



AUTUMN WOOD Homeowners Association

October, November, December

The Push for New Governing Documents: They Just Make Sense

In September, the USPS officially delivered to all Members of the Autumn Wood HOA, the Updated and Restated Covenants, Codes & Restrictions (CC&Rs) and By-laws. That's attorney-speak for revised documents to eliminate paragraphs that are no longer useful or needed to govern the Association. These two documents are part of the regulatory suite that governs the operations of the Association, sets responsibilities and restrictions for Owners and Tenants, and provides authorizations and limitations for the HOA Directors.

Staying current with California regulations is the main reason our Association is bothering to update the CC&Rs (and the Bylaws). The Davis-Stirling Act of 2010 drove many of the changes to our CC&Rs; other changes were needed by the mere passage of time; and still other changes were drawn by common sense and practicality. Another important element in this updating effort is to remove legally those paragraphs, content, and protections that refer to the "Declarant" – Griffin Home builders – so that those of us who bought homes here become the masters of our destiny. To achieve this officially, Members must approve the 'new' documents to replace the old

(See *Documents* page 2)



Get on the HOA "flash message" mailing list; send a message to: Prez@autumnwood.org

Solar Power Installations Are Hitting a New High

For years, many have touted the benefits of solar power. Now, those black panels are topping a few of the roofs in our neighborhood.

You must receive written approvals from Simi Valley City Planning and the Autumn Wood HOA before you begin installing your solar panels. Submit your plans via the Resident Improvement Application (RIA) to the Architectural Review Committee in enough time to get those approvals. Specific external installation details must be clarified in the RIA. In some cases, installers who were not familiar with the requirements of Zero Lot Line residences attempted to place components of the solar project within their neighbor's easement, which is not acceptable and violates the CC&Rs.

It is best to get your project specifications resolved with the solar company before you plunk down any money. Find out what 'extra' equipment the installer requires and where they plan to put it. Items like cut-off switches, circuit-breaker panels, and micro inverters all have specific shapes and sizes,

(See *Solar* page 2)



Inside this issue:

Stucco Stain Removal	2
Reserve Planning	2
Budget News	2
New in the CC&Rs?	3
Switching to Satellite	3
Trim and Metal Flashing	3
Security At The Pool	3
Board Review	4
Scheduled Meetings	4
Gift Card Drawing	4
Cigarette Litter	4
Payments & E-banking	4

2013-2014 Board of Directors

Position	Director
President	Frank Boardman
Vice-President	Irene Allen
Treasurer	Sean Wolpin
Secretary	Monsef Sidrak
Member At Large	Joe Gibbons
Member At Large	Paul Hobbs
Member At Large	Lee Mainwal

Documents (Continued from page 1)

ones, then have them filed with the Ventura County Recorder's Office. If the Membership does not approve the new documents, the old CC&Rs and Bylaws remain in place. The Association will have to continue to apply the 'old' requirements and continue spending money on another round of the approval process; or, the HOA must take the documents to court where a judge imposes them upon us, also at a cost.

State law requires Members to use the Secret Ballot method to vote to ratify, or approve, the documents at a meeting to be held October 15th. A quorum of 67% is needed to ratify the proposed governing documents. That means at least 98 Homeowners must approve the 'new' documents. Homeowners who return their ballots by mail prior by October 11 need not attend the meeting. If necessary, the Board will convene a forum at the November meeting with an attorney present so homeowners may get answers to their specific concerns.



Don't wait until the last minute to send in your ballot. Follow the simple instructions: Mark your vote on the Secret Ballot and place it inside the smaller of the two envelopes (the pink one). Seal that envelope. Make no identifying marks on the Secret Ballot or on the smaller (pink) envelope. Seal the pink envelope inside the larger (yellow) one. In the upper left hand corner of the yellow envelope, please *print* your name, and the address that entitles you to vote *and then sign*. If your name, address, and signature, are not on this envelope, the Inspector of the Election cannot count it and will show it as void. *Please recheck*

this. The yellow ballot envelopes are pre-addressed with postage paid.

If quorum is achieved, these envelopes will be opened by the Inspector of Election, who will tally the votes at the meeting.

It is very important that you vote, and that your vote count!

Contact your Board of Directors via Prez@autumnwood.org if you have questions or concerns about these documents.

Stucco Stain Removal

The Review Team noticed during the monthly walk-throughs an increased number of residences that are blemished with stucco stains. These brown-gray areas on the stucco, usually caused by dirt, dust, and excess paint pigment that has been carried off the roof by the few rainy days we've had this year, will make your house look old, unkempt, and detract from the true value. Most walls, except those that are severely stained, can be cleaned simply with the hose, or, in more stubborn cases, by pressurized water.

Check the front and sides of your residence to see if you have stucco stains that must be removed.

Solar (Continued from page 1)

and particular placement requirements. City Planners understand the implications of our CC&Rs and will work closely with installation teams to develop "situational changes" - those onsite modifications to the original engineering plan - in order to accommodate our CC&R requirements. Do not let the installation team bully you into accepting work that will not meet City or HOA standards. It may cost you additional monies later.

Reserve Planning

Every year the Treasurer and the Board review the Association's capital assets using an industry-standard tool known as a *Reserve Study*. The Reserve Study identifies each asset, showing cost, expected remaining useful life of the item, estimated cost for replacement, and how big a portion of the monthly Assessment the Association should be putting in a reserve fund for that item. Some items require immediate replacement during the year because they fail their function; others continue their useful life; and still a few are added as we gain new assets. The Reserve Study is another valuable tool the Board applies to maximize the Association's funds.



Budget News

Your Board of Directors believes an increase in the HOA Assessments will not be necessary for the coming 2014 Fiscal Year. "At this stage in the planning process, that is good news, of course," Sean Wolpin, HOA Treasurer says. "We have been fortunate in adhering to most of our other [budget] numbers despite increases in water consumption and a few other over budget costs." Costs from vandalism are lower this year and contribute to this funding success.

Budget planning concludes by the end of October when the Budget Committee proposes the *pro forma* budget required by the State law to the Board, which in turn, approves its release and implementation for the 2014 Fiscal Year. Homeowners will receive a copy as a part of the Annual Summary.

What's New in the CC&Rs? Did the HOA Sneak In Some New Rules?

A direct comparison to the Proposed CC&Rs with the existing CC&Rs is difficult. Generally, the attorney adopted the same CC&Rs that were in place 25 years ago, but removed any reference to the Declarant (Griffin Homes) and also incorporated Common Interest Development (Davis-Stirling) Act citations into our CC&Rs so that Homeowners understand the law at our immediate level. The language (words, terms, phrases, and dates) was made consistent throughout.

The Easement sections for Utilities and Owner maintenance are essentially the same since we live in a unique environment (Zero Lot Line Lots). The Driveway Landscape Easement is better articulated. Architectural improvement requirements, Assessments (dues), Non-Payment Remedies, Obligation to Maintain, Damage to Common Area, and most of the “miscellaneous and not-often-used” Articles were rewritten to comply with California State laws.

Of note, Article VI, *Architectural Control*, contains a few changes. It removes the processing fee for applications except in few cases; establishes a Notice of Completion requirement for completed work; provides for HOA inspection (if needed), enforcement, and an appeal process. It also allows case-by-case Variances.

Article VII, *Use*, is probably the most interesting portion for homeowners to read, for it is in these Sections the HOA made important changes. The table illustrates the major changes.

In terms of a page count, the Proposed document is a much thinner document: 65 vice 91 pages.

Another note of importance: these changes will not affect our Association Assessments (dues).

Old CC&Rs (Article X)	Proposed CC&Rs (Article VII)
No professional, commercial activities allowed	Home-based businesses are governed.
No window coverings allowed	Tinted film allowed on windows.
No unsightly items allowed	Unsightly items limited to 'fence height' or out of sight.
(Not addressed)	'Backyard junk' must be hidden from frontal view.
Only overnight parking allowed. No vehicle maintenance allowed. No storage allowed.	Driveways, parking, and vehicle repairs are better defined and governed.
Garage Door must be closed	(Not addressed; it's your stuff to lose; don't let it become "unsightly")
Exterior Improvements restricted.	Exterior Improvements identified and governed.
Pets limited to two per Lot	Pet numbers align to City codes
No antennas allowed	TV receiving equipment governed
(Not addressed)	Solar power equipment governed
No sports equipment allowed	Sports equipment allowed when in use and maintained

Switching to Satellite?

If you have made the decision to move to a satellite dish, get approval before any installation using the Resident Improvement Application (RIA). To meet Association standards, the satellite dish must be installed with the wires running through the attic or wall of the house, or neatly along the face and sides of the house and/or trim and blended to the color of the house/trim. There is no reason for the dish to be mounted on the front or near the front of the house for better reception. Ideally, the dish should be screened from view from the adjacent streets, sidewalks, and surrounding properties.

House Trim and Metal Flashing

Look at your house as if you were a prospective buyer. Have the elements deteriorated the trim? Is the metal flashing at the roofline showing its age? Although seemingly insignificant, these two repairable items will make a difference in the overall presentation of your home.

Because trim boards are the outermost covering, they are subject to moisture, which can cause rot over time and if not replaced, the rot can spread to the house framing.

The flashing along the edge prevents rainwater from seeping under the roof tiles, rotting the wood, and entering the attic and should be painted the color of the trim.

Security At The Pool: The Cost Of Personal Consideration

In 2010, your Board of Directors realized affordable security patrols only centered on the pool area but still proved ineffective in preventing vandalism. To avoid raising the \$75 HOA Assessment for a substandard service, the Board shifted the budget line item and focused on putting physical deterrents in place at the pool area: cameras, electronic locks and keys, iron spikes, and location lighting. That is a savings of \$10,800 annually and is better used to balance other budget items.

We can all contribute to our own safety and security at the pool and in our neighborhoods, as well, by being good neighbors and community citizens. Following the rules is one aspect. Smoking, ‘talking trash’, being intoxicated, or being ‘on a high’ in the pool area are not acceptable forms of behavior and will not be tolerated, nor should they be. Being considerate toward your neighbors is a hallmark of a tight-knit Association. Our Common Facilities exist for the benefit of all Members of the Association, not just a few. No one has any exclusive rights.



ABM Property Management

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Simi Valley, CA 93063

Raven Stefanelli, Assistant Manager
Phone: 805-522-0292, ext 105
E-mail: ahf@abmpropertymgmt.com
Or: raven@abmpropertymgmt.com

The HOA Website:
<http://autumnwood.org>

Scheduled Directors' Meetings

When:	OCT 15	NOV 19	DEC
Where:	Vintage	Vintage	None

The Board of Directors for 2013-2014

In July, thirty percent of the HOA Membership voted to fill the three Board member positions for the 2013-2014 Administrative Year. The nominated candidates for those seats were Irene Allen, and Lee Mainwal. The membership seats held by Sean Wolpin, Joe Gibbons, Paul Hobbs, and Monsef Sidrak were not up for re-election.

Following the reconvened Annual Meeting, the Directors reorganized to designate administrating officers: Irene Allen was selected as Vice-President; Sean Wolpin remained as Treasurer; and Monsef Sidrak continues as Secretary. The Board appointed Frank Boardman to the unfilled seat as President.

The Board avows to continue to make the Autumn Wood HOA one of the best functioning Associations in Simi Valley.

Don't miss your chance to win a \$20 gift card!

Homeowners who return their voting ballot have a chance at one of the five \$20 Gift Cards from Albertson's grocery store. Drop the coupon from the voting instructions into the **yellow** envelope before sealing. The drawing will be held along with the ballot counting process. Note: if a quorum is not achieved, the envelopes cannot be opened and the drawing cannot take place.

Cigarette Litter

In many cities and communities in the nation, smoking outdoors is banned or outlawed—not only because of health hazards of the smoke but also the litter blight.

In just one day 230,000 cigarette butts were collected from California beaches during the 2000 Coastal Cleanup Day. Cigarette butts were the number one trash item found.¹

A cigarette butt or cigar tip dropped to the ground seems insignificant. But follow that butt as it's carried off by rain into storm drains and eventually to streams and rivers. It now adds up to a big impact on the places we live: In fact, 32% of litter at storm drains is tobacco products.²

Our *No Smoking in the Pool Area* is a posted rule that most of our pool users abide by. But what about when you smoke elsewhere?

Are you the kind of smoker that when finished, pitches the butts into the street, into the bushes or hedges? Or, do you field-strip it and properly dispose of the remnants?



Cigarette litter is becoming a problem within our Development. Now that you are aware of it, you too will notice the little pieces of white paper everywhere: in the gutters, in the middle of the street, just off the sidewalks, and outside the pool gate.

Do your part and dispose of cigarette litter properly. Set examples for others by not littering. Make others aware of this effort.

¹ www.cigarettelitter.org

² "Litter in America" 2009 KAB Research

Where do I mail my HOA Assessments (dues)?

Mail your check along with the coupon to:

Autumn Wood HOA
c/o First Bank
P.O. Box 15028
Vallejo, CA 94591-1928

In the memo block of the check, **be sure that you precede your LOT number with, "237-AHF-AW___"**. (For example, 237-AHF-AW058, for lot number 058)

What about e-banking?

If you are paying via auto-pay or electronically, be very sure your 'account number' includes your Lot number as in the example noted above!

Should you need a contact phone number, use 888-350-0078, Lock-box Services.