

Sea Ridge Connect



September, 2015



SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN...

A rousing thanks to everyone who replied to our recent survey. Although we had hoped for a higher return rate, 30% is enough to allow us to draw some conclusions. The Board will not be proposing any amendments at this time. We will proceed with landscaping for water conservation and with plans for repiping of the units, but not with sub-metering. Visit the web site for the complete Survey Report.

- ❖ **The Board of Directors** will have two open seats in November due to expiring terms.
- ❖ **The Architectural Committee** is in need of a chairperson and additional committee members. This committee serves a vital role in helping to maintain property values as it reviews and approves Homeowner improvement requests.
- ❖ **The Maintenance Committee** assists the Board in ensuring that annual maintenance requirements are satisfied and in identifying and planning for preventative maintenance needs.

Please contact our Property Manager or any Board member with questions and/or your willingness to serve.

Meet Shanne Ho



Shanne will serve as our Property Manager from Accell until January, 2016 while Claudia is on maternity leave. Shanne has started attending Board meetings and landscape walks in order to get to know our community. She holds the PCAM designation and has more than 20 years experience in community association management. She can be reached at shanne@accellpm.com or 949.581.4988

Your Sea Ridge neighborhood is what you put into it —your time, your investment, your pride, your care. Become an active member today!

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September 10 - 6:00 P.M.
Finance Committee Meeting

September 16 - 6:30 P.M.
Board of Directors Meeting

November 18 - 6:00 P.M.
Annual Membership Meeting & Board Elections

Sea Ridge Clubhouse



OWNER ASSESSMENTS

Maintaining an appealing, functional community requires regular upkeep and this costs money. These expenses, both short- and long-term, are covered by the monthly fee paid by every homeowner to support the community and the amenities made available to them. Here are some frequently asked questions about Sea Ridge dues.

What is a regular assessment?

A regular assessment, often referred to as homeowners association dues, is the recurring periodic amount due from each homeowner to cover the operating expenses of the common area and provide for reserve funds for replacement of common facilities in future years. The regular assessments must be sufficient to cover the operating budget of the association.

What is the Association operating budget?

The operating budget is a projection of the money needed by the Association to cover its operating costs and provide adequate reserves for repair and replacement of the elements of the property the Association maintains. California law requires the Association adopt an operating budget every year.

How are monthly dues calculated?

Our dues are calculated based on two factors. Owners pay equally for operating expenses and on a percentage basis for expenses that are impacted by square footage, such as reconstruction and insurance which provides for rebuilding. Variable assessments, or “blended rates” are used when, as in our development, the Association’s responsibility for the elements of the units is unequal.

What are Association dues for?

The monthly dues cover both the operating expenses and contributions to the reserve fund. The operating account is for the Association’s day-to-day expenses, including contracted services, utilities, administrative and maintenance expenses (think repair). Reserve funds are for replacement and major maintenance of existing property components. *(For specific budget items, see the Disclosure Package mailed May 28, 2015 and posted on our website www.searidge.info).*

How is each owner’s assessment determined?

The governing documents always specify how assessments are allocated among the owners. Our CC&Rs mandate a formula whereby expenses for reserve funding and for insurance are split according to square footage and other costs are evenly divided between the 188 units. Any change to this allocation requires an amendment approved by 75% of the membership.

Why the differences when dues are adjusted?

The Association revises its budget from the previous year to take into account changes in its financial position and cost structure. With variable assessments, either the larger or the smaller units will normally get a different percentage increase (or decrease) in assessments. Simply put, the dues vary by unit type as the ratios between variable and fixed costs change. The percent change will almost never be the same between units of different sizes.

What you should know...

At the end of the day, all the bills – current year, capital repairs and replacements – will have to be paid by you and the other owners in the community, one way or another. The Board does their best to financially manage the community well, but due to a number of factors, it is a challenging assignment.

Remember, while unwelcome, the purpose of an increase in fees is to keep our community in good financial health and a desirable place to live



Turf Removal Project

Our Sea Ridge Community has one of the largest, private green spaces in the area. With that space comes several challenges in terms of our water use and landscaping. The cost of water has gone up dramatically over the past couple of years and represents a significant portion of our HOA dues. As the cost of water continued to rise, it was not economically feasible for our community to continue its levels of consumption. The severe drought only added to that situation with the introduction of water restrictions statewide. As the 7th largest customer of the South Coast Water District, we were mandated to limit our water use to one time a week.

The **turf removal rebate** and **recycled water** are two programs launched this year to address these challenges. We have 44 patches of grass, not including the green belt park. Of the 44 patches, 34 patches are located on the clubhouse side of the subdivision and 10 patches are on the opposite side of the green belt. We chose to reduce our grass footprint and allocated 4 patches of grass to remain; 3 patches will be on the clubhouse side and 1 patch on the non-clubhouse side. We kept these grass areas to be pet-friendly areas in consideration of dog owners so they would not have to walk to the green belt to take care of their pet's needs.

Although we had experimented –unsuccessfully – with drought tolerant grasses in the past, this is the most significant undertaking made to address this issue. By the time we decided to participate, the highly successful rebate program had been replenished, but the credit amount was reduced from \$2 to \$1 per square foot and limited to \$25,000 per community due to unprecedented demand.

We had to start the turf removal process when we did in order to qualify for the rebate program. The program reached its maximum allocation shortly after our application was approved, leaving many HOA's without any funds for replacement. We are removing approximately 60,000 square feet of turf.

Another challenge we face is how to keep the aesthetic of our wonderful community in light of this situation. We have to rethink what a beautiful, well-maintained landscape looks like.

During the turf removal process, the areas will look unattractive for a few months, until we can resume planting in winter. Replanting right away is ill-advised as the plants would die due to our watering schedule. We needed to complete the turf removal and installation of mulch so that replanting can be completed before the rainy season.

We are also taking into consideration the timing of the El Nino for the planting schedule. Although the weather bureaus are unable to forecast the timing and severity of the El Nino, we will take the necessary precautions to protect our community.

Additionally we are planning to connect to the recycled water system and will provide updates as we progress.

We know that this change may be shocking and appreciate your patience and understanding during this time of transformation. Thank you...

Your Landscape Committee, Michael Ker, Chair

Let Go of Your Lawn



In literally thousands of yards across Southern California, something historic is taking place. Traditional lawns that are better suited for the East Coast are being replaced by native flowers and plants belonging in this Mediterranean climate. This current drought feels destined to change how we enjoy our yards and to match the landscapes with our climate.

Reimagining the California Landscape

We love a lawn, don't we? It is beautiful, satisfying, creates a lovely first impression, and we're accustomed to having it; it's almost an inalienable right. But perhaps lawn is just a state of mind. Besides the aesthetics of the green carpet, what real function is there? We know -you need a place to play croquet and the dog needs a place to run. Grass is a big tradition, and it's hard to let go.

However, we live in a Mediterranean climate: five or six months of sporadic rain, six or seven months of drought. There are plenty of ideas for using water more efficiently by replacing mowed turf grass with Native California and other drought tolerant plants, so many of which are quite beautiful, colorful, have lower maintenance needs, and attract beneficial insects, butterflies and birds. Low water doesn't have to mean cacti and succulents.

Such are the changing times in southern California. Beauty and benefits can be found and our preferences will evolve as we become more aware of drought-tolerant landscaping as a way to preserve resources and save costs.

Reasons to Lose the Lawn

- The typical lawn consumes 10,000 gallons of water a year to remain plush and green.
- Drought-tolerant landscaping uses 30% to 50% less water than turf to stay healthy.
- Less grass means less fertilizer, less mowing, and fewer sprinkler systems (or system repairs).
- The beauty of the landscape is enhanced by adding vibrant and attractive splashes of color to an otherwise uniform sea of green.
- A more sustainable landscape is created by converting turf to a landscape more appropriate for and adapted to thrive in our local climate.
- Water prices will skyrocket as drought conditions worsen.
- Removing turf and replacing it with a beautiful water-efficient garden is an easy and effective way to reduce water use and make an impact.

Why Has Sea Ridge Initiated Turf Removal?

- Water rates have increased while at the same time water supply has decreased.
- Rebates were available in being approved before all funding was allocated.
- Our Association was required to comply with mandated water conservation targets.
- This program will help us avoid penalty fees.
- We anticipate a long-term payoff in savings thru reduction in water use and, ultimately, lower landscape maintenance costs.

What Are the Steps in This Process?

1. Remove existing turf in defined areas.
2. Install weed-block & moisture retention material (mulch) where turf has been removed.
3. Assess & develop a plan for replacement plant materials in select areas.
4. Analyze cost proposals and savings.
5. Develop plant recommendations.
6. Hold a Town Hall Meeting for Community input.
7. Install new sprinkler system into turf areas for replacement plant coverage.
8. Plant California drought tolerant plants in public or visible areas.