

Forest Gate Homeowners Association Annual Meeting December 6, 2023

Board members in attendance: Mal Johnson (President), Craig Meeks (Vice-President), Gregg Brumburgh (Treasurer), Kristine Strauch (Secretary), and Jim Metcalf (Member-at-Large). The meeting began at 6:31 p.m.

The meeting started with reports from the various officers of the board.

President: Since 2017, the Board of Directors and the Architectural Control Committee have increasingly functioned through electronic communication versus physical meetings. As a reflection of this, and to save time and postage, the Forest Gate bylaws were amended this year to allow for electronic notification of meeting notifications. To increase the transparency of the board's business, we have also strived these last 12 months to enhance our communication with the HOA's members. This was done on several fronts:

- Focused on maintaining the HOA website as an up-to-date reference for existing homeowners and potential homebuyers. HOA guiding documents, meeting minutes, and information on our partnership grant program with the Colorado State Forest Service are just a small example of the information contained within our website.
- Initiated a biannual electronic newsletter summarizing design review decisions, providing notices in accordance with our governing documents, and highlighting additional information that impacts the neighborhood.

Mal reported that the HOA's Summer Picnic attracted neighbors from 21 lots. Not only was it a great opportunity to connect with neighbors, it also functioned as a community event to promote wildfire mitigation awareness and support our Firewise accreditation.

Mal also recounted how the Board attempted to collect delinquent dues earlier this year from a couple of homeowners. A request for payment was sent by registered mail at a cost to the HOA. Unbeknownst to the Board, if registered mail is not signed for or picked up by the recipient, it remains uncollected at the post office. It was decided to use only Priority Mail from now on in such situations.

Vice-President: Craig stated that all but two homeowners provided photographs this October of their meters to report their 2023 well water use. This practice ensures that accurate numbers are recorded. The neighborhood's median home use was down from previous years. Each lot is authorized to use 195,500 gallons, or .6-acre feet, annually. One homeowner exceeded that level; however, Water District 10 issues penalties, not the Forest Gate HOA.

Treasurer: This year's budget encountered unexpected inflation costs and repairs. The HOA's post office box rental, its liability insurance, the monuments' electrical use, and administrative expenses all were higher than anticipated for 2023. In addition, the Vollmer monument required replacement lights and new dimmer switch parts. One of our members, David Georgian (a certified electrician), donated his labor to help with the repair. The unexpected expenses required us to dip into our general reserve and thus negated our goal of increasing the reserve from \$2500 to \$3000.

The 2024 proposed budget has been adjusted to meet the inflationary costs. The Board has also contracted with the IT company The Marketing Group to host and maintain the HOA's website going forward. Carrie and Jeremy Isaac generously provided this service for us over the past several years through their Circa Group Realty business, but they will be moving out of the neighborhood next year. Finally, a \$200 line item has been added to the 2024 budget to support an annual HOA social event. Although past events have been potlucks, the hosts still endure out-of-pocket expenses. It's anticipated that the \$200 will help to offset these costs and hopefully increase the potential for others to volunteer to host.

Secretary: Only one Board of Directors position expires at the end of this year. Kristine is completing her 2021-2023 term. Kim Jones volunteered to serve a 3-year term. There were no other volunteers running for the spot.

Old Business: At last year's annual meeting, a neighbor inquired about Mountain View Electric's plan to provide fiber optic cable within Black Forest and create competition with Force Broadband. MVEA is currently burying backbone cable along Burgess Rd. They anticipate service to our neighborhood this coming spring. More information can be found online at <https://mvea.coop/internet/>.

New Business: A total of 18 votes were cast by proxy or ballot. The proposed 2024 budget was approved and Kim Jones was elected to serve a 2024-2026 term on the Board of Directors.

In 2023 the cost of the HOA's liability insurance rose dramatically. The insurance is a necessity required to protect the board members' personal assets in the event a lawsuit is filed against the HOA by a disgruntled member. The board considers it prudent to form a subcommittee to research alternative insurance companies prior to the 2025 budget. Jim Metcalf will be leading this effort. Any homeowners interested in working on this project should contact him.

For the tenth consecutive year, the Forest Gate HOA has met the National Firewise USA program standards and is in good standing through 2024. This is significant as many insurance companies provide a discount on a homeowner's policy with this recognition. A copy of our Firewise certification can be found on our website if proof is required. The HOA's ability to meet this standard was helped by the following:

- The Black Forest Fire & Rescue provided every homeowner a personalized wildfire risk assessment of their property this past summer.
- Our regional forester, David Poletti, has walked approximately 1/3 of the lots as part of the grant program available through the state forest service. Beginning in 2022, over \$28,000 has been spent in either contracted or volunteer mitigation efforts. Initially the grant allotted \$10,000, but due to the success of the program in our neighborhood, Mr. Poletti increased our funds an additional \$30,000 for 2024 projects. Next year the board will also contact homeowners to the north and east of Forest Gate to see if they would like to join the project. Mitigation of outlying land helps to protect our properties.
- After 10 years of service on the HOA's Firewise Committee, Scott Braeger is stepping down. Rob Harasimowicz offered to join the committee. Any other lot owners are encouraged to volunteer.

The following people were thanked for "doing just a little bit more":

- Robin Georgian for adding pumpkins to the Vollmer monument over Halloween
- David Georgian for the gratis electrical labor on both of the monuments
- Mack Sharp and Craig Meeks for mowing around the monuments
- Mal Johnson for adding Christmas lights to the monuments
- Carrie and Jeremy Isaac for over a decade's worth of free website design and maintenance
- Kristine's three years' service as Secretary of the Board

Finally, a member at the meeting asked if anyone knew anything about the sign posted at Arroyo and Vollmer. The answer is that it's a notice of the final platting of the Timber Ridge housing development.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09

Respectfully submitted,
Kristine Strauch