

Tales of Tanglegrove

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – Edition 3

November 30, 2009

Hello neighbors, I apologize for being late with this edition of the newsletter. More importantly I hope you noticed it was late! Autumn is here in all of its glory and the holiday season is upon us. There is a lot to tell you since I have not reported for quite a while so I guess I better get started.

I think that all of us on the Board would agree that our September meeting was extremely productive. We went through next year's budget and made the necessary adjustments that will at this point keep our maintenance fees at their current rate.

A couple of things relative to the budget, one of the first questions I had at my first board meeting was in regards to the category "Insurance Expenses" there was a specific line item named "Boilers & Machinery." Lance kindly explained what covered this line item and we went on through the meeting. Since that time I have been asked numerous times it and my mind goes absolutely blank! So at the October meeting I admitted my lack of retention to everyone and requested a refresher course for all of our benefits and I wrote it down. So here goes – there are no boilers on the property as we all suspected. This category covers any kind of repairs to the electrical systems that distribute electricity to the community such as our underground wiring and anything relative to the pool. We have insurance for massive repairs; however, it has a \$5,000 deductible. Now we can all stop looking for the boiler.

Second issue regarding next year's budget: you may or may not have heard that there was an increase in next year's budget for new plants. There were four reasons which substantiated this increase that all tie back to maintaining the value of our homes; two were weather related and two are maintenance related. As you know we lost numerous trees due to Hurricane Ike. To replace these trees with nice size trees has been and continues to be quite expensive. We followed Ike with one of the hottest summers and our shrubs, trees and lawns suffered greatly. You only have to walk through the property to see missing plants that had to be removed or areas that have suffered greatly in the heat. Now we are burdened with the task of repairing the damage from both of these weather related events. An additional cost regarding landscaping occurs each time we rehab a building or a particular building requires extensive repairs such as foundation work or removal of the facade. In such cases we always try to remove the plants and keep them alive. We also re-plant them when the work is finished, but this does not always work and frequently the landscaping was as in as much disrepair as the building, regrettably. The Association is obligated to restore your unit not just structurally but esthetically to

maintain its value. Lastly, we have the situation that many of our large shrubs throughout the complex are extremely old and well past the point of being appealing. We are starting a three year program to update the green plants in the common areas in our communities to make sure that Tanglegrove remains appealing, welcome to our guests, and the potential new homeowners.

Our October meeting was yet another constructive meeting. We had several homeowners present some new ideas which we discussed at length and will put up for further discussion at another meeting. It was decided that we had sufficient volunteers for all of our committees.

As you may or may not have heard, the Board decided to solicit bids for a new landscaping company. This decision was made due to two factors: 1) We had received many complaints that residents were not satisfied with the current standard of care we were receiving from Gardenia and 2) cost savings. A look at our annual budget shows that one of the largest line items is the expense for landscaping the property. The two issues kept coming up in conversations with homeowners as well as among those of us on the Board. Collectively we felt that we would be remiss in our duties to you, the homeowners, unless we investigated the possibility of improving the quality and reducing the cost of the services or at a minimum maintaining our current standards and reducing the cost of the services. In either event it would a win-win for the community.

To accomplish our objective a list of requirements and standards was prepared and then numerous companies were offered the opportunity to bid including our current company, Gardenia. All companies walked the property with our Landscape Committee Chairman, Kay Bates, and Lance Williams from Creative Management at one time so that they would all have the opportunity to ask questions and so that Kay could point out to them particular issues of concern. All sealed bids were submitted to the Board and were opened and discussed in executive suggestion at this month's Board meeting. It was revealed to the Board that the bids were most likely not accurate as the various companies had included some additional factors not on the required list given out. The Board decided to postpone a re-bid given the fact the fall planting needed to commence. Our committee chairman is currently working with Gardenia to begin planting the trees that have been on hold and to start fall planting.

It was reported that there have been some problems in regards to safety due to some problems we have had here on the property and in the area.

- Over a month ago a resident accidentally left their wallet on the front seat of their car which was parked in their carport. Unfortunately, for the resident, they locked their automobile and their electric window malfunctioned and did not roll all the way up that evening. It stopped and left a space obviously just large enough for someone

- to get their arm in so that they could unlock the car and steal the wallet.
- Another resident had their tailgate stolen from their truck within the last month. The following week their vehicle was broken into resulting in additional stolen property and vandalism. Both incidences occurred between midnight and 7 am.
 - The apartment complex at the corner of Fountainview and Valley Forge have had incidences where a man or men were walking through their parking lot checking for unlocked cars. Fortunately, in the first incident a car alarm went off and scared them away.

Personally, I have fallen into a false sense of security and am not as careful as I should be. What about you? I have had my reality checks here at Tanglegrove. The first night I spent in my home in 1997 someone stole the tailgate from my truck. What a welcome to the community! Per HPD it only takes 9 seconds to steal a tailgate. On another occasion I was followed home from dropping a friend off. Luckily I became aware of it and did not lead them to my home.

We all need to be extremely alert at all times. Report any suspicious people or vehicles to the police; do not try to look up the number for a board member! Be careful and constantly aware of your surroundings when you walk your pets, husbands and/or wives at night. Leave your porch lights on and report any lights out on the property by filing a Work Request on the website. Also, if you feel that a certain spot on the property is unsafe, perhaps the bushes are too tall or too thick and could provide cover for an unwanted person please file a Work Request or send us notice on Feedback. We need your input.

Terry Groce of Universal NewsLetter Publications (“UNLP”) addressed our November board meeting. UNLP designs and operates numerous websites for townhome communities in Houston and Terry gave a presentation to the Board of what his company has to offer Tanglegrove to give us an update. Subsequent to the November meeting the Board evaluated his proposal and reviewed some of the websites they have designed and currently operate. We found them to be appealing, professional and user friendly and have elected to upgrade our website. UNLP visited the property on Wednesday November 25th and with the assistance of Kay Bates and Robert Gardenia conducted a photo shoot for the new site. We are very excited and hope to have the new Tanglegrove website ready for use in early February. More details will follow in next month’s newsletter.

I think that takes care of all the updates, now a few reminders. It appears that Tanglegrove has either so many new homeowners that have not read the By-Laws and the Rules & Regulations or there are many of us who have been here so long that we have forgotten what they say. For your convenience our Website Committee has them posted on the homepage under “Governance” or you can select either of these topics listed previously. One of the most frequent

questions we have is: "Who is responsible for what?" Again, the Responsibility Matrix has been on the website and recently it was set up in a downloadable format and it is there for your reference. If it should be changed for any reason you will be notified.

A reminder to our homeowners who currently are or are contemplating renting out your townhome; whether you live there or not you remain responsible for compliance with the Rules and Regulations. Any violations incurred by your tenant will reflect on you and any penalties will be your responsibility. We suggest that you copy these very important documents and give them to any and all tenants for their review and compliance. Although you no longer live here the value of your investment relies on this compliance.

One rule that appears to have been forgotten by many residents is the one relative to vehicle parking on the property. All of our units have double garages and/or a carport with a garage. Hopefully it is no surprise to anyone that we are required to park our vehicles in those designated areas. If we have furniture, boxes, etc. in half of the garage and we have two cars then that second car needs to be in your personal driveway, **not in visitor parking**. Keep in mind to park in your driveway as it must be 10 feet in length. If you live in one of the units that do not have a 10 foot driveway then you need to put your excess property in storage so your second vehicle will fit in the garage. Residents, this means anyone living in a unit, is not to park in visitor parking. Visitors are not to park in visitor parking for more than 48 hours. Any and all vehicles that are in violation will be stickered and subject to fines and could result in being towed.

A reminder, garbage pick up is on Monday and Thursday. We have received several complaints that some residents are placing their garbage outside of their unit day(s) in advance of pickup and are not removing their cans timely. Please be a good neighbor and abide by the rules. Failure to comply is subject to a fine.

I have been asked to mention a couple of things about our monthly Board Meetings. At the beginning of each monthly Board Meeting there is an open forum where any homeowner is welcome to address the Board with their concern(s). Per the Rules and Regulations if you intend to address the Board you must (1) email or fax a request to be placed on the Open Forum Agenda, (2) you must identify what will be the topic of discussion, and (3) you must limit your discussion of the issue to 5 minutes. We have not been adhering to these rules in the past few months because we felt that we needed to allow as much information to flow as possible. However, with the ability to use Feedback and Violation reporting features on the website we feel that we can go back to following the rules as they were set up.

During our monthly meetings we review the Architectural Control Change Forms that have been submitted. You will recall that before we make any

changes to the exterior of our units we have to fill out one of these “lovely” forms and have it approved by the Board. These forms must be submitted to Creative Management in advance of the Board Meeting so they can be placed on the Agenda. Only the fully completed ACC forms received by Creative by close of business the Wednesday before the monthly meetings will be up for discussion. You can still hand deliver it to a monthly meeting; however, it will not be reviewed until the next monthly meeting.

As for the ACC Forms, please take care in filling them out. They must be completed in full with all information attached. Make sure that when you fill them out that you use the name(s) that appear on the title to the property. When it is signed it must be signed in the presence of a Notary Public by the same individual(s) and in the same manner in which the name is set forth on the title. You must include all information to describe what is being done, sketches, pictures, etc. before it will be placed on the Agenda. You will be notified after the meeting if your proposal has been approved or denied.

Now for some cheerful topics. Part of the continued success of our beautiful community is our extremely hard working on-site workers Ron and Jorge. These two gentlemen are the magicians behind the scenes of Tanglegrove Townhomes that fix those darn gates that hang up, that are there to plug up those holes where the rascally squirrels are getting into the attic, and that among many things rebuilt the arbors on both pools this year for everyone to enjoy. You name it and they do it. Also on the property we have two gentlemen who work for Gardenia Landscaping but are here each day to keep our grounds lovely, to keep the gutters flowing and did the most outstanding job bringing us back to a certain sense of normalcy after Hurricane Ike by cleaning up in such record time. I know it is a very difficult time period for all of us based on the downturn of the economy, however, I hope you will join me in finding something in your heart and your wallet to give to these extremely good men as a holiday bonus. If you would like to donate to our Christmas Bonus fund please do one of the following:

1. Place your donations in a sealed envelope, write “Creative Management” on the front and drop it in the Suggestion slot at the clubhouse, or
2. Mail your donation directly to Creative Management, c/o Lance Williams, 8323 Southwest Frwy, Suite 330, Houston, TX 77074. Make note on your check that it is for Christmas Bonus.

If one of these options do not work for you email the Board at Feedback and we will try to make accommodations for your needs.

I would like to take a moment to thank someone who helps me each month with the newsletter, Matthew Wells. When I finish each month I pass my

work product on to my "Editor in Chief." Matthew takes the time out of his busy schedule to critique my work, correct my punctuation as necessary (and it is necessary), and steer me back in the event I stray from the point. After working on this for several days I sometimes totally lose my focus and it is so nice to know that I can count on him to be there to help out. So if you see Matthew walking around pushing his beautiful twin girls in their stroller on a Saturday or Sunday please thank him for his contribution.

Finally, it is the Holiday Season and we want all of our residents to be safe, happy and healthy. Please be careful in your travels whether they are out of town or across town. If you are leaving for a few days advise your neighbor(s) so they can pick up your papers and leave your porch lights on. Stay alert at all times.

The Board, Trent, Roger, Kay, and Matthew have asked me to send you their very best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season!

Happy Holidays!!

Vicki Townsend