



Walnut Country - The Signal | Volume 2021, Issue 2 | Office Phone: 925-687-9961 | Email: businessoffice@walnutcountry.com

Board Approves Permanent Pickleball Courts



The CHOA Board of Directors met on this past Thursday, February 28th in an Open Meeting and has approved moving forward with the installation of permanent Pickleball courts and nets here at

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Please see page 6 for a preliminary diagram of the plan to incorporate a permanent Pickleball court into the lower tennis courts.

the Crossings! The approved plan includes removing a single tennis court (#8, the Eastern-most of the lower courts) and replacing it with four new permanent Pickleball courts.

This decision came as a result of many discussions at Board meetings in 2019 and 2020, valuable feedback from homeowners during the Open Forum portion of these meetings, as well as emails and a petition received signifying the strong desire for a permanent Pickleball solution here at CHOA, to satisfy the sport's growing popularity.

One of the Board's major concerns throughout these discussions has been to reduce the impact the installation of a Pickleball court may have on those who regularly play tennis. Initially the Board looked into the possibility of in-

ings with the vendor who handle the resurfacing of the upper tennis courts this past year, it was determined that we would be able to fit four Pickleball courts in the space previously taken up by a single tennis court – known as #8 at the lower courts, the court closest to the practice wall. By removing the fence between courts 6 and 7, and shifting court 7 several feet to the West, it was determined that there was adequate room to install four new Pickleball courts as well as a fence separating these courts from the tennis court. The approved plan also includes a fence running east-west between the two pairs of Pickleball courts.

We have included a diagram on page 6 to help better visualize the plan for these

Walnut Country THE CROSSINGS

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Upcoming Schedule

Board of Directors Meeting

- Thursday, March 25th @ 7pm

Architectural Committee Meeting

- Thursday, March 18th @ 6pm

Board Meeting Info

The Board of Directors meet on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7pm. Meetings are currently held via Zoom and owners are welcome to join by phone or by utilizing the Zoom app. Meeting information is included on the agenda, which is posted at the Business Office and also available online at the HOA's website.

The Architectural Committee meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6pm - please contact the Business Office for the Zoom info if you are interested in attending!

of options for the Board to consider and it was important that a reasonable, prudent decision be made. While you can never please everyone, we are hopeful that this decision delights many of the CHOA residents who have been asking for Pickleball courts and does not negatively impact those who play tennis regularly.

Stay tuned for further updates as we near the end of spring!

Treasurer's Report (Year to Date) Balance Sheet as of January 31st, 2021

Current Assets

Cash - Operating	\$ 79,154
Cash - Reserves	\$ 2,426,220
Receivables	\$ 64,607
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 44,913
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,614,894

Current Liabilities

Liabilities (Prepaid Assessments, Accrued Payables, Deposits, etc.)	\$ 150,631
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Assessments Received vs. Assessments Billed

Assessments Billed	\$ 109,386
Assessments Received	\$ 103,484
January Delinquent Assessments	\$ (5,902)



A LOOK at the BUDGET

Year-To-Date Budget Report

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Monthly Actual
Total Revenue (Accrued)	\$ 111,868	\$ 111,545	\$ 323.00	\$ 111,868
Operating Expenses				
Administrative/Legal	\$ 32,690	\$ 27,701	\$ (4,989)	\$ 32,690
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 15,127	\$ 25,114	\$ 9,987	\$ 15,127
Utilities	\$ 15,789	\$ 18,067	\$ 2,278	\$ 15,789
Miscellaneous (Payroll)	\$ 1,858	\$ 12,542	\$ 10,684	\$ 1,858
Reserve Transfer	\$ 28,121	\$ 28,121	\$ -	\$ 28,121
Total Operating Expense	\$ 93,585	\$ 111,545	\$ 17,960	\$ 93,585

New addition to the Treasurer's Report: Assessments Received vs. Assessments Billed. Because HOA accounting is done on an accrual basis, it can be difficult to distinguish how much the Association is collecting in assessments every month, since accrual-based accounting considers this income earned. We have now added a report detailing exactly how much was actually collected for a given month, which should give a more accurate picture of the actual revenue coming in (not just what was "earned" - as that may not have been collected!).

New Association Key Policy Approved as of February 25th



The Board approved an updated Association Key Policy at their February meeting, to help clarify questions owners may have had about new and replacement HOA facility keys. One major change to this policy is that **owners now have the ability to purchase a third key fob from the Association for \$50.** Another

clarification provided in this policy is regarding new homeowners who did not receive keys from the previous owner. The approved policy states that, in the case that there was documentation confirming that a previous owner was given keys and did not hand these over to the new owner, the Association will provide replacement keys at no cost to the new owner.

This policy also confirms the replacement cost (\$25)

and household limit (1) for dog park keys. Owners who have lost their dog park key, or are in need of their first copy, can contact the Business Office for assistance.

If you are interested in obtaining a third key fob to use for the pools or tennis courts, please contact the General Manager at the Business Office during normal business hours. Payment should be made by check, and

can be made out to Cowell Homeowners Association.

Each key fob has a string of numbers printed on the back. All owners should write these numbers down for reference, as this is how your specific key fob is linked to your address. Without this information, we will be unable to troubleshoot any issues that may arise and you will be charged for a replacement key, if needed.

President's Corner // March 2021

Hello Walnut Country,

On February 25th, we held our monthly Board Meeting. Below are some of the items that were discussed and decided on. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 25th.

Reserve Study

The Association uses a Reserve Study to guide decisions related to long term projects and property upkeep. The Study is a living document that helps the Board and our Association management company conduct proper forecasting and budgeting so that when a large project, such as re-roofing the Clubhouse, comes due the money is already there. This forecasting and budgeting keeps the Association from having to impose a special assessment to complete such a large project. The Study is updated every year. Every three years, a full update with site inspections occurs. In 2021, the Board will work with our contracted company jointly on this important step. We will assess all physical components of the Association to

ensure we are budgeting the correct dollar amounts and that our facilities are being properly maintained.

Pools

As you likely remember, the Association was required by the County Health Department to have COVID Safety Monitors present when our Association pools were open for the 2020 swim season. This was of course an expense that the Association had not budgeted for. We had hoped that conditions with the pandemic would have improved enough that this requirement would not exist for the 2021 swim season. As of now, this requirement has not been changed. The Board has started discussions on how we can meet this requirement if it still is in place when the pools are scheduled to open in the Spring. Options that we are exploring include shortened pool hours to keep the costs down and potentially delaying the start of the swim season. This will be a regular agenda item for the next few months.

Also related to pools, three board members were appointed to a committee to review conditions and identify needed maintenance for our pools last year. The equipment room for the West Pool was found to have extensive maintenance problems, including corrosion to the electrical system and pool components. The committee has had the room inspected by professionals who have reported that the pool could have major problems and might have to be shut down if it is not updated prior to opening this Spring. The Board is obtaining bids now and has a Special Meeting tentatively scheduled for Monday March 8th. The single agenda item for that meeting will be to select the best contract bid. This meeting is of course open to the membership. The reason for holding a special meeting instead of waiting for the monthly meeting is to get the work started as soon as possible so that it has little to no impact on the 2021 swim season.

Pickleball

The Board has been looking at the issue of Pickleball at Walnut County for the last year. Since the last meeting, the Board was able to obtain an additional plan for the lower courts. This new plan calls for the resurfacing of the lower courts, which was already budgeted to occur in 2021. Additionally, the plan calls for one Tennis court (Court 8 closest to the sports court) to be repurposed into four Pickleball courts. After lengthy discussion and homeowner input, the Board voted to approve this plan. Court resurfacing is not conducted during winter months due to temperature requirements for the process. This work will likely occur in the Spring or Summer months.



Thank you and looking forward to seeing you at our next Board meeting,

Mike Kindorf
CHOA Board President

Architectural Committee Chair's Corner // March 2021

While I think we all wish we had just a little more rain, the reality is that Spring is just

about on us. Many of our yards may not have experienced a "rough winter" but a little spring cleaning is probably not a bad idea. A little weed and feed can go a long way towards keeping our yards looking good through the coming seasons.

A topic that's had some attention at both the Architectural

Committee as well as with your CHOA Board is the impact of drought on our yards. While green lawns are certainly attractive, they also require a lot of water to keep them healthy. That being the case, homeowners considering changes to their landscaping may wish to consider replacement of (at least) some lawn with low water vegetation.

On another note, we do have homeowners who like to put up seasonal decorations, and I think we all enjoy them. But...Christmas is over and it's past time for those holiday

decorations to be put away for next year.

Finally, if you're thinking of making changes to your front yard or home that will change the appearance of your property, PLEASE submit an application to the business office BEFORE starting the work. In this regard, changes to vegetation do not require approval but changes to walkways, driveways, fences, paint colors, etc. do. If in doubt, please call our General Manager for advice.

Ken Dixon
Committee Chair



General Manager's Update // March 2021

Hi all – happy almost spring! I personally cannot wait for it to start warming up on a consistent basis – I am an absolute baby and can't handle the cold weather and rain! It's not my fault I grew up in Southern California, I swear...

Anywho, these "winter" months are usually a little quieter on the project management side of things, so you won't see a lot of physical property updates here, but there are a lot of things going on behind the scenes that are more administrative or "clean-up" in nature. They may not be as sexy, but they're still important!

- The gate to the small dog park has been fixed! We had an issue where if you let it close naturally, it wouldn't catch and would just snap back open. Now it will stay shut without you having to slam it! Big shoutout to the owners who reported it.
- At the Preschool, we repaired some large holes that birds had made in the soffits (area underneath the eve of the roof, that hangs over the building) and had turned into bird nests and general hangout areas. We had those holes plugged up and the area cleaned – they were making quite the mess!
- Our Q1 tree trimming project is just about wrapped up. Starting this month, we will begin working with a new arborist to help us create a long-term tree care plan with a trackable inventory system for the most significant trees. Not only will this help ensure that our larger, more mature trees get the attention they

deserve – it should also help us better budget tree care expenses over the next handful of years. There will likely be another round of trimming later this year – this will be discussed at a future meeting and of course noticed via e-Signal and the HOA website.

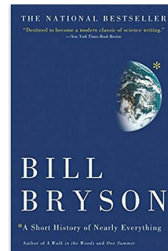
- On the paperwork side of things, both the Architectural Committee and Board have approved some new policies. The goal for these is to make your life easier, and the processes more straightforward. Solar panels can now be approved without needing to go to the Architectural Committee. The Roofing Materials policy has been given a face lift, and more materials were added to the approved list, including a large number of Title 24 compliant materials in an attempt to help keep the cost of your project down. The Board also approved a new Key Policy that allows homeowners to purchase a third key fob and clarifies what happens with keys when you rent or sell your house. One of the next projects we're working on behind the scenes is a revamp of the Approved Paints policy – including updated materials and a policy that is easier and more straightforward for owners who want to repaint their home.

- Pickleball is coming soon! The Board has approved moving forward with converting tennis

court #8 (lower courts) into four Pickleball courts.

And as always, another book recommendation from the GM that no one asked for but you're getting anyways....

A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson



Incredibly entertaining! It's funny and you'll learn a lot – what more do you need? A lot of you have probably heard of this or read it already, but for those who haven't, do yourself a favor and pick this one up. The title, though a bit silly, really is pretty apt – the book talks about the universe, space, Earth and its creatures, and how most of these crazy discoveries were made. Side note – if you're into audiobooks, this version was fantastic – one of the best narrators out there! Just don't accidentally get the abridged version...

That's all for now. Until next month - see you in April!

-Bill, CHOA General Manager

Christmas/Winter Holiday Decorations

Just a quick reminder to all that the CHOA rules require that all holiday decorations be removed no more than 30 days following the end of each holiday season. We respectfully ask that any

owner who still has any Christmas lights or decorations, or decorations up from any holiday that has ended more than 30 days ago, kindly remove them at their earliest convenience!

Walnut Country Swim Team News



Happy spring to all residents! WCST is happy to be back on the pool deck for our Spring Swim Clinic! The clinic starts March 8th with practices from 4pm to 7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The Spring Clinic will run for four weeks. WCST is also finalizing plans for our 2021 Summer Season, which, due

to Covid-19, is expected to be limited compared to a normal season and to be focused on practices. More details about Summer registration will be available in the next few weeks.

If you have any questions or would like to join our emailing list, please send your contact information to wcst-meetdirector@gmail.com.

WCST is committed to ensuring safe swim practices for its staff and swimmers. We continue to operate this 2021 year with a limited number of swimmers and following all protocols to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.

Enjoy the beautiful spring weather and stay healthy!

-WCST Board of Directors

HOA Helper - Rental Information

The Business Office always receives several questions from owners about rentals – whether it be owners who are concerned about an increasing number of rental units within CHOA, or owners who themselves wish to rent their unit out. CHOA owners may also have heard about the newly approved Assembly Bill (AB) 3182, which limits what restrictions HOAs may put on rentals within their community. This article will help clarify how AB 3182 impacts CHOA, and then go into the current CHOA policies that address what to do if renting your unit (or thinking about it).

What is AB 3182?

AB 3182, which took effect Jan 1 of this year, requires that Associations have a minimum 25% rental cap, and a minimum 30-day lease term for units being rented out. It also requires that HOAs with more restrictive governing documents have those documents amended to match the bill's requirements. Why is this a big deal? Because amending your CC&Rs is a difficult, expensive project! Amending your CC&Rs requires a vote of the membership, meaning ballots will need to be sent out to every homeowner and an attorney engaged to help draft the updated language.

When discussing how AB 3182 affects CHOA, there is good news and bad news. The good news is that CHOA's current rental restriction cap is at 25%, which matches the new AB 3182 minimum and does not need to be changed. The bad news is that CHOA's minimum lease term is 6 months, and will likely need to be amended. This lease term is found in the CC&Rs, so a vote of the membership will likely be necessary to have the

CC&Rs amended as required by AB 3182.

(As an aside, don't feel like you're going crazy if you're wondering why a law was passed that requires documents to be amended that still need a membership vote! It is definitely an odd situa-

tion. What happens to the HOA if the law requires the HOA to amend the CC&Rs, but the vote of the membership asking for permission to amend the CC&Rs fails? Nobody knows!)

mailing address, or who have informed the HOA that their unit is being rented by following the policy detailed below.

The CHOA CC&Rs also require owners who want to rent out their house to first obtain permission from the



Board of Directors. This can be done by filling out a *Rental Application* form found on the HOA website at walnutcountry.com. The application will then be reviewed by the Board at their next meeting. Speaking generally, if the HOA is under the 25% rental limit, assessments on the lot aren't delinquent, and there are no active violations on the lot (or any other lot owned within the HOA), the application will likely be approved.

Once approved, you may move forward with looking for a tenant. As soon as you have a tenant and the lease is signed, you should fill out the *Tenant Information and Key Deposit Form* and send it to the Business Office. This form is important for several reasons: 1) it ensures that the Association has your most up-to-date mailing address, as all Association notifications go to the owner, not the property, and 2) it gives tenants the opportunity to ob-

What to know if renting your unit (or thinking about it)

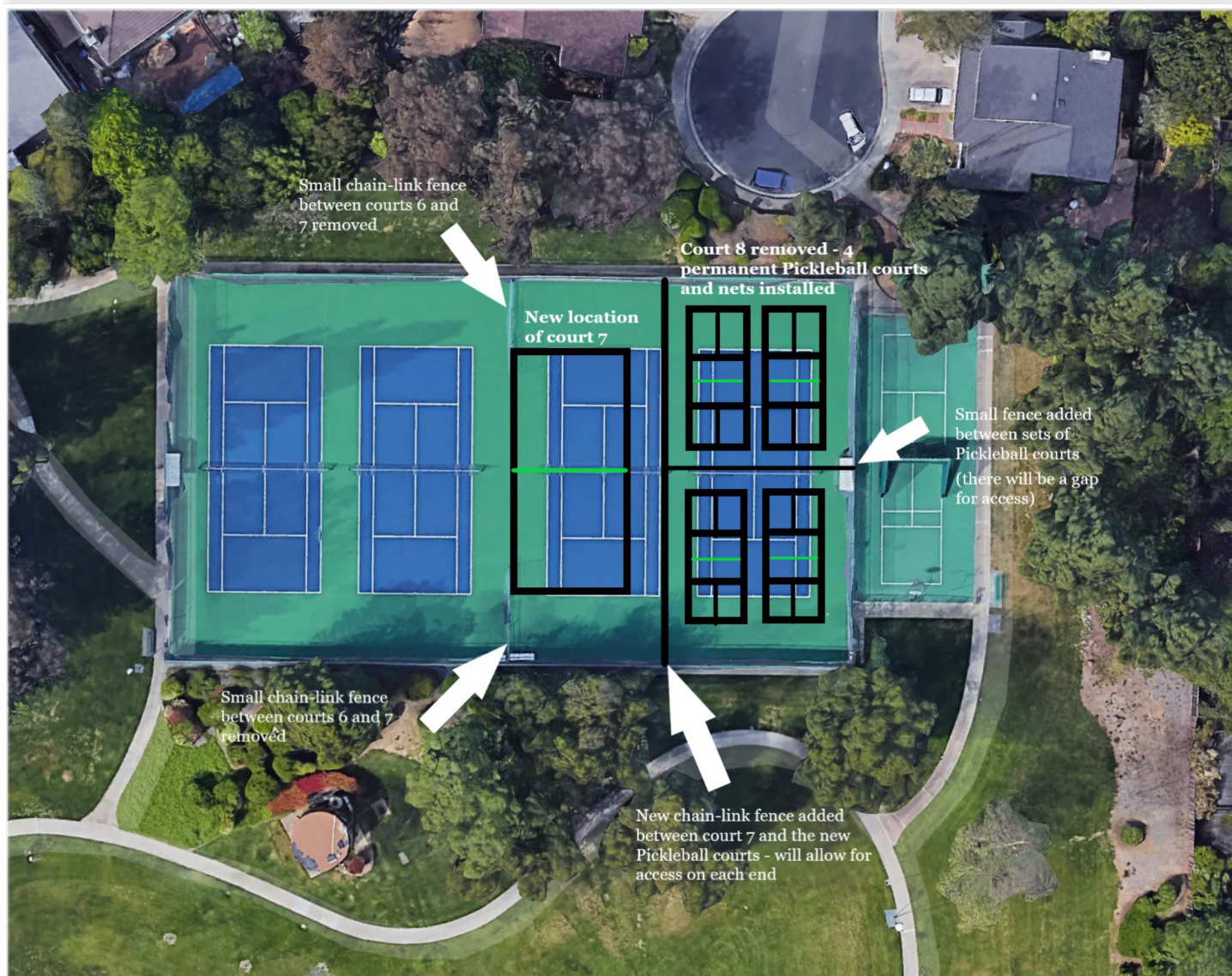
tain keys for the common area facilities. As a reminder, owners who rent out their property forfeit their right to utilize the common areas. This means that, if you are renting out your unit, only your tenants can use the pools, tennis courts, greenbelt, playgrounds, etc. Any keys the owner has should be handed over to the tenant. The tenant can obtain additional keys if they were never given any by the owner, but any key fobs previously belonging to the owner will be deactivated. Tenants can currently purchase key fobs for \$10 each, and obtain a dog park key for a \$100 deposit (that is refunded back when the key is returned). If you are renting out your unit and have keys, you must give them to your tenant. Owners who rent out their unit cannot use any portion of the common areas!

Once the lease is up and your tenant is moving out, they can return the dog park key to the Business Office along with the *Key Deposit Refund Request* form (if applicable). The cost for key fobs is non-refundable, and those should be handed over to the owner. If you have new tenants moving in, you do not need to re-obtain permission to rent out your unit. You simply need to fill out a new *Tenant Information & Key Deposit Form*.

All forms, along with a detailed how-to regarding renting out your unit can be found on the HOA's website at www.walnutcountry.com. We respectfully ask that those who rent out their units ensure that tenants understand the HOA rules and expectations. It is also important to note that any owner who rents out their unit is solely responsible for the action of their tenant.

Please let us know if you have any questions!

Preliminary Lower Court Pickleball Design (continued from Page 1)



Important note: This is simply a preliminary diagram and is in no way final. This diagram is provided to owners for demonstration purposes only and meant to convey the general shape and locations of each court and how the Pickleball courts will likely be arranged. The dimensions are not to scale and locations/sizes are not exact.

We're Impressed!

Thanks to all the owners who are spending their hard-earned time and energy keeping their properties looking great! A special shoutout to some lots that caught our attention this past month:

- 4484 Adelia Ct
- 4404 Arrowwood Ct
- 4411 Arrowwood Ct
- 4481 Clear Creek Ct
- 4413 Corkwood Ct
- 4485 Deerberry Ct

- 4496 Derrberry Ct
- 4491 Juneberry Ct
- 4493 Oakbrook Ct
- 4496 Sheepberry Ct
- 4479 Silverberry Ct
- 4478 Stone Canyon Ct
- 4408 Water Oak Ct
- 4413 Water Oak Ct

thank you

WANT TO ADVERTISE HERE?

This Association newsletter is directly emailed to more than 700 individuals monthly.

Quarter page ad = \$20/mo
Half page ad = \$40/mo
Full page ad = \$80/mo

Advertisements must be purchased at a minimum of three-month blocks.

Full page advertisements will be included in the same PDF, at the end of the newsletter.

Contact the Business Office for more information at 925-687-9961

Walnut Country Preschool News



In these historic times, the preschoolers have enjoyed prehistoric themes! We've been talking about dinosaurs and how some are meat-eating or leaf-eating. We also explored landforms and science when talking about volcanoes. The students have some very creative ideas about what happened to the dinosaurs!

We would like to invite you to dinner! Socially distanced of course! Support our school fundraiser Thursday 3/18/21 from 10AM to 9PM at Panda Express Clayton Rd & Ygnacio Valley Rd (5458 Ygnacio Valley Road Concord 94521) 925-673-9010. Enter 321456 in the promo code box during online checkout at order.pandaexpress.com. Orders must be placed on the event day. Please avoid any 3rd party delivery to ensure your order counts toward the fundraiser.

-Walnut Country Preschool Director and Teaching Staff

Pool Rehabilitation/Renovation Project Updates - Main & West Pools

If you have attended any of the Board meetings throughout 2020, you likely heard the Board discuss the potential main pool rehabilitation project, something that the previous Board was discussing back in 2018 and 2019. A group of three Board members were delegated the authority to work with the Association's pool maintenance vendor and finalize a scope of work for this main pool project, which would then be put in front of the Board for approval and bids solicited.

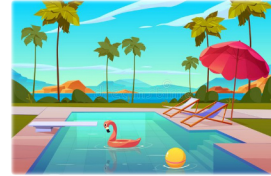
During the time spent on this project, and after many on-site meetings with the pool vendors, the delegated Board members soon realized that the West Pool's pump room was of more urgent concern than any main pool component. These board members made a presentation to the Board at the 2/28 meeting, indicating that the west pool pump room was in dire shape and had multiple concerning components that might not

make it through a full 2021 swim season without several major failures. At this meeting, the decision was made to move forward with a full-scale rehabilitation and renovation of the west pool pump room, to get it 100% up to speed, ready for the 2021 swim season, and ensure that it was relatively future proof. This also means that the main pool project has been put on hold until the west pool pump room is completed.

The Association is currently working on soliciting an additional proposal for this west pool pump room project, but the Board is also prioritizing timing – since it is a large project, if there are any delays, there is a chance that the work will not be completed prior to Memorial Day, when the west pool is to open per the Association's rules. The Board is doing all it can (without jeopardizing the work or components) to ensure that this project is started quickly and completed effi-

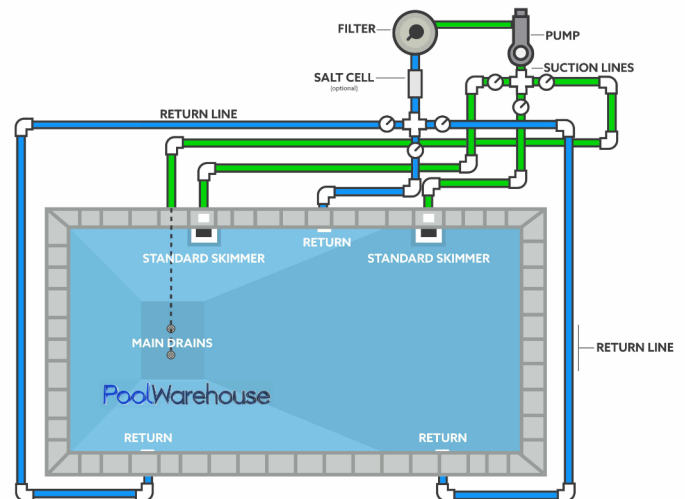
When Will the Pools Open in 2021?

The CHOA Board recently met and discussed the pool schedules for 2021. At this time, due to the uncertainty caused by COVID as well as the unpredictability of the county health guidelines for public pools, we cannot confirm an exact date for the opening of our pools in 2021. Currently the county requires a pool monitor to be present at each pool that is open, for the entire duration that it is available for public use. At this time, opening all three pools and asking three pool monitors to stay at each pool full-time is likely not a financially viable option. We are currently working hard to hire pool monitors and are also considering alternative systems that would forgo the pool monitor requirement, like a reservation system (although logistically that may



still require an active employee on hand to respond to issues like the pool being used by someone who had not reserved it). Unfortunately it's not as simple as just turning the heater on and unlocking the gates, and hiring pool monitors for the number of hours that would be required is a very expensive path to go down (and one that the Association may not be able to afford this year).

In order to expedite the possibility of opening the pools this spring, the Board delegated the authority to hire pool monitors and open the pools to the Board President, who will work closely with the General Manager to get the pools open as soon as is reasonably possible. We thank all residents for their patience as we work on getting this figured out! Updates will be available on the website.



ciently and properly, so that we will have a pump room and pool components that last well beyond their estimated useful lives. No corners will be cut in order to open this pool sooner – but everyone involved understands that the goal is to get the west pool open as quickly as possible.

A special meeting will be held on March 8th at 6pm to discuss this project and potentially approve a bid and get the work scheduled. More updates will be posted on the HOA website as well as sent out via e-Signal as soon as they are available!