

Walnut Ridge Homeowners Association

Aug 2020 Walnut Ridge HOA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, Aug 26, 2020—7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting- Zoom

Attendance: Board members: Jim Neugebauer (Vice President), Robert (Bob) Kipling (President), Laurie Winkelbauer (Secretary)

Representative from PJ Morgan Real Estate - Kathy Kavan (Treasurer)

Homeowners in attendance: Thomas Wilson, Kerry Dirks, Andy Smith, JoAnn Rowedder, Francesco Caracciolo, Bill Clark, Terry King, Matt Leonard, Corilee Meidlinger, Margaret Conlon

Call to Order- Bob Kipling

- Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Bob welcomed all attendees and introduced board members

Officer Reports:

Secretary Report – Laurie Winkelbauer

- Laurie Read the July HOA Meeting Minutes
- July 2020 meeting minutes attached
- July 2020 minutes approved
- All normal HOA sponsored neighborhood activities have been suspended during the pandemic

Treasurer Report - Kathy Kavan

- Financial Statement for Fiscal Year 2019/2020 was sent to the board before the meeting.
- Budget statements were previously reviewed and approved by the board.
- Kathy read the financial statement line by line.
- Have approximately \$37,000 in the HOA now. Also have approximately \$36,077 from special assessments that were collected thus far, in an interest bearing money market account for the planned fence replacement
- Financial statement attached
- In 2019 90% of homeowners paid HOA dues. In 2020 92% of homeowners paid annual HOA dues and the special assessment for planned fence replacement. Of those who have not paid some have not paid for more than one year.
- Liens have been placed on homes that have not paid the annual dues and special assessment for 2019 and any previous years. Walnut Ridge Covenants state liens are to be placed on properties for failure to pay dues.
- The board was concerned about the pandemic related financial issues some homeowners may be facing this year and none wanted to place liens on those who are struggling at this time. Homeowners who have special financial considerations during the 2020 pandemic have been strongly encouraged to reach out to PJ Morgan regarding dues/special assessment.
- Thank you to Kathy for her help to the HOA and the board for this past year!!

Architectural & Landscaping Report – Bob Kipling

- Priorities have been upkeep of areas that belong to Walnut Ridge neighborhood. It was shared the board voted to not put more HOA funds into park lighting which is continually needing repairs. Rodents and age of electrical components are a big factor in the expensive electrical

damage we continue to see. Will continue to maintain lighting at front entrances for safety and ambience.

- Bob explained the process for neighbors to submit a request for approval (ACR) for architectural changes to the board
 - Go to PJ Morgan website
 - Property Management
 - Home Owners Association
 - Click on Walnut Ridge HOA
 - Click on ACR Form under the Documents heading
 - Can print out ACR form and with mail or scan/email to Kathy Kaven at PJ Morgan
- Process for ACR approval: Once received by PJ Morgan the ACR will be immediately forwarded to all board members via email for approval. Generally approval is within a day or two. To date the board has approved every single APR request. There was one instance where a home owner submitted a request in June 2020 and that request was lost at PJ Morgan. The request was found and passed on to the board in August. The request was then promptly approved. This is not the norm and PJ Morgan has taken additional steps to prevent this from happening again.
- Bob encouraged all home owners/neighbors to check out the Walnut Ridge information page on the PJ Morgan web site. He explained all updates to the website. He is still working to update the information on that page so it is more helpful to everyone and accurate. Also on that site can be found the reinstated covenants and bylaws.
- Everyone was appreciative of Bob for working to get the information updated for all of us.
- A g-mail account was created as a means for neighbors to communicate to the board: walnutridgehoa.ne@gmail.com. Bob is personally checking this email account 1-2x per week.
- Due to COVID, no updates to the 160 St entrance planned sidewalk installation by the City of Omaha. City of Omaha project is on hold. We will update the neighborhood when we hear anything more on this project.

Safety Report – Jim Neugebauer

- OCCP – Omaha Coalition Citizen Patrol is active in our neighborhood.
- This is comprised of volunteers from Walnut Ridge and Elk Creek neighborhoods.
- Currently have 25 trained volunteers with 15 who are regularly patrolling Walnut Ridge and Elk Creek neighborhood
- Could use more trained OCCP volunteers. Please contact Jim if you need more information about OCCP or how to become a volunteer. We need you!
- OCCP meets monthly at Don and Millie's on 162 and west Maple
- OCCP will drive through the neighborhood looking for any safety issues.
- Luckily, No big safety issues in our neighborhood in the past few months
- Lately OCCP are seeing minor things such as cars parked the wrong direction on the street. Warning notice is placed on the cars. Will also notify home owners after dark if their garage door is noticed to be up.
- Thank you to all the volunteers to provide this amazing service to the entire neighborhood!

New Business – Bob Kipling

- HOA board president recently resigned. A big factor in losing this valuable board member was the amount of anonymous often angry complaints and letters placed in his home mail box and the demands that he fix those complaints.
- As a board of volunteers this kind of homeowner behavior is not helpful and is causing burnout of current board members. The accountability of home owners in taking steps to resolve their issues with their neighbors has been nonexistent for the most part.

There is a lack of ownership on the part of neighbors to reach to and get to know their neighbors.

- The board has taken the stance that going forward the HOA board members will not respond to any anonymous complaints.
- All complaints should be submitted to the Walnut Ridge g-mail (walnutridgehoa.ne@gmail.com) or to Kathy Kavan at PJ Morgan and **must be** signed by the person submitting the complaint. Also, any potential ideas for how to resolve the issue would be appreciated.
- The Board will no longer respond to any complaints about neighbors. The Board is only responsible for managing issues associated with common areas that belong to Walnut Ridge.
- If Walnut Ridge residents have issues with their neighbors it is up to them to have a respectful discussion with that neighbor about their concern. Should that approach not work there are other avenues they can pursue:
 - Calling the City of Omaha Mayor's hotline for any issued involving City property or City code violations (examples: street parking, sidewalks issues, trash build up or unsafe storage on personal property, overgrown lawns/noxious weeds)
 - Hire an attorney as an individual or with a group of neighbors for issues that can't be resolved
- Covenants and issues enforcing them
 - It is recognized the our Covenants which were first instituted by the subdivision builder/planner in 1993, and later amended on majority vote of homeowners in 2013, now need to be updated.
 - In order to update existing covenants we would need a 75% majority vote of homeowners on any proposed changes.
 - In the coming months the Board will be looking at existing covenants and considering which individual covenants to keep, which to delete and which to add. Neighbor attendance at any upcoming HOA meeting (most likely virtual via zoom) would be appreciated. Your input is needed. The Board will then propose the amended covenants to all homeowners for vote.
 - There are many complaints about covenant violations that irritate neighbors. The perception is that the Board is not doing anything about the violations. The fact is the HOA doesn't have enough money to legally do anything about violations when home owners refuse to comply. The Board will send a respectful letter through PJ Morgan to the home owner notifying them of the violation and will ask for a response by a certain date. In most cases the home owners who are notified by the Board do not comply with a request to abide by the covenants. (All home owners signed a document to uphold and abide by the covenants when they purchased their home. Many deny ever signing a document or knowing of the covenants) A member of the HOA board, usually the President, will also attempt to have a respectful conversation with the home owner in some cases if the letter(s) that was sent to them is ignored. However, this is often not a pleasant task and a lot to ask a volunteer President or Board member to be accountable for. Home owners who violate covenants are not happy when approached. Some have threatened to take legal action against the HOA/subdivision.
 - One of the proposed new covenants the Board is considering adding will be to initiate a fine structure to assist in enforcement of covenants, more discussion to come.
 - Current covenant violations in the neighborhood include: trash cans permanently left in front of garages at multiple residences, approximately 15

known sheds in back yards, multiple above ground pools (**although there is great sympathy right now for the pandemic and closing of public pools. No one has taken action about above ground pools**), satellite dishes installed so they are visible from the front view of the home. Depending on which home owner we talk to there are differences in what people do and don't want as covenants.

- Covenant law has changed and violations have gotten out of hand. There is no way to currently enforce existing covenant. There are some home owners who want all covenants removed.
- We need more volunteers to serve on the Board. We have a skeleton crew Board. Please reach out if you are willing to help. We could specifically use someone willing to help oversee landscaping issues.
- One neighbor shared an issue in which a neighbor of his has a parked trailer/camper on the driveway and asked for help in how to resolve the issue. It has been there for 4 months and hasn't been moved. Current covenants state a trailer or camper can be temporarily kept on a driveway between the months of May through Sept.

Next HOA Meeting

- Next meeting will be in October 2020. Will plan on another virtual meeting via free Zoom. Details to be announced. Will plan to discuss amending covenants at the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.

A big *thank you* to all who took the time to attend the meeting, to ask questions or to voice concerns. We have a great neighborhood with a lot of good and decent people for our neighbors. We all appreciate each and every one of you!

A big **thank you** from all present to our outgoing President, Matt Leonard, for his service and dedication to the neighborhood and to Bob Kipling for graciously stepping up to become the HOA President.