



Walnut Country - The Signal | Volume 2022, Issue 2 | Office Phone: 925-687-9961 | Email: businessoffice@walnutcountry.com

Greenbelt Watering and Grass Update

A large focus of the current board is water use reduction and developing a plan for the removal of non-recreational turf, due to its high requirement for water. Non-recreational turf means most grass to the east or west of the central greenbelt area. The Board has resolved to instruct the landscapers that the goal for 2022 is to reduce the water use to a reasonable degree and allow the grass to lightly brown, so long as the grass is recoverable and not permanently damaged. The Board would also like to emphasize the use of well water in the central greenbelt area, meaning the eastern and western portions of the greenbelt may dry out more than the central area,



which is irrigated using a combination of well water and district water.

Much like previous years with drought or severe water restrictions, this will carry over to the architectural committee and expectations for individual homeowner front

yards with grass or turf. During the hotter months, grass can dry out and lightly brown, so long as it is kept neat and trimmed/mowed regularly.

If you have any questions about this or any other HOA expectation, please contact the Business Office!

Walnut Country THE CROSSINGS

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Upcoming Schedule

Board of Directors Meeting

- Thursday, March 24th @ 7pm

Architectural Committee Meeting

- Thursday, March 17th @ 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!

Pool Schedule - Main Pool Open, Side Pools TBD

As you may be aware, the Main Pool is now open and available for use! Daily hours at 7am to 8pm. The Swim Team's spring clinic is starting the same day the Main Pool opens, Monday March 7. The clinic is held Monday through Friday, 3:30pm to 7pm. During the clinic, the pool will not be available to residents. Weekends the Main Pool is open all day to residents. The Spring Clinic will be held from March 7 to April 1.

So from March 7 to April 1, the main pool will be avail-



able to residents from 7am to 3:30pm, and then again from 7pm to 8pm on weekdays. On weekends, it will be available from 7am to 8pm without interruption.

The side pool pump room projects are still underway, and no decision has been made regarding a potential opening date for the side

pools. When we have a confirmed date of completion and a decision can be made for when the side pools will reopen, we will send out an update right away via eSignal as well as the HOA website.

There are no active state or county restrictions for outdoor pools. It is still recommended that individuals try

their best to socially distance from individuals from other households whenever possible, and to avoid large gatherings.

Because the clubhouse is still closed, badges are not required at this time, but all HOA rules are still in effect - please reference the "Pool Area Rules" on this webpage: <http://walnutcountry.com/facilities/pools/>.

Treasurer's Report (Year to Date) Balance Sheet as of February 28th, 2022

Current Assets

Cash - Operating	\$ 137,734
Cash - Reserves	\$ 2,242,792
Receivables	\$ 8,265
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 94,327
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,483,118

Current Liabilities

Liabilities (Prepaid Assessments, Accrued Payables, Deposits, etc.)	\$ 103,516
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Delinquent Assessments, Fees, and Fines

Total Outstanding Assessments as of 2/28	\$ (7,524)
Total Outstanding Fees and Fines as of 2/28	\$ (4,741)
TOTAL OUTSTANDING DELINQUENCIES	\$ (12,265)



A LOOK at the BUDGET

Year-To-Date Budget Report

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Monthly Actual
Total Revenue (Accrued)	\$ 231,683	\$ 231,851	\$ (168)	\$ 116,399
Operating Expenses (Abridged)				
Insurance	\$ 11,056	\$ 10,267	\$ (789)	\$ 5,539
Taxes & Permits	\$ 2,451	\$ 1,916	\$ (535)	\$ 2,451
Legal Fees/CPA	\$ 3,550	\$ 2,792	\$ (758)	\$ 3,550
Management & Accounting	\$ 36,972	\$ 36,926	\$ (46)	\$ 18,705
Office, Admin, & Mailing	\$ 4,781	\$ 5,877	\$ 1,096	\$ 2,373
Staffing/Payroll	\$ 1,349	\$ 22,451	\$ 21,102	\$ 865
Security Patrol & Gates/Fences	\$ 2,310	\$ 3,667	\$ 1,357	\$ 900
Alarm Systems	\$ 1,484	\$ 1,016	\$ (468)	\$ 888
Landscaping & Irrigation	\$ 30,894	\$ 32,551	\$ 1,657	\$ 16,894
Pest Control	\$ 2,468	\$ 2,500	\$ 32	\$ 1,534
Maintenance & Janitorial	\$ 2,819	\$ 3,083	\$ 264	\$ 2,369
HVAC & Plumbing	\$ -	\$ 1,163	\$ 1,163	\$ -
Building Mtnc (Roof/Carpets)	\$ -	\$ 433	\$ 433	\$ -
Pools, Tennis Courts, & Dog Park	\$ 6,756	\$ 8,859	\$ 2,103	\$ 2,408
Utilities	\$ 28,851	\$ 38,093	\$ 9,242	\$ 14,234
Bad Debt (For Delinquent Owners)	\$ -	\$ 83	\$ 83	\$ -
Reserve Transfer	\$ 60,180	\$ 60,180	\$ -	\$ 30,090
Total Operating Expense	\$ 195,921	\$ 231,857	\$ 35,936	\$ 102,800

Note regarding new categories: Discerning readers will notice the categories are different from those found in previous Signals. Good catch! Common Interest Management recently transitioned over to a new accounting system, and as a result, some of the categories are displayed a little bit differently in the monthly financial reports.

President's Corner // March 2022

Hello Walnut Country, The Board and I hope that you are all doing well. It appears that things are starting to go back to some level of normalcy with regards to the pandemic. We are happy to see things improving in our county and community.

We held our last monthly meeting on February 27th. Below are some of the highlights and additional news for the Association.

Common Area Irrigation

As you have probably read in prior Signals, the Board is working on many different projects to help reduce the use of District water for irrigation of the common areas. This will take multiple years as we try to reduce water usage to both save money and reduce our overuse of this important resource. Last month I told you about the high water bill for the South Slope, which was approximately \$50,000 for 2021. The General Manager and I have worked with

our landscape company researching changes we can make towards this goal. We created a preliminary concept to remove the fescue grass and replace some of it with rock landscape near the curb line and wood chips in other areas. The concept also included a number of low water use trees to fill in some of the open areas that now exist between South Larwin and Ygnacio Valley Rd. The Board reviewed and decided that they would like to see the preliminary concept expanded into a plan with price estimates. Our ultimate goal is to fix the well on the south slope and convert the landscape to low water use vegetation, creating an area that is completely irrigated by well water.

Pools

I mentioned in the last Signal that the Board approved an acid wash treatment for the surface of the West pool. We have since obtained an additional opinion that this option may not have much effect on

the current discoloration and that the pool may have to be re-plastered. Re-plastering of the West pool now would be several years ahead of schedule and not something we have budgeted for at this time. We will be exploring options after the 2022 swim season in the Fall. The refurbishing of both the East and West pool pump rooms is ongoing and currently on schedule.

Tree Trimming for 2022

The Board held a Special Meeting on February 9th where we heard a presentation from the Arborist who we have been working with for the past year. This meeting was requested by the board so that we could better understand the proposed tree trimming work for 2022. The original proposal was higher than what was budgeted for the year. After the meeting, we asked the company to try and find ways to reduce costs. At our regular meeting on the 27th, we reviewed the updated proposal that came in at a

lower cost. The Board approved this proposal and tree trimming will begin in the Spring. Our goal is to catch up on needed tree trimming over the next several years and then get to a maintenance level where we will have more even costs going forward. Our top priority for 2021 was to ensure all mature trees were inspected and that the Association had a three year plan. We are now starting on the first year of that plan.

Thanks for reading. Hope to see you at our next regular Board meeting. All of our meetings are currently held on Zoom so hopefully owners are able to attend. We'd love to see you there. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 24th at 7pm. Contact the Business Office if you need assistance joining.

Mike Kindorf
CHOA President

Architectural Committee Chair's Corner // March 2022

While we had hopes that we'd have a nice wet winter, things

are not looking good for the summer season. It's not too late to be looking at drought-resistant landscaping options to cut down on our individual watering demands. As information, at our last CHOA Board meeting we established some guidance for our landscapers that we will expect and anticipate some drying of our greenbelt grass during the summer but want to keep enough watering to prevent

full dry out and loss of grass. We don't want to have to re-plant but we don't need to have it all lush as we're accustomed to seeing. As far as individual properties are concerned, we'll be using that same standard over the coming months so, for those of us who have lawns, please keep them trimmed and maintained...even if a little on the dry side.

I'd also like to remind homeowners that our waste receptacles must be stored BEHIND a fence or in the garage when not out for pick-up on collection day. We've noted some properties where bins are being left where they

can be seen from the street and that's not permitted.

Lastly, the Architectural Committee is made up of volunteer homeowners and is the backbone of our efforts to keep our development looking great. It is an important part of keeping our property values high and is an opportunity for homeowners to participate in the protection of our values and keep our neighborhood as the most attractive place to live in Concord! If you would like to join our effort, please contact the General Manager for guidance on applying.

Ken Dixon
Arch Committee Chair



General Manager's Update // March 2022

Hey CHOA! Hard to believe it's already time to open up the pools for the season! Now I need to start making sure my shorts and t-shirts are ready to go for the year...

On the HOA side of things, we've had an eventful last couple of months! Here are some highlights for February, including some decisions made at the most recent Board meeting:

- The Board approved the annual proposal to disk the north slope open space hill between N. Striped Maple and Rising Dawn Lane – this is HOA property, and we perform weed abatement there every spring. This work is scheduled for May 9th.
- As you may be aware, recent state law has changed HOA minimum restriction requirements for rentals. CHOA is impacted by a portion of this law and is required to update its governing documents. AB-1584 permits the Board to modify the CC&Rs without a vote of the membership to obtain compliance with this state law. The Board approved moving forward with having legal counsel draft up a small amendment to the CC&Rs that will change the minimum lease length for tenants from six months to 30 days, as now required by the state. This draft will go out to the membership for comments, then can be approved by the Board in an open meeting. The deadline for this update is July 1, 2022. You will likely see a mailing from the HOA later this spring or early summer!
- The Board discussed its expectations for watering and the condition of the common area grass going into 2022. There is a standalone

article going over this in more detail, but essentially the Board would like to prioritize water use reduction this summer, so you may see portions of the greenbelt getting a little dryer than it has in the past.

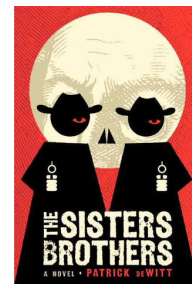
- Tree maintenance work for 2022 is officially approved and on the calendar! The first round of trimming and removal of potentially unsafe trees is scheduled for early April. The second round of trimming will take place in late summer or fall of this year. We are also working on getting the trees retagged. If you have a question about a particular tree, please reach out to me at the Business Office anytime!
- The Board talked about the clubhouse schedule and directed the GM to start looking into getting the clubhouse ready to open. This means having it cleaned, creating updated job descriptions, hiring staff, and finalizing rental procedures. Our internal goal is early May, pending no other changes on the COVID front. Once a date is confirmed, we will put out an update via eSignal and through the HOA website. Until an opening date is confirmed, we are not taking reservations – but when we do have a confirmed opening date, we will be able to make the clubhouse reservation calendar public and available for use!
- The Board approved replacing approximately 350 square feet of grass behind the preschool with artificial turf. That project is scheduled for early April.
- The clubhouse decks are in need of repair and resurfacing, especially the area above the two storage rooms on the west side of the building (facing the lifeguard shack). We are working with ven-

dors and obtaining bids for review at either the March or April board meeting.

- The CHOA pickleball clinic is scheduled for March 26th at 11am. The 16 spots filled up within 30 minutes! If this is a hit, the Board will certainly consider additional programs like this in the future. Thanks to all who signed up and showed interest!
- As of this past Monday, the Main Pool is open and available for use! The swim team's spring clinic is held Mo-Fri from 3:30pm to 7pm, and the pool is unavailable during those times. We do not yet have an ETA for the side pools as the pump room project is still underway. Once we have more details there, we will be sure to send out an eSignal and make a post on the HOA website!
- If you're a tennis player and interested in joining a USTA team, there are some openings! Teams usually practice one day a week, with matches on weekends. It's a fun way to get some exercise and meet other CHOA residents. Contact the GM if you're interested!
- The Board is working on a project focusing on the south slope that would significantly reduce our water use. The fescue grasses you see along the south slope use about 80% of the water irrigating that area. The Board is considering removing that fescue and replacing it with more drought-friendly materials. No decision has been made, but a basic scope of work was reviewed at this past meeting. A bid will likely be ready for review at our March meeting.
- Two homeowners have expressed interest in being appointed to the vacant seat

on the Board. We are scheduling a special meeting for Wednesday, March 16th at 6pm where the board will interview the candidates and potentially make the appointment. We will send out an eSignal with the Zoom info shortly!

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



The Sisters Brothers

by Patrick deWitt

This was a fun, short, quick-moving western that I really enjoyed. Probably not one of the best books I've read recently, but a good, straightforward story. It's also pretty darn funny! It strikes a good balance – it goes from feeling light-hearted to brutal quickly and it never feels out of place or inappropriate. It just feels real. They made a movie out of it in 2018 but I watched the trailer and wasn't interested in seeing it. If you saw the movie and thought it was meh, give the book a shot – part of the appeal of the book is the uniqueness and sincerity of the narrator's voice, which (from what I could gather) seems to have gotten left out in the movie. Give it a shot – it's a good one!

Also, Board meetings continue to be held via Zoom (but that might change soon). If you haven't attended a meeting before, why not join us?

Until next month!
-Bill, CHOA General Manager

2022 Tree Trimming Starting this April

At the February meeting, the Board approved a proposal from Arbor Vision for 2022 common area tree work. Most of the trimming will focus on trees within the greenbelt area, with one day of trimming assigned for the south slope's most pertinent trees.

Tree trimming for 2022 will take place in two phases. Phase one will start in early April, and should last about a month. This round will focus

primarily on eucalyptus trees and conifers. Phase two is scheduled for later this fall, and will include oak trees and everything else. 141 trees will be trimmed in phase one, and 114 trees will be trimmed in phase two.

In addition to trimming, a total of 14 trees are scheduled to be removed this year. Please reference the February Signal for a detailed breakdown of which trees are being removed and why.

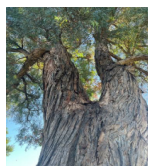
And last but not least, the Board approved two proposals for tree healthcare. One is a revitalization program focused on the Valley Oak heritage tree at the end of Adelia Ct. Unfortunately this tree has a very large fungal conch on at least one of the main stems and at the base of the tree inside a large cavity.

We are also working on getting the greenbelt trees re-tagged. If you have questions about whether a particular

tree is scheduled for trimming this year, please reach out to the Business Office once the retagging project is complete (ETA is early April).

As always, if you have any questions at all, contact the GM at 925-687-9961!

Below: pictures of trees from our urban forest scheduled to be trimmed this year!



Walnut Country Preschool News



Walnut Country Preschool

We've just completed our community helper section which keeps us close to home. We will be exploring things far from home with ocean animals and outer space next. While they are very different, they are similar in the way that they are quite separate from our reality on land where we are beginning to experience early Spring!

By this point in the year the 3 year old class has been introduced to our Zoophonics program. Zoophonics is a multi-sensory program that is designed to increase meaningful understanding of the alphabet. By engaging oral, auditory, visual and kinesthetic cues the preschooler's brain

has a lot to grip on to make learning fun and translate into reading and spelling success. The 4 year old class will be adding on to that knowledge and introducing the Q-U pairing.

As the weather warms up it's a great time to practice large motor skills on a walk or bike ride. Even bubbles are a great fine motor skill that can support development of oral motor coordination for your preverbal or early verbal child. It can be a messy business, but very beneficial.

Our program for Fall 2022 is nearly full. To be added to our waitlist please call 925-798-9686, or email walnutcountrypreschooldirector@gmail.com.

2022 Assessment Reminder

The Association's January financials listed more than 50 homeowners who had a \$4 balance at the end of the month – likely meaning bill pay or autopay had not been updated to reflect the new \$107 assessment amount.

If you need any assistance with this, want to check your balance, or want to confirm that your autopay has updated, please call the General

Manager at 925-687-9961 or email businessoffice@walnutcountry.com. Because there are several methods of payment for your assessments, it sometimes can be hard to know which method you are signed up for and whether it has updated the assessment amount automatically, or if you need to do it manually. Please do not hesitate to give us a call, even if you just want to make 100% sure!

Pool Chlorine System

All three of the CHOA pools were upgraded last year to utilize a chlorine tab feeding system, rather than having to add liquid chlorine to the water. These tabs are added to the pool through a component installed in the pump room. This system means we are not reliant on liquid chlorine and – more importantly – not sub-

ject to or impacted by the continuing chlorine shortage affecting the country.

One side effect of these tabs is that, when added to the pools in large quantities, the water may look a little cloudy until everything has been run through the filter. Due to the size of the pools, this may take some time, but the pool will be perfectly safe to swim.

Walnut Country Swim Team Updates



Walnut Country Swim Team Spring Clinic begins March 7-April 1.

Come one, come all to the Annual Ice Cream Social

Sunday, March 13 from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM at the main pool deck. It will be a great time to learn more about our swim team.

Our family friendly, fun and exciting summer swim season is almost here. Preseason begins April 11. Registration is now open.

Visit wcstingrays.com for registration and more information.

We'll see you at the pool deck! Go WCST!

-WCST Board of Directors

Interested in Joining a USTA Team?



There are several competitive U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) tennis teams that play in our development in league matches against other non-Homeowner club teams. Some of the adult USTA teams are looking for residents that would be interested to play on a USTA tennis team. Please contact the Business Office if you are interested in joining, and we will connect you with the USTA captains.

To learn more about the USTA leagues, check out the

Norcal USTA league site: <https://playtennis.usta.com/tournaments>

And as a reminder, we always have the most up-to-date Walnut Country USTA schedule posted on the HOA website (along with at the bulletin boards at the upper courts): <http://walnutcountry.com/usta/>. USTA practices are typically held Mo-Thurs from 6pm to 8:30pm at courts 2-4. Matches are held on weekend mornings and afternoons. Contact the Business Office with any questions.

Please Leash Dogs at all Times

We continue to receive reports of owners letting their dogs off leash within the common areas (dog park excluded). Even if you believe your dog is very well behaved and perfectly trained, it *must* be on a leash at all times when outside of your residence. You never

know how other dogs (or humans) might react to a dog off leash coming up to it. Please ensure that all dogs within the greenbelt are on a leash at all times. Owners who see residents with dogs off leash can report the address of the dog owner to the Association for escalation.

HOA Helper - Architectural Committee FAQ

We frequently get questions from homeowners about the architectural committee, violation letters, and the architectural process in general. We wanted to make this “Frequently Asked Questions” section to help answer some of the most common questions or comments we get.

Who’s on the Architectural Committee and what do they do?

The committee is made up of one Chairperson (a Board member) and several homeowner volunteers. These volunteers donate their time to the Association, meeting once a month and also performing monthly inspections of their assigned sectors. The Committee’s job is to 1) review requests from homeowners wanting to make changes to their property, and 2) perform inspections of the HOA, looking for potential violations of the HOA’s governing documents and rules. Right now we have a total of 6 architectural committee members, some of whom have been serving for many years.

Why do we need to perform inspections and send out violation letters?

The CC&Rs and rules for the HOA list specific restrictions and requirements that must be followed by all residents. This is part of living in an HOA and runs with the land. The intent behind these restrictions and requirements is to uphold property values and protect the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. The HOA is required by law to enforce the rules and CC&Rs. Failure to do so could result in litigation against the Association, believe it or not.

Why do I need to get approval from the HOA if I want to do something like paint my house or extend my driveway?

This is because the CC&Rs require homeowners to go through the approval process for modifications they are making to the property. Governing documents, like the CC&Rs and Bylaws, run with the land. They are a part of the agreement owners make when purchasing a house within an HOA, confirming that they are aware of these governing documents and agree to abide by them. Please reference Article IX, Section 1 and 2 of the CC&Rs (pages 19 and 20) for specific reference to the architectural application process. This is a process that will always exist – but the current Board and Architectural Committee are working hard on making this process as easy and painless as possible for owners, since we don’t want to prevent owners from upgrading or enhancing their property. We have already put in place many pre-approval policies for common modifications like painting, re-roofing, solar panels, and landscaping. If you ever have a question about the types of modifications that require approval, or if your particular application falls into a pre-approved category, please contact the Business Office.

I got a letter about weeds in my front yard, but my neighbor’s house looks so much worse – why don’t you send them a letter?

This is feedback we receive frequently. Owners sometimes get a letter for a violation that they might think is punitive and compare the state of their property to another that is clearly in worse

shape. The important thing to remember here is that many letters are sent out each month. If you got a violation letter, and your neighbor’s property is clearly and objectively in worse shape than yours, they received a letter as well. The violation process can be slow and tedious, and unfortunately there are a number of owners who simply ignore the letters and do not rectify the situation once they’ve received a letter from the Committee. Just because an owner is refusing to comply doesn’t mean they haven’t received one or more letters from the HOA. We certainly understand the frustration, but if you see a property that is in bad shape, it has likely been sent multiple letters by the HOA.

Couldn’t you have knocked on my door to talk to me about a violation, instead of sending me a letter?

This is another common comment we receive. While we certainly understand this perspective, the answer to this question is no, for two specific reasons: 1) there are 1,062 homes in this community that need to be inspected on a frequent basis. If we asked inspectors, who are already volunteering their free time, to knock on the door of every single home that they found to be in violation, their inspections would take an excessive amount of time. 2) the Association needs to keep a record of addresses where a violation has been noted, along with information like the date, pictures, etc. This is so the Association has tangible proof if the issue ever needs to be escalated to a hearing or legal counsel. This is also why we cannot usually make phone calls to report violations either. With this many units and

monthly violations, the process has to be efficient and consistent – and the program our inspectors use to record violations and send out letters allows the HOA to 1) perform inspections quickly and 2) keep proper documentation of all recorded violations.

I got a letter after leaving my trash can out for one day – can’t you cut me some slack?

While in the grand scheme of things a trash can being left out for an extra day or two is certainly not the highest priority target for inspectors, the HOA has a duty to enforce the rules and must make owners aware of violations whenever they are noticed. Because inspections are performed once a month, this is often the result of unfortunate timing. Sometimes owners are out of town for a day and can’t put the trash can away until they return, which might be after an inspector has completed their rounds. We completely understand this situation and are flexible in working with owners who call the office to explain what happened. The real problem is when this becomes a frequent occurrence. And as annoying as getting a letter about trash cans might be, the truth is trash cans are probably the easiest violation to confirm – they are either visible on a non trash-pickup day, or they aren’t. There’s no gray area there that might make an inspector pause or hold off on sending a letter until the next month.

As a reminder, the first notices owners get for violations are “courtesy reminders,” and are generally just making folks aware of the particular issue that was noticed. Hopefully this answered some of your questions!

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