

July 2024

NEWS TODAY

Issue 1

Chateau in the Pines 1 Community Information

New to the Community?

Community website:

www.chateauinthepines.com

Use this site to:

- contact your Board of Directors
- find meeting agenda/minutes, rules and regs, parking assignments, approved paint colors, etc.
- learn about maintenance projects to keep your home in tip-top shape
- learn about how our community functions and the role of your Board of Directors

Our professional property managers: Community Association Management, 321-777-0402. Reach out to CAM for:

- assistance setting up your owner portal
- issues related to payments and dues
- filling out an ARC for exterior maintenance projects (roof, shakes, fence, balconies, etc.)

2024 Board of Directors

Debra Marshall, President
Jesse Biron, Vice President
Marissa Baker, Secretary
Stephen Campbell, Treasurer
Jeni McCarthy, Director

Remaining Meetings:

September 24
October 29
November 19
December 10 (Annual, Budget, Organizational)

All meetings: 5:30 PM, poolside



The Chateau in the Pines Pool area

Newsletter Launches

FIRST EDITION

This is the inaugural edition of your Board newsletter.

We'll only put out an edition when there's "enough" important news to share.

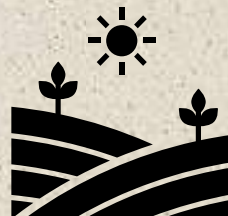
Please let us know what you think! Use the "contact" form on our website.

Thank you to our wonderful neighbors:

- **Gary L.**, for blowing leaves and general upkeep around building 39.
- **Ellen B.**, for plantings and grounds maintenance around her unit. Looks great!
- **Donald R.**, We LOVE the pergola and thank you for helping out around the community!
- **Denise M.**, for the beautiful landscaping around her unit.
- **Louis M.**, for the new composite shakes! They are awesome 😊
- **Carol T.**, for sweeping, edging and taking care of the grounds.
- **Adam C.**, your rental unit looks great! Thank you for your efforts.

Our neighbors are great! Above is a small list of neighbors who we see out and about taking care of our neighborhood and helping the Board with daily tasks.

We "see" you, and we appreciate you!



Budget Talks

See pages two and three for more information on the start of "budget season."

That's Good to Know

Delinquencies impact EVERYONE. Find out some facts about living in a deed restricted community and violations of rules on page three.

President's Corner

See page four for a note from your Board President.

Debra Marshall, President

Budget Season is Approaching

Get Ready to Share Your Thoughts with the Board

The second half of 2024 is upon us, and with that comes discussion of next year's budget.

The main purpose of the Association's budget is to ensure that tasks that must be completed get funded. Examples of these tasks are pool maintenance, roadway repair, tree trimming, lawn maintenance and more. The elected Board is charged with ensuring that required items are discussed and that a reasonable amount of money is set aside for each line item on the budget.

If you're not familiar with the process of budgeting, there are a few things you might be interested in knowing.

The neighborhood you live in is deed restricted. This means that there are certain rules and regulations that you agree to abide by when you purchase your home here.

Your Board is elected to ensure that the rules and regulations are enforced, and that the budget is managed day-to-day. They spend several months at year end in discussion about the next year's budget, and they set the amount of dues to collect by forecasting what they expect the actual costs of items will be.

If you want to be involved in budget discussions, you must attend regular board meetings to

provide your thoughts to the Board.

This year's discussions will begin with the September meeting, scheduled for the 24th, 5:30PM, poolside.

Your thoughts are welcomed! We want more community input. What's important to you, what would you like to see us spend our money on, and what would you like the board to consider as they are working on the budget for next year?

Come to meetings with your thoughts and ideas; we would love to see you!



Above: our community website is at www.chateauinthepines.com

Jesse Biron, Vice President

Trash Talk

What to do with Your Trash

One area in our community that the Board hears about regularly is the dumpsters. They quickly become messy and with our abundance of local wildlife, it's easy for things to quickly get out of control.

We have on-site maintenance twice a week, for about an hour each visit. If we must call them out for extra cleaning of dumpster areas, the charge is \$75.00 per hour. We simply cannot afford this sort of expense, especially when we can do a lot to avoid dumpster messes to begin with.

If we see a mess on a day when maintenance is not scheduled, neighbors and board members pitch in to clean them up. Frankly, folks, this is not something your neighbors (or your volunteer board) signed up to do!

Please ensure that you bag all items, and that dumpster openings are fully closed each time you use a dumpster. Don't send your children to dumpsters unless they can properly dispose of items. And, if you see a mess, let us know by alerting a board member, by using your maintenance request on the CAM portal, or by sending a notice via the community website.

Marissa Baker, Secretary

Our Community Website

Our community website has a lot of helpful information for you! Among other things, you can find:

- Covenants, By Laws and Rules and Regulations: all of the documents that govern board and owner conduct in our community
- Agenda and Minutes from past meetings
- Approved paint and stain colors
- Board meeting information
- Parking assignments
- Door and window replacement information
- Cedar shake maintenance guidelines
- ...and more!

We also have a [YouTube Channel!](#)

Please check out our sites, and if you have suggestions for content, please reach me or the Board president by using the contact form on our website.

Stephen Campbell, Treasurer

How Budgeting Works

Be Informed about Your Investment

One area that is the most challenging for Board members as well as owners is understanding how our annual budget works. Read on to learn the basics of budgeting.

The first step in budgeting comes when the Board begin discussing the budget for the coming year. This discussion generally starts at a Board meeting around August or September. You'll see an announcement on the meeting agenda.

The Board is always working ahead, meaning that discussions taking place in 2024 are for the 2025 budget.

The Board's fiduciary duty is to craft a budget that ensures all functions of the community are funded. We must make sure that vendor bills get paid (insurance, pool maintenance, property management, site maintenance, utilities, lawn care, and so on) as well as setting out funding for many other expenses.

Since we are a non-profit organization, once the budget is established, we collect dues only to cover budgeted amounts. There is no excess money collected, and at the end of the year, we must verify that we've balanced our budget to the State.

This also means that when something unexpected needs to be paid or something comes in "over budget" (as our insurance has for the past two years), it squeezes our budget in unexpected ways. For example, extra dumpster pick-ups, or extra custodial work at the pool or dumpster areas cause us to pull money from a budgeted item, and in turn, this means that a budgeted item will be defunded, and that work will go undone. In extreme cases (like exorbitant insurance premium increases) we must levy a special assessment.

I often hear owners say, "Well, what the heck am I paying so much in dues for?" I can assure you that what you're paying is only covering what we anticipate expenses to be. If ever there were any money left over, we'd use it for the following year to reduce dues or to decrease an unexpected surge in vendor pricing (for example, with insurance). But that has yet to happen.

If you have thoughts about our budget, please come to meetings! We would like feedback from our owners about what they feel is necessary spending and what we might be able to do to rein in unexpected costs.



Jeni McCarthy, Director

What Exactly is a Violation Letter?

Different Letters for Different Issues

There are different kinds of letters you might receive if you are in violation of any of the community's legally binding documents.

You might receive a letter from our property management company (CAM) for an exterior violation at your home, or for some other violation of community rules. You'll get one every 30 days for three "rounds" or months. Each letter that you receive is at a cost of \$5 to your association. On most months, we send out about 20 letters, at an annual expense of \$1200 to our budget.

If you don't rectify noted issues by the third notice, the Board must decide if they will escalate the problem to our attorney, who will then draft a demand letter at a cost of \$300.00 per letter. This year, we've sent out five demand letters due to owners who have not fixed their violations in the 90-day window outlined above. Again, this has serious impacts on our budget. We do have some money budgeted for attorney costs, but at the rate we are going, we will exhaust the budgeted amount soon.

The final kind of letter you may receive is a "Notice to Lien," and this happens if you get behind in paying your regular association dues or any special assessments that have been levied. The Board determines whether these letters are sent by reviewing our monthly financial statements. Once specific criteria are met, the lien process begins. Once the Board notices twice (30 days apart) or if you ignore any Notice to Lien sent by your Board, your issue will be forwarded to the association attorney, who will immediately begin the lien process.

It is imperative that you respond to any letters you receive; ignoring them will not save you if your matter ends up in court. The most helpful thing you can do as an owner in our community is to fix any violations before we must consider spending money on our attorney.

Debra Marshall, President

President's Corner

It's Been a Tough Few Years... We aren't out of the Woods Yet

Hello Everyone!

Your Board are your neighbors.

Four of us (of five) have full-time jobs. And we are also committed to our community and are willing to put in the work we need to put in to make our community better.

We began as owners with little knowledge of what we were getting into. But since volunteering and being elected, we have met statutory requirements for training; we strive to do our very best for you.

Being on the Board means we run the business of Chateau in the Pines 1, which is a non-profit organization. We work on community matters **every** day. With no on-site management, we shoulder a lot of responsibility for getting things done. You have probably seen your Board members holding meetings at the pool, cleaning up trash, sorting out maintenance problems with our vendors on site, and walking the neighborhood with our property management company when they are here.

For now, though, I'd like to discuss the financial concern I hear about most from owners: insurance costs.

Recent insurance industry changes have decimated our budget. Our annual budget is approved in December and our insurance is renewed in February. Thus, we are always anticipating premiums without a clear idea of actual costs. We don't know what our premium will be until late January (that's an industry issue, not something we have control over). This causes problems when forecasting our annual budget, which must be completed in December. But there are some things that we DO know:

First, we are required to carry insurance. This requirement is not negotiable. Second, the single biggest driver of insurance premium increases is aging roofs.

There is no wiggle room with the roof "cutoff" age; it is an insurance industry mandate: any roof over 15 years of age must be fully replaced. We've spent the last year trying to get all 60 homes into compliance. We have come a long way but there's room for improvement. We started 2024 with eight homes in violation; we are down to two and have started legal action against the remaining violators.

Roofs were the ONLY driver of your 2023/24 special assessments and were the primary driver of monthly dues increases. When premiums were presented to the Board by carriers, they were above our forecasts and we were forced to reallocate funds from items that were not necessary (i.e., pool beautification, minor maintenance, etc.) to pay our premium. And even so, special assessments were necessary to make up for the shortfall. What does this mean in "real money?" For perspective, here are our last five premiums:

- 2020: \$46,900
- 2021: \$49,800
- 2022: \$52,300
- 2023: \$64,000
- 2024: \$188,450

We are suffering under this weight, both as individual homeowners and as an association!

As we continue to work toward satisfying insurance requirements and trying to balance the budget, know that we aren't out of the woods. Unfortunately, we anticipate that there will be another increase with February 2025's premium, so be prepared: come to regular Board meetings and get familiar with the work we do on your behalf. Taking a few hours of your time is an obligation that will pay off as you get more familiar with how your community runs. And who knows? Maybe you'll decide to join us as a Board member one day!

Finally, many thanks go out to our neighbors who've been coming to regular meetings and who've been working alongside the Board, using their unique talents to make the neighborhood better. You have no idea how much it means to us to know that we are building a coalition of like-minded friends and neighbors who have the interests of the neighborhood in mind.

Reach out to me with questions on any community matters. We, your Board, are here to work for you.

Thank you for reading, and I hope to see you at our next Board meeting 😊

Debra