

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

UPDATE from the Board.

With the state of emergency in effect in Polk County in November 2020, the Board did not feel it was safe to hold the Annual General Meeting in November. As a result, it was put on hold and will now take place later this month.

The AGM will be an "In-Person" meeting only. Masks are required.

As an Owner you will have the opportunity to elect your Board of Directors at the postponed AGM. This will be a short-term Board as we are required to have our AGM each November.

I encourage as many of you as possible to run for the board at the AGM later this month. It is a wonderful opportunity to impact positively on your community and can truly be a rewarding & fulfilling experience.

Should you be interested in becoming a Board member, please complete and return the attached "Candidate Form" and your Bio to Robert Oldro at robert@hoaemt.com or fax 352-708-4923.

As an HOA we have experienced significant issues over the past couple of years. The flood in the Clubhouse and Covid.

Another issue is with our Landscaping contract. At the end of their 3-year term the Board was prepared to solicit for the lawn care business. To meet the contract end date the process was scheduled to begin in November 2020. That was in the middle of the pandemic. Most areas were still in lockdown. The executive members, the potential vendors nor our Community Manager wanted to risk their health and safety to begin the quotation period. We also wanted to minimize the health risk to our Homeowners. We had the option, under the contract, to extend for an additional year. The Board felt that this was the best option at that time.

Due to travel restrictions, I will be unable to attend the AGM. I hope you have a good meeting.

I wish you all well. Stay safe.

Mark Stephens
On behalf of the Board

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

REMINDER

The Manors at Westridge – Annual General Meeting

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND ELECTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of the 2020 annual meeting of the membership to be held on **April 12, 2021 at Manors at Westridge Homeowners Association clubhouse at 214 Buckingham Circle, Davenport, FL 33897 at 6:00 p.m.** for the purpose of electing a board of directors, and any other association business deemed appropriate. If a quorum is not attained, the current board will continue to serve or may appoint replacements from the candidates.

registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will cease at 5:59 p.m.

Please be early to be counted and avoid lines or delay the start of the meeting. The meeting will begin **promptly at 6:00 PM.**

MASKS REQUIRED

You must bring Photo ID.

The complete package is available on the Owner's Portal.



The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com



The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

Long Term Renters

Homes that are rented long term are required to submit a copy of the long-term rental agreement to the HOA. The rental agreement must state that the tenants were informed or were provided a copy of the Manors at Westridge Covenants and rules and regulations.

The rental agreement must be signed by owner/agent and the tenant stating they agree to abide by the Covenants and rules and regulations. Homes that are rented more than 6 months will be considered long term.

Owners should ensure tenants have an access card for the Clubhouse facilities.

Contact Robert Oldro for assistance at Office: 352-366-0234, Direct: 352-404-4473 or robert@hoaemt.com

Trash and Recycle Totes

Are you missing a wheel? Is your tote no longer in good shape?

Call Polk County Wates to arrange for a new tote or to schedule to have it repaired.

(863) 284-4319 or send an email to PolkWasteWise@polk-county.net



Architectural Review Board - ARB

We often get asked – When is an ARB required?

An ARB form is required when the Owner is contemplating any type of work on the Exterior of their home. This could include home additions, wall, fence or other structure or improvement of any nature or kind also including mailboxes, landscaping fences and exterior paint and finish. It also includes new plantings, trees etc. Removal of trees also require an ARB approval.

Inside your lanai is **NOT** included as external to your home.

While it may seem arbitrary from an individual homeowner's standpoint, the ARB process **looks out for the entire community**. Aside from stopping residents from painting pink polka dots on their houses, the committee's job is to make sure that the size and style of the project, the type of building materials being used, and the overall look of the new structure adhere to the Association's design requirements.

The process also protects us all by ensuring contractors hold the necessary licence and insurance.

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

Responsibilities of Board Members

The Board of Directors has a fiduciary relationship with its members and is responsible for making good decisions for the association.

Directors are responsible for: Preserving property values, Maintaining the property, establishing house rules and regulations, Overseeing the organization's finances (including collecting assessments), Maintaining appropriate insurance coverage for common area liability and property damage, and Keeping members informed.

What does an HOA Board President do?

The president leads the Board and is responsible for overseeing and handling many of its procedural duties. In order to succeed in this role, the Board president must be knowledgeable about the community's CC&Rs and governing documents and understand how to run an effective meeting. He or she serves as the authority on all association rules and governing documents and appoints committees if dictated by the bylaws. The president also leads community and association meetings, handling such responsibilities as calling the meeting to order, announcing the agenda, and ensuring adherence, maintaining attendee order and decorum, proposing questions, calling for votes and announcing the results, and recognizing others to speak on the floor.

What does an HOA Board Vice-President do?

The Board vice president shares many of the leadership and procedural duties with the president, including assuming the leadership role when the president is unable to do so. The vice president's responsibilities include ensuring order is maintained during meetings and parliamentary procedures, ensuring a smooth flow of business, and serving as an informed source about association rules, bylaws, and governing documents.

What does a Board Treasurer do?

The Board treasurer is responsible for the association's funds, securities, and financial records. He or she oversees billing, collections, and disbursement of funds, and coordinates the development of the association's proposed annual operating budget and reserve allocations. In addition, the treasurer is responsible for monitoring the budget and reporting on the association's financial status throughout the year, as well as for overseeing year-end reporting and any required audits. In self-managed communities, in which many of the day-to-day financial responsibilities are handled by a property management company, the treasurer is responsible for ensuring that all association funds are collected, disbursed, invested, and reported accurately and remain in compliance at all times with the association's by-laws and governing documents.

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

The Purpose of a Board of Directors and an HOA Management Company

We have heard from some Owners, why do we have a BOD and a HOA Management company?

Most associations are managed solely by a homeowner's association, which in turn, is led by an elected board of directors. This small group of individuals is made up of volunteers from the community, and most HOA board members don't have any specific expertise that qualifies or prepare them for the task. That's why it becomes essential for HOA communities to hire an HOA management company that can take care of daily management while helping the community to realize its long-term vision.

Benefits of an HOA Management Company

With the help of a management company, an HOA board can achieve so much more than it could on its own. The best part is there's no need to delegate all responsibility to a manager, only a few demanding everyday tasks that would free the board to focus on more important, long-term goals. In essence, it's much easier for an HOA board to fulfill its duties with the assistance of a qualified HOA management company. Here are some of the services that an HOA management company can assist your association with:

- **Hiring vendors**

HOA board members don't usually have the resources or network connections required to find cost-effective and quality vendors. However, when you delegate this task to a management company, you can have rest assured that the firm will draw on a vast array of resources to find the best vendors in your location at cost-effective prices.

That's because most management companies have long standing relationships with experienced and qualified vendors that they've been working with for years. These relationships are often built on a positive reputation underpinned by years of reliability, paying on time, and getting access to more clients. As such, vendors are willing to negotiate lower rates with management companies that they know, as opposed to HOA board members they're not familiar with.

- **Open communication**

The great thing about an experienced HOA management company is that they're not just there to enforce rules and regulations. They also make a concerted effort, through systematic action, to listen to community members and understand their needs so they can cater to them better.

A qualified community management company will ensure that residents feel comfortable to express their thoughts and ideas in order to foster a happier community.

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

- **Consistency**

Sometimes, familiarity with neighbors can affect the decision-making of HOA board members, and even lead to unintended preferential treatment. After all, we're all human.

A management company is different because it has no personal relationships with any of the residents. As such, the manager is able to enforce the association rules and regulations without any underlying bias.

- **Dealing with legal issues**

Another responsibility of the HOA management company is to ensure that the association operates according to its own rules and regulations, as well as state legislation.

An experienced HOA manager will bring a wealth of litigation experience and relationships with legal professionals that can benefit the HOA.

- **Managing expectations**

When most people move into a planned community development, they'll receive association governing documents as part of their welcome pack. But most people are so busy that they don't bother to read these drawn-out and difficult to understand documents.

However, it's important for the board at least to study and understand the HOA's founding documents, including its policies, bylaws, and CC&R's.

An experienced HOA management company can work with the board of directors to interpret and clarify the governing documents so that the board is empowered to enforce them fairly and appropriately.

It can be quite difficult to operate a homeowner's association. It's a balancing act between keeping homeowners happy while securing the long-term fiscal future of the community. This is more than most HOA board members can handle, and it's the reason why it might be a good idea to hire an HOA management company.

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

Roles and Responsibilities of an HOA Management company

An HOA management company acts on behalf of the board of directors to perform daily management tasks. But it's important to make sure that the management company knows what is expected of it and can carry out its responsibilities without crossing the line.

As such, the HOA must be clear on the tasks it wants to delegate to the management company. There must be a clear boundary between the duties and responsibilities of the HOA and those of the management company.

Generally, these are the duties of the HOA:

- To oversee the maintenance of common areas and the community as a whole.
- Provide shared community amenities such as trash collection and recycling.
- Enforce governing documents.
- Collect dues.
- Maintain a reserve fund and take out insurance for a rainy day; and,
- Cover ongoing expenses.
- Adopt policies.
- Organize community events.
- Hire vendors.

These and other duties can be overwhelming for a small group of volunteers with little to no experience in this field. That's why a vast majority of HOA boards choose to hire a management company to manage some or most of these responsibilities.

HOA management companies are usually tasked with the following:

- To assist the board of directors in accomplishing their responsibilities
- To implement any decisions or policies that are permitted by the board of directors.
- To maintain accurate and up to date records of financial and other transactions that are carried out on behalf of the association.

Owner Contact Information

It is important that Owners update their contact information on Vantaca, (The Manors at Westridge Owner Portal), including your Email address, telephone numbers and address. Please sign in, review, and update your Profile information. Don't forget to save your changes. Owners without Owner Portal access should contact contact Robert to have the information updated.



The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

Myths of an HOA

Many who live in a homeowners' association (HOA) recognize its value, but it can be difficult for some homebuyers to look past the common misconceptions about HOAs. Beyond dues, rules, and regulations, there's so much more that defines an HOA and makes it an enjoyable place to call home. To help clear the air about living in an HOA, read on to learn what's myth versus fact when it comes to settling down in one.

Myth: HOAs aren't suited for young-adult living.

FACT: Many of today's HOAs are forward-thinking and progressive. As the demographics of homebuyers begin to shift, communities are adapting to the wants and needs of their future residents. With millennials entering the home buying market at an increasing rate, more and more communities are offering more experience-based amenities, like upgraded pools and large playgrounds, investing in technology, getting social, and going green.

Myth: Architectural reviews make it difficult to upgrade your home and increase your property value.

FACT: One of the main reasons people buy into an HOA is the consistent property values, and the architectural review is an integral part of that. An architectural review occurs when a homeowner submits planned changes to the aesthetics of their property, also known as an architectural request. The architectural review board will then approve or reject the proposed changes. Without it, there's no way to enforce the standards of homes in a community.

Myth: The rules and regulations are too stringent and impede on your liberties.

FACT: A well-run association provides the proper framework for a great community living experience. Established rules and regulations are designed to promote harmony and prevent problems like loud music, barking dogs, and neglected lawns before they

become a real issue. They also provide guidance on the usage of common spaces, meeting areas, and activity centers, so neighbors and community members have equal opportunities to come together and socialize.

Myth: Neighbors don't look out for one another.

FACT: The biggest emotional benefit to living in an HOA is a real sense of togetherness. Whether it's a condominium or a master-planned community, you, your neighbors, and your association team are in it together. This benefit can be especially crucial for people who don't have family close by, as neighbors often become their chosen family. Additionally, those who live within a community often have similar lifestyles, which helps build camaraderie. If and when there are issues between neighbors, the board of directors can be called upon to help resolve community conflicts. An advocate for all homeowners living within the community's rules and regulations, the board can help enforce an existing rule or guide homeowners towards a mutually agreed-upon resolution.

The Manors at Westridge

For comments or to provide suggestions or articles please email manorsnewsletter@gmail.com

Myth: Residents don't have a voice.

FACT: From barbecues to board meetings and committees, there's plenty of opportunities for neighbors to meet each other, create personal bonds, and do good for their community. An HOA is designed to foster engagement in fun activities and association duties, but it's the board's responsibility to encourage involvement and offer open lines of communication with residents. One of the best ways to get involved is to join the board, but there are other ways to make your voice heard, like attending board meetings and joining committees.

Myth: There are too many hidden fees.

FACT: HOAs generate their operating funds by collecting fees and assessments from members. This money allows the HOA to carry out its responsibilities, including maintaining shared spaces, saving for future repairs and improvements, and enforcing community guidelines.

Before you buy a home that's part of an HOA, make sure you're familiar with any fees you may be responsible for paying. You'll need to decide for yourself if these fees are worth it.

Myth: Board members only act for the good of themselves, not the community.

FACT: The most significant responsibility for the board of directors is to act in the best interest of the association. A board member's decision should never be made only to benefit themselves or a select group of people. Most boards have a mandated Board of Directors Code of Professional Ethics. This code outlines expected behavior regarding integrity and objectivity, technical standards, conflicts of interest, and more.

How to Get More Involved

One of the best ways to help change the perceptions of HOAs is to be more involved in the community. While serving on the board is the best way to affect change, it isn't a small task, as your role can make the difference between the community's success or failure. Read our article, "10 Signs You're Cut Out for the HOA Board," to learn what it takes to be a member of your HOA board.