

Westwind / Desert Breeze

Aka Dave Brown @ Mtn & University HOA

Newsletter

June 2010

The Journey of Westwind/Desert Breeze

Written by Nancy Salzwedel

For those of you who are new to the community, the following is an overview of our community's journey.

Over the past decade, with the deterioration of the economy and some homeowners either losing their homes and/or do not have the ability to pay their HOA assessments, the HOA funds began to dwindle and the HOA could no longer afford basic landscaping services.

The common areas, the natural wash and the park were overgrown with weeds and tree limbs extended to the ground providing the perfect cover for underage drug and alcohol use, sex, and other activities. Trash littered the community, park lights were being shot out on a weekly basis and as soon as they were replaced, they were shot out again. Many block walls contained graffiti that had to be painted over; beer cans, syringes and prophylactics were found under the overgrown trees and in the park and natural desert wash areas.

With concerns of safety, the regression in the appearance of the community, the decline in property values, and the increase in graffiti and drug activity, approximately a dozen homeowners in the community came together and "the journey" began.

This group of determined individuals, (ages ranging from 40 to 75 years old), began getting together every weekend at 6:00 am from June through November armed with chainsaws, loppers, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, trash bags, trucks and trailers and began the overwhelming task of cleaning up the neighborhood. Some of the more ambitious people were found cutting through the weeds and tree limbs every opportunity they had throughout the week, (as long as there was

daylight), mounting upwards to several hundred volunteer hours.

The pride and the spirit of camaraderie of this group was the driving force behind several months of painstaking efforts, putting up with the excessive summer heat, and transforming our neighborhood into a safe, cleaner community. Areas where people were reluctant to walk at night previously were cleared out and now have a much safer feeling. Families are once again taking their young children to the park to play and many comments were expressed from passers-by on the incredible improvement in the community.

With the diligence of neighbors contacting SRP as soon as lights were shot out in the park, and SRP's quick response to replace the broken lights, the malicious activity that had been taking place was reduced to a rare occurrence, and eventually became a non-existent problem.

Following consultation with the Mesa Police Department, the "quad squad" was formed consisting of homeowners patrolling the neighborhood providing a "non-confrontational, active adult presence" in the community. This helped deter the vandalism, graffiti, drug and other malicious activity that was occurring after dark. In addition, many neighbors expressed feelings of comfort that came over them knowing that the "quad squad" was out and about in the community.

The neighborhood became a "registered neighborhood" with the City of Mesa, block watches were formed, and community get-togethers were held in the park that included chili cook-offs, barbecues, bake sales, children's games, horseback rides and raffles. Most importantly, people got to know other neighbors and new friendships were forged. In addition, periodic newsletters are published and distributed as a means of communication on what was going on in the community.

The following spring, the community was finally able to hire landscapers to maintain the community. In order to assist with water conservation, a few common areas were converted from grass to desert landscape.

Most recently, with the creative efforts of the HOA Board members, donations of “off-shoots” or “babies” of low water usage plants that normally would have been thinned out and thrown away were solicited from homeowners. The donations from homeowners provided for the replacement of over 400 plants that had died over the years and were not replaced due to lack of funding. This proved to be an economical way to replace plants and revitalize the neighborhood at no cost to the homeowners.

However, we continue to have problems with a few neighborhood kids uprooting or stepping on newly planted or younger plants thus killing the plants that were intended to make our neighborhood look more appealing. We are also seeing an increase in trash littering our park and roadways. Please remind your children to be respectful of our common areas so that we can maintain a nice looking neighborhood and increase our home values. Parents could be held liable for the acts of vandalism by their children.

Though the number of volunteers willing to transplant the plants has dwindled due to the summertime heat, donations of desert-friendly plants from homeowners continue to be accepted as there are still a large number of areas where plants have died and were never replaced.

The Westwind / Desert Breeze community transformation continues to progress and more people are coming out of their homes to enjoy the neighborhood. As funds permit, the next phase of the revitalization project will be to replace the picnic table and trash cans in the park that were stolen several years ago and replace parts of the playground equipment that were vandalized and are a potential hazard to our children.

Just as the Phoenix rose out of the ashes, so does our community as our revitalization

journey continues. Significant gains have been made and we thank all of those who were instrumental in our endeavors.

If you would like to donate desert-friendly off-shoots from your plants to transplant into our common areas, please contact Nancy Salzwedel 480-357-7898 to arrange pick-up.

COMMUNITY POT-LUCK HUGE SUCCESS

The Neighborhood Pot-Luck held on April 17th was a huge success with approximately 100 people turning out for the event. Several new neighbors were welcomed and many new friendships were kindled. By the feedback from everyone who turned out, everyone had a great time and are looking forward to the next community event.

The HOA Board would like to thank **EVERYONE** for their contributions of food, beverages, games, face painting, electricity and horseback rides, all of which played an important role in the success of this event.

In addition to the HOA Board and the Community's donations of food and supplies, Special Thanks goes out to the following:

- John and Kelley Anguish for supplying the power for electrical needs;
- Michael and Sophie Russo for supplying the kids inflatable Bouncer
- Shadyn and Kyana Russo for tattoos and face and hair painting
- Tony Chaplinski , Jim Graham and Nancy Salzwedel for donating coins for the “Tot Box money search”;
- John and Maggie Czerwinski, flyers, face painting; and
- “Dandy” for tirelessly giving horseback rides to countless kids, many of whom had never been on a horse before.

We plan to organize another event in the fall when temperatures cool back down and we hope to see you all again at that event. In the meantime, enjoy the new friends you have made!!

THANKS AGAIN TO EVERYONE!!

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DUTIES:

Our homeowners association hires a property management company (Kinney Management Services) to perform community management services for us including, but not limited to: Attending all HOA meetings, prepares meeting agendas with input from the HOA Board; composes meeting minutes; secures bids for services; provides monthly financial reports; handles monthly dues assessments and following up on non-payment issues; handles calls from homeowners concerning homeowner issues; performs routine bi-weekly inspections of all homes in our community and follows up with any homeowners found to be non-compliant with our CC&R's in the form of violation letters.

Contrary to a common misconception, the HOA Board **does not** send out the violation letters nor do they tell the property management company who to send violation letters to. The Property management company is hired to manage our community in this aspect so that we are able to maintain a friendly rapport with the neighbors in our community.

GOING GREEN

You may have noticed that the park has gone green... By this, we mean that the grass is growing in the park again.

Many homeowners had expressed discontent with the grass being left to die out in a potential move to granite.

Tremendous consideration was given regarding the benefits of water conservation and moving towards granite in our common areas versus having grass in the park. Homeowner's comments regarding the grassy park being part of their decision to purchase their home in this community and having a green grassy area for the kids to play, the Board has heard your pleas and have turned on the water to the park. We appreciate your input and welcome you to attend future monthly HOA meetings to be part of the decision making process.

RESERVE STUDY PROVIDES EXCELLENT NEWS:

It has been ten years since our previous reserve study so the HOA Board approved that the study be updated.

The reserve study is an analysis of the amount of money we have in our operating and reserve accounts; reviews our amenities and takes into account the age of the component, life expectancy of the component and current replacement costs. HOA amenities include the park ramada, playground equipment, tot box sand replenishment, common walls, irrigation systems, etc.

The HOA reserve study recently conducted revealed that if we continue with current financial trends, we will be 180% funded for repairs / replacement items by the end of 2010. This is good news because it means we will be able to afford the repair / replacement of amenities that are in need of replacement.

Discussions have been held at the monthly HOA meetings regarding the replacement of the following:

- Broken Playground Equipment (inspected, beyond repair, potential liability issue if not replaced, bids received – **High Priority**)
- Replace picnic table and trash cans at park ramada (scheduled for 2011)
- Replenish gravel in some common areas (scheduled for 2011)
- HOA Website
- Replacement of granite in common areas

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!!

If you have a question, suggestion or an opinion on any topic, please come to the meetings and let us know. The HOA Board is interested in your opinion!!

ASSESSMENT REMINDER:

HOA assessments are due on the first of each month. You may pay in advance if it is more convenient for you. If you do not have a payment coupon book, please contact Diana Rice at Kinney management Services (480) 820-3451.

HOA WEBSITE COMING SOON

The development of a HOA website has been an ongoing discussion at our HOA meetings for several months. Bids have been secured and, following review of other websites created by the firms, the job was recently awarded to Concepts in Creations. The website should be up and running within the next couple of months. Features include:

- HOA Financial information such as income statement, balance sheet, budget and reserve study (*not* individual homeowner's financial information)
- Access to meeting minutes, newsletters, architectural request and other forms, CC&R's, Bylaws
- Approved Exterior Paint Colors
- Meeting calendar / Announcements
- Events
- FAQ's
- Contacts
- Resources

If you would like to see other HOA websites created by this firm to get an idea of what ours will look like and what information is on them, you can visit any of the following links:

www.mesquitegrovehoa.com
www.crescentvillagehoa.net
www.crestviewcourthoa.org
www.caymansquarehoa.com
www.settlersmeadowhoa.com

ARCHITECTURAL REQUESTS:

Any modifications to the exterior of your home where it can be seen from the road, i.e., landscaping modifications or exterior paint, require approval by the HOA Architectural Request Committee. If you plan on making any modifications to your property, please contact Kinney Management Services for an architectural request form. The modifications **MUST BE APPROVED PRIOR TO THE MODIFICATION BEING MADE.**

An approved exterior paint color palate is on file at Dunn Edwards Paints at the address listed below.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

Holes burned into slides & crawl tube, graffiti, and large cracks in the crawl tube are some of the damage caused to the playground equipment at the park. Safety concerns necessitated replacement of certain components of the equipment. While seeking companies to bid on the job, it was found that there are not many companies that deal in commercial playground equipment and the cost was amazingly high. The Board was able to renegotiate the bids reducing the cost from over \$7,203.22 to \$4,271.32, a reduction of \$3,000.00. It will take approximately 4-6 weeks for the new equipment to arrive.

Again, we ask that you speak to your kids about how acts of vandalism are not only disrespectful and cost *all* of the homeowners by means of increased assessments, but the parents could be held liable for any damages incurred.

NEXT HOA MEETING:

The next meeting of the homeowners will be held on Tuesday, July 12, 2010. Open Session at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the home of Tony Chaplinski and Jim Graham at 11327 E. Covina Street

CONTACTS:

Property Management Company:
Kinney Management Services
PO Box 25466
Tempe, AZ 85285-5466
Office: (480) 820-3451
Fax: (480) 820-7441

Dunn/Edwards Paints
5959 E. Southern Ave.
Mesa AZ 85206
Phone (480) 985-3820
Discount Account # 233246-000

HOA Board

Nancy Salzwedel, President
Gary Lambert, Vice President
Mike Ujvari, Treasurer / Secretary
Tony Chaplinski, Board Member
Michael Russo, Board Member