefit.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

Even though the current deed restrictions may not be perfect, they are the current binding agreement by which we strive to maintain the beauty, neighborliness, and value of WLR.

Nobody likes to get those “nastygrams” from the management company about a deed restriction violation. We, like many of you, had concerns about the correctness and consistency of enforcement of our deed restrictions in the past. Therefore, one of our first discussions as a board was whether or not to immediately replace the management company or to wait and see how they perform for us as an elected Board, rather than for Mr. Boyd as a developer.

After some discussion, we decided to continue our contract with HCMS, while asking for a new property manager. This allowed us to maintain the continuity we needed as a newly seated Board, but did make a clean break with the developer-manager pairing that was associated with so much community dissatisfaction.

Our new HCMS property manager is Emily McIlrath, and thus far we have found her to be extremely responsive and helpful to the Board – not to mention patient with us as we take much more active and assertive roles than Boards typically do as we get ourselves more educated about the problems and needs of our community.

But back to those “nastygrams” or Deed restriction violation letters. There was a bit of a slow-down on letters earlier this year due to the transition from developer to elected board. That time has ended. However, fear not. The Board has taken the initiative to review ALL cases before a violation letter is sent out. Although this is a temporary measure to provide Emily and us the opportunity to work closely together and get in synch, we do anticipate it should reduce the number of letters on small, temporary issues. The other side of the coin is that if you do get a violation letter in the next few months, be aware it has already been reviewed by a Board member. So whether you agree with it or not, at least address it promptly either by correcting the problem or providing more information as to why you believe the letter was in error.

OUR COMMON PROPERTY

Pool Contract. As was apparent to anyone using our pool, it was not being maintained to the high standards that we all expect in our neighborhood. The Board gave notice of termination to the current

How to get help...

For an emergency: 911

Routine LC Police: 281-332-2566

For community maintenance problems

Call HCMS : 832-864-1200

pool company, effective July 17th and has entered into a temporary arrangement with another company for maintenance and significant repairs to neglected and failing hardware as we arrange a competitive bidding process for a new contract.

There has, most unfortunately, been vandalism in the pool area on several occasions. There is no excuse for such destructive behavior. To those who fail to respect our common property, be warned: we are enhancing our neighborhood security and when we catch future perpetrators of any crime, the consequences will be severe.

Thanks to the personal efforts of Roy Hunter and Frank Prisco, we have many new trees gracing Whispering Lakes Ranch Drive. We are also proceeding with a full reserve study to help us establish a solid fiscal policy going forward, and seeking a company that can do a proper inspection of our wooden bridge.

With the record drought, the community lakes are at amazingly low levels. On the plus side, this has allowed the contractor that maintains our lakes to get to some debris, such as trampolines blown in by Hurricane Ike, out of the water. The minus side is that we had to shut off our beautiful fountains to avoid damaging the expensive pumps. They'll have to stay off until the lake levels rise significantly. They're also surprisingly expensive to operate, but more on that another time.

While we're on the subject of the drought, we just want to offer everyone a friendly reminder that League City is under mandatory water restrictions enforced by fines of \$500 per incident. For more information, go to this page on the League City web site.

You may have heard about the new Golf Cart Law. Most importantly, because we are a gated community with private streets, this ordinance does NOT apply as long as you operate your cart within the community. If you do wish to use your cart

elsewhere in the city, please review the new ordinance and get the required inspection and permit.

The issue of regular patrols of our neighborhood by the League City police department was also recently brought to us. As presented, this is an all-or-nothing deal. Either we decline and the police will come out to the neighborhood only if called and will not conduct regular random patrols at all, or we accept and they will enforce ALL city ordinances and state laws. For instance, you would be ticketed if caught driving your golf cart without your driver license in possession. The Board discussed this at fair length and decided not to ask for patrols at this time since it would significantly impact the private community lifestyle that is for many residents an important part of what they were buying when they chose to live here.

That notwithstanding, we certainly share the safety concerns many people have expressed about neighbors who, for example, drive recklessly. As we develop more clarity on how our community and its surrounds will develop, we will also develop a community safety and security plan. We can always opt in to the police patrols at a later time as part of that security plan if we choose.

IN CLOSING

We thank our fellow residents for the opportunity to serve our neighborhood. We have been working diligently to improve our neighborhood and will continue to do so. Like a mother's work, though, the job is never done. So we invite all of our neighbors to be active, involved participants in the growth, value, and beauty of Whispering Lakes Ranch.

Steve Glenn, President
Frank Prisco, Vice President
Peter Bauer, Secretary
Jeff Farmer, Treasurer
Roy Hunter, Director