

Homeowners Associations – Frequently Asked Questions

Homeowners Associations – Generally

What is a Homeowners Association?

A homeowners association, or HOA, is an administrative entity created by the developer with the owners as its members. It is like a mini-government that looks over the neighborhood.

What does a Homeowners Association do?

The HOA maintains the common areas of the neighborhood. It also creates a budget and assesses annual dues to pay for the maintenance. Enforcement of the architectural requirements and other rules is also performed by the HOA.

What are the benefits of a Homeowners Association?

The HOA holds homeowners to a high standard and makes sure the neighborhood is well looked after. This makes the area a desirable place to live while maintaining or improving your home's value.

What happens if I report a homeowner who may be breaking a rule?

The HOA will address any reported issue with the homeowner allegedly breaking the rule. The names of those who complain are never provided to the offending homeowner so as to keep harmony in the neighborhood.

Who controls the Homeowners Association?

The developer, or in the case of Bielinski neighborhoods, Bielinski initially controls and appoints the Board of the HOA. The Board, consisting of 3 persons, directs the activities of the HOA within the confines of the recorded Declaration and the HOA Bylaws.

When does control of the Homeowners Association pass on to the homeowners?

Technically, the developer appoints the Board until 100% of the lots within a neighborhood have been sold. Bielinski has previously appointed one homeowner from within the neighborhood elected by the homeowners when 60-70% of the lots have been sold. As the neighborhood gets to where only a few lots remain unsold, Bielinski usually turns over the entire Board at an HOA annual meeting.

Homeowners Association Budgets and Financials

What is a Management Fee?

All Bielinski HOAs that are still under developer control employ Bielinski Management to provide management services to the HOA. The management services are provided for a fee that is shown on the budget for the HOA.

What services are included in the Management Fee?

The management services included in the fee are bid and budget creation, accounting and collection functions, contractor relations, preliminary architectural request review and annual meeting preparations.

How does the bidding process work for contracted maintenance services?

The HOA usually seeks out three (3) bids for its maintenance services each year. Many times the HOA will only receive one or two bids back. When multiple bids are received by the HOA, the HOA will typically employ the services of the lowest bidding contractor unless there are other known performance related issues with that particular contractor.

What is Developer Deficit Funding?

The developer of your neighborhood does not pay annual dues for lots it owns while it is in control of the HOA Board. During that time of developer control, the developer makes sure that the HOA does not run a deficit, so it contributes funds to the HOA so the HOA can pay its bills. The amount of developer deficit funding for any calendar year is a liability of the HOA, but then such liability amount is cleared from the books as of January 1.

Architectural Control

What are the architectural requirements for the neighborhood?

Every neighborhood has different architectural requirements that direct the size, type of siding, roof pitch and other architectural features of homes built in that neighborhood. Section 6.9 of the Declaration outlines these requirements.

Are there landscaping requirements that owners need to follow?

Homeowners are required to plant a certain number of trees and shrubs on their lot. The specific requirements can be found at Section 6.10 of the Declaration.

Do I need to get approval for any improvement I wish to make?

If you want to make any improvements (such as additions, pools or fences) or change the appearance of your home in any way, the homeowner needs to submit an architectural request to the HOA for review and approval.

How do I obtain architectural approval for an improvement I wish to make?

The HOA will need to see drawings of any improvement along with a survey showing the location of the improvement and a complete description of proposed colors and materials. You can submit the request online at www.bielinski.com/Architectural-Request.aspx or on your HOA's website. Once submitted, the HOA reviews the request to see if it is in compliance with the Declaration for the neighborhood and if it will fit in with the rest of the neighborhood. Typically only those items that are prohibited by the Declaration or outlandish ideas are denied.

How long will the approval process take?

The HOA can usually provide a response to the request within two weeks of submission although it can take longer depending upon the complexity of the request or availability of the Board to review.

Homeowners Association Maintenance Responsibility

What maintenance does the HOA perform?

The HOA maintains common areas within the neighborhood. These common area maintenance items could include signs, sometimes lights, lawn care on outlots or easements, snow removal on sidewalks adjacent to outlots, and stormwater ponds. Please see the maintenance map for your respective neighborhood for further details.

What maintenance does the HOA not perform?

The HOA does not perform nor pay for any maintenance on any residential lot within the neighborhood. This means that the HOA does not maintain any lampposts, mailboxes, lawns or sidewalk snow removal for any residential lot, whether vacant or built upon. Each lot owner, including the Developer, is responsible for maintaining its lot and any other obligation associated with ownership of such lot.

Who maintains the roads in the neighborhood?

The roads in the neighborhood have been dedicated to the municipality and the municipality maintains those roads.

Who maintains the street lights in the neighborhood?

The street lights are typically maintained by the electric company and/or the municipality. If a street light is not functioning, please contact the municipality.

Who maintains the yard lampposts on a homeowner's lot?

If there is a lamppost in your yard, the homeowner is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the lamppost to ensure that it is fully operational.

Homeowners may need to replace light bulbs, ballasts and photo eyes for the lamp. Further, the homeowner will need to paint the post if necessary. The color of the post is either black or bronze. The HOA does not perform any maintenance on the lampposts. BBC Lighting, at 414.933.0808 or www.shopbbclighting.com, can be contacted for information on the lampposts and any electrician can assist with ballasts and photo eyes.

Who maintains the mailboxes?

Each homeowner is responsible for maintaining and repairing their mailbox and mailbox post. If mailbox posts are shared, the sharing homeowners should divide the responsibility for the posts.

I need to replace or repair a mailbox, what do I do?

Suburban Mailbox at 262.784.8714 or suburbanmailboxes@yahoo.com is the contractor that installed the original mailbox and post and should be used for any repairs or replacements.

What is the paint color for the mailbox post?

The color for aluminum posts is black and the color for wooden posts is Glidden Evermore Ashton Grey. The mix information shown below can be used at Home Depot to match the color.



Note: The questions and answers provided here are a general guide for homeowners in a Bielinski created HOA. If there are any conflicts between these questions/answers and the Declaration for a specific neighborhood, such Declaration will control and be binding.