

[We're on the web!
www.oakviewheights.org]

Oakview Heights Homeowners' Association
c/o HOA Community Solutions
5500 Olympic Drive, H-105
Gig Harbor WA 98335

Oakview Heights Meeting Calendar

Board Meetings

2nd Tuesday of each month
7:00 p.m.
Roy Community Center

Mid-year Community Meeting

November 8, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Roy Community Center

Annual Meeting

May 8th, 2012
7:00 p.m.
Roy Community Center

All meetings follow a set agenda that is published in advance and may be accessed on the Community website. All agendas provide for public comments from the community and a section for open items not on the agenda. All comments will become part of the public record and published with the approved minutes along with the name of the person who made the comments.

Community Website

The Oakview Heights website, www.oakviewheights.org, has a new volunteer primary and alternate webmaster who will be working hard to update and revitalize the community website to make it more informative and user friendly. Please check in often to see the revisions and let us know how we are doing.

Contact Us

You may contact the Board of Directors at any time via email if you have questions, comments, or ideas. Please send all email to oakviewheights@gmail.com.

Please contact our community manager, Debra Porter, at 253-985-3812, ext 4 or debra@hoacommunitysolutions.com for questions about billing, to report violations of CC&R's, to report damage to community property, to submit lot change requests, or for help answering questions about the CC&R's.

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OAKVIEW HEIGHTS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Community Newsletter

Who is HOA Community Solutions?

As the owner/operator of HOA Community Solutions—a management and consulting company that exclusively works with homeowners associations, I am often asked why I started the business. The simple answer is that I felt there was a great need in the Pierce County area for a local and affordable HOA management company.

Based on what I observed in my neighborhood, there was a tremendous need for support and service to homeowners associations. At the time, my community owned a 50-year old well that was failing, roads filled with pot holes, the existing board was in turmoil and no one in the was eager to step up and volunteer to be on the board. Neighbors weren't getting along, the community became divided over financial issues, and ultimately we ended up spending nearly three years in the court system to find answers. The legal drama created a great deal of agony for everyone and cost our community over \$140,000 in legal fees and settlement costs). During this difficult time, I saw the strain on our board members, who in my mind were "heroes" simply because they didn't resign their posts during a

time when it would have been much easier to just quit and walk away.

In an effort to find help for my community, I called various management companies and attorneys and found that most of them were Seattle based and not within our community's financial reach. So as a community, we abandoned the idea and soldiered on.

However I couldn't shake the feeling that there was a need that wasn't being met. After some serious soul searching, I left my position as a Sr. VP with a local non-profit after twenty-two years of service to form a start-up company to help meet the need.

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Annual HOA Dues

Throughout the year, your Association Board has worked to ensure that Oakview Heights remains an attractive and safe community with stable property values. We strive to deliver the maximum amount of services on the minimum amount of homeowners' dues.

A number of homeowners have volunteered their time raking, trimming and beautifying the community. We appreciate all of your efforts. Everyone pitching in a little saves us from having to hire everything out and builds the sense of community that we all want to enjoy.

One item that has been a major concern this year has been the increase of annual assessments. As outlined in the CC&Rs, the Board is charged with the responsibility of maintaining and managing the Homeowners

Association in accordance with the CC&Rs and all applicable WA State laws, which includes having a reserve fund in place that is sufficient to meet the repair and/or replacement of community infrastructure and common areas. For Oakview Heights these include the roads in the community and storm drainage system, which are the two most costly but critical parts of the community infrastructure. When I moved to Oakview Heights in 2005, the annual dues were \$100.00, and in May 2008 the dues were raised to \$135.00. While there was a reserve fund in place, it was inadequate to meet the current or projected future needs of the community based on estimates in place at the time.

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Who is HOA Community Solutions cont.

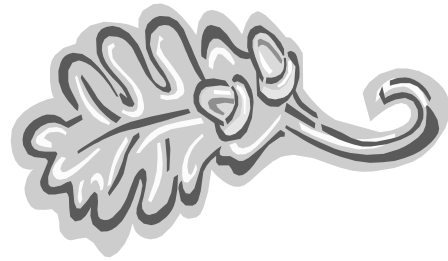
Homeowners Associations (HOAs) are non-profit corporations that legally require a board of directors to operate in the state of Washington. Finding homeowners willing to give of their personal time to serve as board and committee members is becoming increasingly difficult in this day and age. HOAs were developed to help communities maintain their property values and manage the community owned assets. Yet to do this effectively, HOAs must collect dues from their neighbors and "govern" the business of the community through the enforcement of the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs). While in theory the system is a good one, it is difficult to implement primarily because volunteers find that enforcing the CC&Rs and collecting debt owed to the Association by

their neighbors can be uncomfortable and perhaps strain their neighborly relationships.

At HOA Community Solutions, our goal is to try to ease the volunteer burden and do many of the day-to-day tasks. Communities are still required to have a board of directors to make the necessary decisions, and our role is to implement those decisions as smoothly as possible.

As communities age, the infrastructure breaks down and aging common elements need to be replaced. Over the past several years, we have helped communities develop their reserves so that the community does not "fall apart" due to lack of care and investment in things like paving, street lights, entrance signs and even stop signs.

Currently we have three staff on our team: Lisa Scott, (finance), Debra Porter, (East Pierce County Manager) and I. We are here to help Oakview Heights residents in any way we can. We look forward to working with you.



Annual HOA Dues Increase cont.

In August 2008 I was elected to the Board to fill an unplanned vacancy, and in September 2008 another unplanned vacancy required that I take over the day to day management of the Association, which included all the financial management. It was quickly apparent to me in September 2008 that our projected revenues were insufficient to meet future needs even under the very best of times. These projections did not take into account home foreclosures, abandoned properties, increased default on dues payments and liens, vandalism, fuel costs, or other cost increases associated with running a business. These increased costs eroded the small amount that was placed into reserves at a faster rate than anticipated. While the topic of incremental dues increases over a longer period of time came up frequently, the Board was unwilling to take action on this issue.

In June 2009 new estimates for road repair and storm drain cleaning were obtained and the issue of our insufficient reserves could no longer be ignored. In July 2009 I wrote a letter to the community in which I mentioned the need to consider raising annual dues. In a special

community meeting that took place in November 2009 the topic of increasing the annual dues was front and center on the agenda and the reasons that were driving the need to raise dues, and in 2010 the Board unanimously voted to increase the annual dues in time for the 2011 billing cycle.

I am acutely aware that many of our community members are on a fixed or limited income. This was not an easy decision on any level, but most especially on a personal level because I too must pay the increased dues in addition to being reminded by the community of their displeasure for the increase.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the Board is charged with the maintaining the Community. As homeowners, we all have a vested financial interest in maintaining our community at the highest possible standard. While I believe that some of this pain could have been avoided early on by raising the dues with incremental scheduled increases, this would not have solved all our problems.

There are several tools that we are now using to help mitigate the need for large unplanned dues increases. The first, which is also a new state law, is a Reserve Study. This study will look at all the Community assets, the size, and age of the community, and the current condition of the infrastructure and put in place a series of projections of what will be required in the short, mid, and long term to be used as planning factors for setting rates. The other tool is the use of a professional management company. Through their professional expertise we have been able to reduce overall costs while at the same time increase collections and enforce collection policy.

While raising Association dues is never an easy or popular decision, I believe that it was the correct decision for the long term health and vitality of the Oakview Heights community.

I am always available to discuss this or any other issue regarding the Oakview Heights community.

Reserve Study

On January 18, 2011 HB 1309 and companion bill SB 5223 were introduced to the State Legislature. This legislation will require all homeowners associations, with limited exceptions, to prepare an initial reserve study and update the reserve study annually. The Board of Directors is required to present the outcome of the reserve study to the Association with the annual budget summary. These bills were signed into law by Gov. Gregoire on April 29, 2011, and will go into effect January 1, 2012. Detailed information is described under RCW 64.34.308(4) and RCW 64.38.025(4).

A reserve study is a financial planning tool that will help the Association esti-

mate costs over a specific period of time for replacing, repairing, and restoring significant infrastructure that is commonly owned or shared by all members. With this tool the Board will be able to accurately predict annual dues and better keep the Association informed on possible rate increases.

Because Oakview Heights is a relatively small community with few common areas, the Board has elected to use a "do it yourself" reserve study kit. This kit is a questionnaire style reserve study that takes into account information such as the size and age of the community, common areas, infrastructure, annual dues, and reserves on hand. Once completed and sent in we will

receive a complete analysis with recommendations. This analysis will be provided to the community with the annual budget proposal. The Board may act on, ignore, or modify the recommendations as deemed appropriate.



Did You Know?

Did you know that all OHHA Board meetings are open to the community? In accordance with WA State law and the governing documents, Oakview Heights homeowners are permitted to attend all OHHA Board meetings. The format for the Board meetings is the same as that used in City and County council meetings, and provides for comments from the community and open items for Board consideration.

Meeting minutes are kept from all Board meetings and are available upon request. All comments made during a Board meeting become part of the public record as well as the name of who made the comments.

Did you know that the elected Board of Directors is a representative body that uses the democratic process of a simple

majority to act on the behalf of the entire community? RCW 64.38.025 and Article 5 of the OHHA CC&Rs spell this out. Many residents believe that Oakview Heights is a direct democracy where by all issues must be voted on and approved by a majority of the Association membership. The only item the Board must take a community vote on is approval of the annual budget and all changes or amendments to the

New Lighting to be Installed

As I am sure everyone has noticed, the front entrance drive into our community is very dark and isolated, and as a result is a frequent target for theft and vandalism. While there is one small grossly inefficient light located above the monument, it is often the target of vandals and several times has been broken on the very same night it was replaced.

Recently, the Board in cooperation with Puget Sound Energy and the City of Roy has contracted to have two lights installed at the entrance of our community. The first will be a 200 watt light on a 30' pole and 12' arm located at the intersection of SR 507 and 292nd Street just behind the STOP sign and angled to illuminate equally the entrance of the intersection and SR 507

and 292nd St.

The second will be located approximately halfway between SR 507 and the railroad tracks in front of the electrical junction box on 292nd St.