

Apache Plume

A Newsletter for the Community of High Desert, Albuquerque, New Mexico

November 2023

There Is a New Role For Voting Members In Board Elections With A Voting Member As New Nominating Committee Chair

Since the association began its self-management in the early 2000s, the Chair of the Nominating Committee has always been a board member appointed by the Board of Directors, as specified in the High Desert bylaws. Voting Members acted this fall to change the bylaws so that a Voting Member, not a Board Member, now chairs the Nominating Committee (See page 13 for details of the bylaws changes). The amendment is intended to give Voting Members more control of one of their primary statutory duties – electing board members. The new process has begun. Tammi Dorsey, Desert Sky, was announced as a volunteer for the Chair position at the October 26 Voting Members Quarterly meeting, and the Voting Members informally endorsed her by voice vote. The Board has accepted both her Statement of Interest and the Voting Members' preference and has appointed her as Nominating Committee Chair by unanimous email consent.

Both the current and previous bylaws specify only that the Nominating Committee interview all candidates and nominate at least as many members as there are open positions for the Board. As before, each year's Nominating Committee determines how to interview candidates and how many nominees, subject to the minimum requirement, to present to Voting Members at the Annual Meeting. Nominations from the floor are also solicited. Other aspects of the election process are governed by board policies and the Nominating Committee Charter, which have not yet been changed, although the new bylaws take precedence where they differ from these documents. The Documents Review Committee (DRC) is working to recommend updates of the relevant documents to the Board. Voting Members do not approve these documents but are always welcome to participate in the DRC's deliberations.

In the past, the Nominating Committee has intensively interviewed candidates and, until the past two years, has usually presented a single slate of candidates to Voting Members at their Annual Meeting to approve or deny. For the last two Annual Meetings in April 2022 and 2023, the Nominating Committee chose instead to nominate more candidates than needed to fill open positions. The committee concentrated on providing opportunities for the candidates to explain their views and qualifications to all Voting Members who then voted for nominees of their choice rather than a slate.

What started as a trial two years ago to have greater Voting Member involvement in the selection of Board Directors has become formalized with the adoption of recent changes to the Association Bylaws. Going forward, this process of selecting Board Members should more accurately reflect the interests of Voting Members and their respective villages.

The annual election for three new Board members will be held

next April at the Voting Members Annual Meeting. Three positions will be open and homeowners are asked to consider volunteering to seek election by submitting a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the management company as soon as possible. Candidates will be interviewed by the Nominating Committee.

Nominating Committee Volunteers Needed

The Nominating Committee is formed in November and December of each year and recruits homeowners to run for Board office and reviews all Board applicants' Statements of Interest. It then schedules and meets with applicants in February and March. The Committee presents the candidates to the Voting Members at their Annual Meeting in April. The commitment to the Nominating Committee is one year since it also will manage Voting Member elections in late summer.

How to Submit a Statement of Interest

On the website at www.highdesertliving.net choose the "How



Do I" dropdown at the top center of the page, then click "Get Involved." Click on *Statement of Interest* in the second paragraph and complete the form, making sure to check the box for "Nominating Committee" (third choice) or "Board of Directors" (first choice). You can submit the completed form online by clicking "Send Request Now" or deliver it in person to the management office at 10555 Montgomery Boulevard N.E., Building 1, Suite 100, Albuquerque, NM 87111. Whichever delivery

is chosen, candidates for the Nominating Committee must submit an SOI by mid-January, 2024. Volunteers can also scan the image to the above to go straight to the SOI form on the High Desert website.

Openings on the Board of Directors

The seven-member Board of Directors each serve two-year terms, which are staggered with positions opening every year in April. Current directors whose terms will expire in April 2023 are Bill Pederson, Bob Howell and Ray Berg.

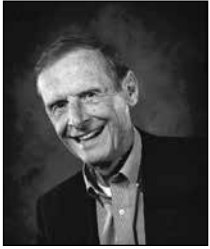
For the Nominating Committee to consider an applicant for the Board of Directors, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Must have lived in High Desert as a resident for at least six months prior to the election.
- Shall not have any hearings or ap-

(Continued on Page 3)

President's Summary

By George Marsh, HDROA President



George Marsh

Here it is a few days into late October and I'm looking out my window and seeing that the homeowner across the street here in Trillium is having a large tree removed from his front yard. This tree had grown above his roof line and was very near the house so it was something that needed to be addressed according to the conversations I had with the new owner. I was amazed at how fast the contractor accomplished this task and also ground the stump in the process. The homeowner did indicate that he had submitted a request to the management office and had received approval from the Modifications Committee.

I also noticed another example just up the street of another homeowner totally redoing their front yard by removing groundcover and replacing it with rock and plants from the Approved Plant List, resulting in a vast improvement in curb appeal.

These are just two examples of residents taking that extra effort to make their homes more appealing and doing it through the process that has been established here in High Desert.

Arroyos

This next subject area is one that most of us who live in High Desert take for granted and don't give a second thought as to the requirements for the maintenance and safety of our arroyos. We have 23 High Desert arroyos and six private arroyos here that require inspection on an annual basis for safety and overall condition. These arroyos are jointly managed by the HDROA and the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority. (AMAFCA) These inspections occur in November and involve representatives from the landscaping contractor, community property manager and representatives from the landscape committee. This inspection will be conducted over two days and will be led by the engineering firm Bohannon Huston. There will be a written electronic report submitted to the HDROA with the inspection results.

I mention this expense because your assessments pay for this particular evaluation and it is a part of our infrastructure maintenance that I wanted to highlight since it does not receive much fanfare.

Did You See the High Desert Bulletin This Month?

If you're not getting the monthly High Desert Bulletin in your email, then you're missing important announcements and other communications from the High Desert association. Contact us at communicationscommittee@hoamco.com and we'll help you figure out the problem.

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Wall and Fence Inventory

The Board of Directors felt it was important that we develop a comprehensive inventory of our entire stucco structure in High Desert. As a result, we have contracted with Pland Collaborative, an Albuquerque-based architecture and planning firm, to perform this inventory. This task will include the following:

- Inventory of all assets
- Assessment of their condition
- Recommendations to repair or replace
- An opinion of probable construction cost for any needed repairs

All of this data will be compiled in a spreadsheet and will be given a unique ID and become part of an interactive map showing its location. This inventory will include all public facing walls, fences and gates within the villages of High Desert.

This final product of wall inventory will be the basis for recommendations on repair of certain assets and the associated cost. All of this data will be incorporated into our reserve studies that will allow us to plan for future reserve expenditures,

Stucco Wall Deposits

Finally, I would like to review the process that we went through which allowed us to adjust off \$360,579 in wall and concrete deposits. Steve Hartig talks more about this from an accounting perspective in his Treasurer's Report in this issue of Apache Plume on page 10.

These wall and concrete deposits were created over the years of 2020 through the middle of 2022 and were generally for work to be performed at a later date which never occurred due to some legal issues with a contractor. We did put these deposits for the above amount on our balance sheet after seeking advice from our CPA. Once our relationship with the contractor was terminated we sought to recover those deposits, with no success. The Board of Directors felt that pursuing the recovery of those monies was going to be legally expensive and time consuming. The board believed that the money was not recoverable.

We did seek legal advice from an independent attorney on this matter. It became apparent that seeking recovery of the funds from the parties involved was going to be difficult for all parties involved and certainly very expensive for the association.

I can assure you that the Board of Directors has examined every possible course of action available and felt that the write-off of these funds should be done at this point in time. The goal of this write-off is to make sure our balance sheet is accurate and correctly states the assets and liabilities of our the association.

The end result of the stucco wall deposits is that the board approved at the October board meeting the write-off of the \$360,579 from the balance sheet.

The Board of Directors, in consultation with the management company, has implemented numerous internal controls to ensure that this type of process does not occur in the future whether it be with stucco or any other contract process. We are currently making sure that the bidding criteria is thorough and examined by both the community manager and the Board of Directors. In some cases, the Contract Committee is involved if the dollar amount reaches a certain threshold.

I think we have put an end to this saga and are ready to move ahead with the lessons we learned. If any homeowner wishes to go into more detail on the deposits question, Steve Hartig and I are more than willing to engage in conversation and answer any queries.

On that note, let me wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and see you in the next issue of Apache Plume in February.

Manager's Message

By Brandy Hetherington
Community Association Manager



Brandy Hetherington

Activities tend to slow down in the autumn, but you wouldn't know it here at High Desert. The management team has continued to work at a fantastic pace on community projects and management initiatives. Below are updates to projects we've been working on the last few months:

Irrigation System Upgrade

You may recall from our August article that in late 2022, the Board of Directors approved a project to upgrade the irrigation systems throughout High Desert for better functionality and water savings.

With the assistance of the Water Utility Authority and Smart Use, the Board began a Customized Performance Rebate (CPR) program that could reimburse High Desert up to \$50,000 for installing water-smart controllers, irrigation flow sensors, and new sprinkler heads, all of which are designed to save water. In early October, the High Desert Landscape Committee, Yellowstone (our landscape contractor), several Board Members and I met with the Water Authority and Smart Use to finalize the CPR project. All equipment and applications have now been installed, and so starts our 12-month water savings endeavor.

Yellowstone will be a critical component in operating and managing the smart devices to save up to 6,000,000 gallons of water over the next year. The Water Authority and Smart Use will monitor High Desert's water use over the next 12 months and assist in reducing overuse and saving these millions of gallons.

Community-Wide Tree Assessment

The Association is continuing to work on two large-scale, long-term projects to assess assets within the community—trees and walls.

Legacy Tree Company was hired by the Board to review the declining piñon tree population in High Desert and is currently in the process of assessing the irrigation systems for the trees and evaluating the root systems and environments of the piñons. High

Desert is hoping to have their completed assessments soon, and with it, plans for removing the dead and diseased trees, as well as their plans for repopulating the tree populations with greater biodiversity and climate-ready trees.

Inventory of All Walls and Fences in High Desert

Pland Collaborative, an Albuquerque-based architecture and planning firm, was hired by the Board to evaluate and inventory the miles of community walls and fences in High Desert, and it is approximately one-quarter complete with those evaluations. The firm will build a priority list of maintenance needs for the walls and fences so the Board of Directors is better prepared to accurately budget for repairs and maintenance over the next several years.

Evaluations should be completed toward the end of the year and results will be shared with the community on both projects.

Snow Removal Protocol

The winter season will be upon us soon and that usually means snow. Current weather predictions for the southern Rockies this El Nino year could mean normal winter temperatures in New Mexico and increased precipitation.

High Desert is preparing for winter weather by engaging Yellowstone for snow clearing services. No funds are paid unless Yellowstone is contacted by the association management to remove snow. The Voting Members for each gated village reviewed their snow clearing and plowing maps and have determined the areas within their villages where snow will be cleared.

In the rest of High Desert, outside the gated villages, plowing is handled by the City of Albuquerque on the public streets, but the association will have snow cleared in the main intersections at Imperata and Cortaderia on Spain and Academy, and at the four bridges in the community. Snow will also be shoveled off the sidewalks along Spain and Academy up to Imperata. Please note that owners are responsible for clearing snow on the driveways and sidewalks of their homes.

New Role For Voting Members In Board Election

-From Page 1

peals before the Board, the New Construction Committee or Modification Committee, nor any legal actions pending against the Association or Association officers. • Shall not be more than 60 days delinquent in the payment of any assessment or other charge due the Association. • Shall not have been removed as a Director by the Voting Members within the prior two years.


Time Commitment

The time commitment for a Board Director is significant and should be carefully considered by applicants. The Board meets once a month and Board members are expected to attend the quarterly Voting Members and Town Hall meetings. Directors' volunteer time averages between 15-40 hours a month depending on the level of involvement with the Board's special projects, committee membership, and/or being an elected officer of the Board. The Board elects its own officers annually, shortly after the Voting Members April Annual Meeting.

A Few General Reminders

If you're planning to make changes to the exterior of your home or yard, please be sure you submit a modification request. Visit the High Desert website, <https://highdesertliving.net>, to review information like Modification Do's and Don'ts and to fill out an online (or printable) modification request form. Also, please remember to review any supplemental documents for your individual village and the Builder or Estate and Premier Sustainability Guidelines. Requests must be submitted before the first Friday of each month to be considered in that month. Please remember that the committee has up to 45 days to review requests, unless the request is considered fast-track. If you have questions about submitting a request, please reach out to the office and we can help guide you.

If you haven't done so already, consider signing up for E-Statements and enjoy the convenience of not having to check your mail for that quarterly assessment invoice. Visit <https://hoamco.opt-e-mail.com/signup> to sign up. As of this newsletter, we have less than 25 percent of High Desert using E-statements and we would like to increase that number. Much like our project to save water, signing up for E-Statements will help save a tree by creating less paper waste. If you need any assistance signing up, please reach out to the High Desert HOAMCO office at 505-314-5862.






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Listing Inventory

GREATER ALBUQUERQUE AREA

Class R1 & R2 (Existing Single-Family Detached & Condo/Townhome Attached)

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	AVG
2005	2,267	2,156	2,276	2,099	2,206	2,243	2,377	2,350	2,319	2,298	2,263	2,211	2236
2006	2,198	2,302	2,558	2,678	3,180	3,602	4,031	4,407	4,695	4,618	4,363	4,098	3441
2007	4,191	4,465	4,881	5,428	5,729	6,106	6,404	6,675	6,718	6,708	6,534	6,066	5532
2008	6,076	6,147	6,434	6,555	6,873	7,074	7,082	7,065	6,856	6,617	6,346	5,821	6227
2009	5,925	6,037	5,995	6,054	6,082	6,114	6,128	5,902	5,574	5,528	5,413	5,176	5534
2010	5,332	5,518	5,717	5,651	6,045	6,346	6,471	6,408	6,375	6,099	5,684	5,320	5614
2011	5,296	5,334	5,444	5,511	5,625	5,552	5,636	5,511	5,249	4,977	4,643	4,216	5000
2012	4,163	4,089	4,117	4,239	4,415	4,528	4,580	4,534	4,518	4,520	4,322	3,980	4155
2013	4,007	4,062	4,227	4,372	4,531	4,795	4,910	5,007	5,035	4,868	4,657	4,232	4363
2014	4,272	4,320	4,619	4,858	5,150	5,402	5,428	5,474	5,390	5,148	4,741	4,212	4694
2015	4,098	4,027	4,156	4,335	4,369	4,490	4,487	4,353	4,216	4,100	3,813	3,407	3990
2016	3,342	3,426	3,527	3,613	3,706	3,919	4,412	4,344	4,264	4,025	3,712	3,247	3658
2017	3,178	3,145	3,187	3,283	3,565	3,769	3,883	3,854	3,793	3,641	3,350	2,982	3357
2018	2,905	2,839	2,886	3,067	3,297	3,570	3,637	3,624	3,580	3,422	3,191	2,779	3140
2019	2,661	2,301	2,276	2,357	2,495	2,665	2,614	2,633	2,605	3,112	2,264	1,901	2454
2020	1,765	1688	1784	1737	1636	1354	1377	1304	1311	1412	1181	950	1501
2021	823	701	673	750	747	898	1062	1072	1016	958	778	639	934
2022	626	562	554	741	880	1143	1321	1350	1501	1499	1434	1173	1139
2023	1008	940	987	934	1042	1192	1257	1291	1442				
AVG	3,375	3,372	3,489	3,593	3,767	3,935	4,058	4,061	4,024	4,086	3,816	3,467	

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Albuquerque Police Dept. Crime Statistics for High Desert

High Desert Crime Statistics: Crimemapping.com		QTR 1			QTR 2			QTR 3			QTR 4			2023				
Crime Categories	Per Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total Year
Animal Call		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0
Rescue Call		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1			1	1	0	1	2
Missing Person		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2			0	0	1	2	3
Stolen Vehicle Found		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0			1	1	1	0	2
Neighbor Trouble		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0
Direct Traffic		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0			1	1	0	0	1
Traffic Stop		0	2	0	9	1	0	1	0	0	0			12	10	1	0	13
Traffic Accident no injury		0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	2	0			7	2	4	0	7
Auto Accident with injury		0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0			3	3	0	0	3
Drunk Driver		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0
Disturbance		5	3	3	7	1	0	4	3	3	4			19	8	10	4	33
Vandalism		0	0	0	0	1	5	0	1	0	0			7	6	1	0	7
Suspicious Person/Vehicle		5	0	2	5	2	0	2	1	3	4			14	7	6	4	24
Burglary Auto		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			1	1	0	0	1
Vehicle Theft		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2			3	1	2	2	5
Theft/ Larceny		2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0			3	1	1	0	4
Theft/Fraud/Embezzlement		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			2	2	0	0	2
Burglary Residence		0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0			3	3	2	0	5
Family Dispute		2	1	3	3	7	2	4	3	3	5			28	12	10	5	33
Aggravated Assault/Battery		0	1	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	0			8	7	1	0	9
Shots Fired		2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0			5	3	2	0	7
Total		16	7	9	34	15	20	13	12	17	18	0	0	118	69	42	18	161

These statistics come from Albuquerque Police Department's reports for calls involving High Desert for the year 2023. Board Director Camille Singaraju, Sunset Ridge, obtains these statistics from APD each month.

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Jessica Hammond,
PA-C

Dr. David Carey would like to introduce you to High Desert Dermatology's newest providers— Jessica Hammond, PA-C and Juanita Feuchter, PA-C. We are very excited to bring two more providers to the team at High Desert Dermatology. Both new providers are currently in training under Dr. Carey, so you can expect the same level of compassionate and skilled care that we pride ourselves in here at High Desert Dermatology. Our new providers will enable us to shorten the wait time for new appointments, and allow us to increase the number of appointments that are available on Saturdays.



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High Desert Volunteers Collect 25 Bags of Trash Along Tramway

By Michele Leshner, Tramway Cleanup Project Chair

Fall brings cooler weather, clear skies, balloons, and the sight of your High Desert friends and neighbors in orange vests on Tramway!

Our most recent Adopt-a-Highway event was held on Saturday, October 21, a truly beautiful day for 12 volunteers to get out and do a much needed trash pickup of Miles Nine and Ten (and our extra-credit section of Mile Eleven). It is truly a community effort, and our neighborhood Albertsons grocery store kindly donated a gift card (which was randomly awarded to one of our crew) to thank us for our time.

We started at Albertsons, with half of the volunteers working south from Academy to the bridge at Bear Canyon, and the other half working north to the bridge at Simms Park Road. We accumulated 25 full bags of trash, and a large amount of cardboard, rebar, carpet padding, construction materials and money (regrettably not a large amount of that, though!). As I write this, our bags are patiently awaiting pickup by NMDOT, which is always grateful for our work.

If you see one of your neighbors on this list, please join me in thanking them for their efforts:

- Lauren Krimsky (Canyons)
- Jim DeBlois (Tierra del Oso)
- Janet Brierley (Sunset Ridge) and Helen Hodgson (her sister from England)



Here is our happy group of High Desert volunteers as they get ready to clean up our adopted section of Tramway.

- Krisan Smith (Mountain Highlands)
- Susan Camp, James Cearley, Karen Taylor (Desert Highlands)
- Howard Friedman (West Highlands)
- Rene Chartier (Enclave)
- Mark Bentz (Pinon Point)
- Joe Wilson (Legends)

To keep our road adoption active, we are committed to holding a formal event twice per year. I am thinking our next cleanup will be sometime in April 2024.

If you are interested in volunteering please drop me an email at mlesher222@comcast.net and I will add you to my list!

Well Rounded.

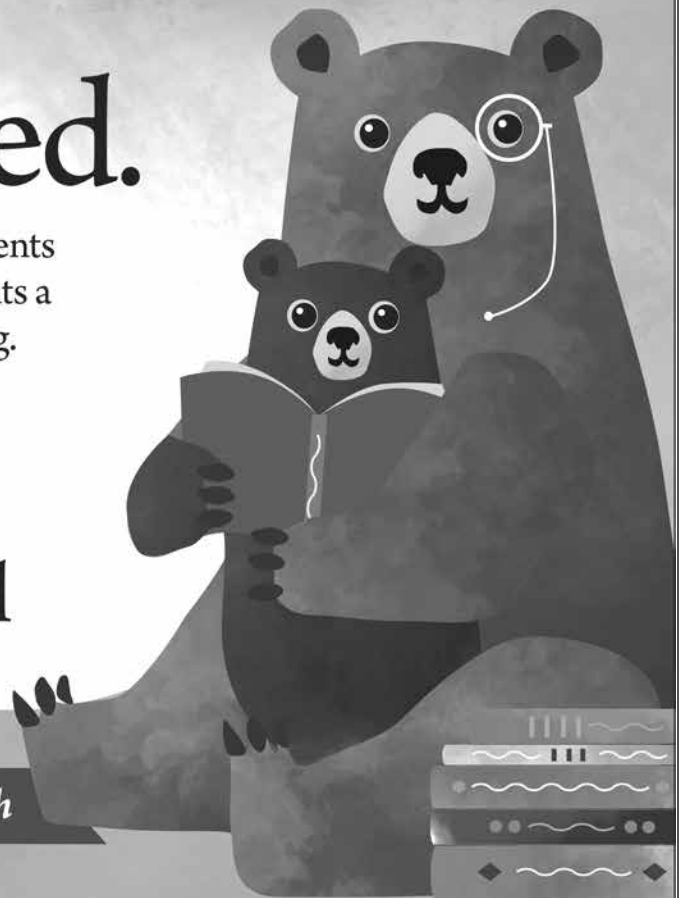
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High Desert YTD MARKET TRENDS Year to date 1/1/23 to 10/22/23

Closed Sales
45
-44% from 2022

Average Sale Price
\$893,409
+12% from 2022

Avg Price per sq.ft.
\$291.95

Avg Days on Market
23
+109% from 2022



JUST LISTED

Sandia Heights
1548 Eagle Ridge Ln. \$1,025,000



High Desert
6404 Gambel Oak CT \$1,450,000

SOLD
in 2-Days



Home on 10 acres
46 Circle Dr \$600,000

Off-Grid



1.21 Acres LAND
9 La Luz Trl. \$395,000

Real Estate News

- 38.7% of Americans today own their home free and clear, 30% have over 50% equity and the average US homeowner has about \$290,000 in equity.
- Apartment construction is at a 40-year-high. This means more choices for renters and likely lower rents.
- A survey by Billium showed that 32% of investors planned to sell their properties in the next two years. This could have an impact on the rate of home appreciation as inventory increases.

Veronica Gonzales 505-440-8956.

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High Desert Patrol Report

Call Type:	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Alarm	0	0	1
Breaking/Entering	0	0	1
Car Accident	0	1	0
Disturbance	1	1	4
Garage Open	1	0	5
Gate Malfunction or Issue	4	2	1
Graffiti	0	0	0
Wildlife Issue	0	1	0
Streetlight Out	0	0	1
Landscape Leak or Issue	0	1	0
Neighbor Complaint	1	0	6
Noise Complaint	0	0	2
Open Community Gate	0	0	0
Police Activity	0	0	0
Pool Incidents/Trespassers	0	1	0
Property Damage	0	0	0
Speeding	0	0	0
Suspicious Activity	2	1	5
Trespassing	0	2	0
Vacation Checks	123	224	543
Vandalism	1	2	0
Vehicle Breakdown	1	0	1
Vehicle Issue Misc.	1	1	2

• In the event of an emergency, call APD at 911. Follow up immediately with a call to High Desert Security at 505-485-5658

Annual Studio Tour Set For December 3, from 10-5

It's time once again to follow the purple balloons! The annual High Desert Studio Tour is set for Sunday, December 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. High Desert artists will open their homes and studios and display their work.

Six High Desert homes will host a total of 13 artists, jewelers, fiber artists and craftsman. Items will be available for purchase or High Desert homeowners can simply tour and admire the art their neighbors create.

Dagmar Beinenz-Byrd, Highlands homeowner, revived the long-running Studio Tour last year after Covid restrictions closed the annual event. The tour was established in 2009 by Thea Berg, who organized it until 2020.

This year's Studio Tour will include artists exhibiting in the following High Desert homes:

- 13215 Bighorn
- 6220 Buffalo Hills
- 13501 Osage Orange
- 13515 Osage Orange
- 13701 Elena Gallegos
- 13601 Quaking Aspen



For more information on each of the artists and to see and download a map showing the locations, go to the new High Desert Studio Tour website, created by participating artist Allison Jones Hunt, at <https://highdesertstudiotour.showit.site/>. Information will also be posted on the High Desert website: www.highdesertliving.net.



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Treasurer's Report As of September 30, 2023



By Steve Hartig, Treasurer

We have now completed three months of the 2023-2024 fiscal year. So far, our revenues for the Master HOA account, which mainly come from dues, are at \$362,137. This is slightly above our budget of \$356,992 with the main differences being penalties and some minor other areas.

Costs through three months are about \$30,000 under budget at \$299,609 compared to budget of \$328,907.

The main differences include:

- We budgeted \$7,500 for the reserve study which has not been spent yet but will be.
- Landscaping is about \$4,000 under budget.
- Maintenance is about \$5,000 over budget due to a number of projects including trailhead repairs, sign post removal, fencing, and wall repairs due to bee removal.
- Professional fees are about \$12,000 under budget due mainly to low legal costs and security service billing.
- Water is about \$7,000 under budget.

Overall, the operating costs seem to be positioned well at this point compared to budget for this year.

Reserve costs for this period are about \$81,000, mainly on some of the higher priority wall and stucco work.

All of the gated villages operating costs were in line with budget with the exception of Trillium which was about \$4,000 over bud-

get due to periodic tree work that was done.

We had interest income across the Master and Villages of about \$9,000 into the reserves from the CDs we have been purchasing.

Audits, Reserve Studies and Write-Offs

We have been working on several initiatives:

- We made the decision to change our auditor from Porch and Associates to Butler Hansen. We have had Porch doing our audit for a number of years and they have done a good job but it is best practice to periodically change auditors to get a fresh set of eyes on the financials. Butler Hansen is a large, Arizona-based, CPA firm that specializes in homeowner associations and does more than a thousand of them a year. As part of being a new auditor, they will also assess our key financial policies to insure they are robust.

- We have historically had a company, Great Boards, do a reserve study each year to assess the state of the infrastructure and make recommendations on the reserve amounts we should have. They do tour the neighborhood but do the overall study on somewhat of a high level. Given our concerns about our aging infrastructure, we have decided to go into a more detailed reserve study working with two new companies. One is an engineering company, which will specifically focus on inspecting all of the walls and stucco within High Desert and estimating the condition and what work will be required over the coming years along with a cost estimate. The other is Advanced Reserve Solutions, which will do the overall study at a higher level of detail than we have in the past and incorporate the wall work into their final recommendations. This will put us in a much better position to make sure we properly maintain our community and budget the correct amounts into the reserve funds.

- Finally, the Board had to make the difficult choice to write off a large number of wall deposits paid to High Desert Maintenance during the 2021-2022 fiscal year as it has become clear that we will not be able to recover these funds either as work on walls or in refunds. These had been put on the Balance Sheet so with this write off they will be removed. The Board has been doing extensive work to recover this money, as has been reviewed in several Voting Member meetings and Town Halls. George Marsh has also highlighted the details of his work in his article on page 2 in this issue. The amounts are:

1. Master - \$289,835
2. Desert Mountain - \$34,555
3. Enclave - \$25,083
4. Trillium - \$8,786
5. Legends - \$2,319

Writing it off is required by accounting practices as we do not believe these amounts have any value but it does not impact our legal rights to this money if, at some point in the future, we get more information or have a different approach. This money has been in separate accounts on the balance sheet indicated as wall deposits so this will not change any reserve balances, though the write off will cause a reduction in income to balance it.

• See Treasurer's Reports on page 11 •

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High Desert Treasurer's Reports

HDROA Income/Expense Statement YTD as September 30, 2023

Accounts	Actual	Budget
Income		
INCOME		
4100 - HOMEOWNER ASSESSMENTS	\$331,092	\$331,092
4200 - COST SHARING - ALTEZZA	\$24,269	\$23,470
4310 - ASSESSMENT INTEREST	\$524	\$450
4330 - ASSESSMENT LATE FEES	\$400	\$600
4350 - LEGAL/COLLECTION FEES	\$2,067	\$1,250
4550 - GATE REMOTES	\$171	\$0
4600 - INTEREST INCOME	\$314	\$60
4800 - PENALTIES/FINES	\$3,300	\$0
Total INCOME	\$362,137	\$356,922
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		
8900 - TRANSFER TO RESERVES	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)
Total Income	\$322,137	\$316,922
Expense		
ADMINISTRATIVE		
5150 - ADMIN SUPPORT PR	\$20,824	\$21,750
5250 - BANK CHARGES	\$0	\$50
5400 - INSURANCE	\$6,304	\$9,255
5530 - LIEN/COLLECTION COSTS	\$425	\$360
5625 - OPERATIONAL SUPPORT	\$225	\$1,650
5650 - BOD/VOTING MEMBER MEETINGS	\$2,043	\$2,100
5800 - OFFICE EXPENSE	\$8,670	\$4,200
8600 - RESERVE STUDY	\$0	\$7,500
Total ADMINISTRATIVE	\$38,491	\$43,865
LANDSCAPE		
6300 - LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE	\$101,736	\$97,520
6360 - IRRIGATION REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	\$10,793	\$9,500
6370 - PET CLEANUP	\$2,441	\$8,600
6395 - LANDSCAPE PROJECTS - MASTER PLAN	\$4,817	\$8,700
Total LANDSCAPE	\$119,787	\$124,320
MAINTENANCE		
6100 - GATE & GUARDHOUSE MAINTENANCE	\$3,164	\$600
6575 - SIGN/ENTRY MAINTENANCE	\$996	\$1,350
6590 - WALL REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	\$4,205	\$200
6600 - SNOW REMOVAL	(\$708)	\$0
6850 - LOCKS & KEYS	\$4	\$250
Total MAINTENANCE	\$7,663	\$2,400
PROFESSIONAL FEES		
5100 - ACCOUNTING/TAX PREP FEES	\$6,059	\$0
5270 - CONSULTING	\$3,691	\$8,750
5500 - LEGAL FEES-COLLECTION/SMALL CLAIMS	\$2,339	\$3,750
5501 - LEGAL-GENERAL SERVICES	\$5,266	\$10,000
5600 - ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT	\$38,947	\$39,600
8200 - SECURITY SERVICES	\$55,060	\$61,446
Total PROFESSIONAL FEES	\$111,663	\$123,546
TAXES/OTHER EXPENSES		
5200 - ALLOWANCE FOR DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS	\$0	\$1,500
5860 - COMMUNITY EVENTS	\$498	\$1,251
5870 - WELCOME COMMITTEE	\$270	\$300
5900 - WEBSITE	\$928	\$2,250
8250 - MISCELLANEOUS	\$2,292	\$500
8800 - TAXES - CORPORATE	\$1,360	\$5,000
Total TAXES/OTHER EXPENSES	\$5,348	\$10,801
UTILITIES		
7100 - ELECTRICITY	\$679	\$975
7900 - WATER/SEWER	\$15,977	\$23,000
Total UTILITIES	\$16,656	\$23,975
Total Expense	\$299,609	\$328,907
Operating Net Income	\$22,528	(\$11,985)

HDROA Gated Villages Income/Expense Report YTD as of September 30, 2023

Canyons	Actual	Budget
Total INCOME	\$6,443	\$6,435
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$1,750)	(\$1,750)
Total Expense	\$2,440	\$4,561
Canyons Operating Net Income	\$2,253.67	\$124.00
Chaco Compound		
Total INCOME	\$3,054	\$3,036
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$1,875)	(\$1,875)
Total Expense	\$718	\$1,129
Chaco Compound Operating Net Income	\$461	\$32
Desert Mountain		
Total INCOME	\$36,239	\$36,180
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$13,750)	(\$13,750)
Total Expense	\$20,753	\$27,398
Desert Mountain Operating Net Income	\$1,736	(\$4,968)
The Enclave		
Total INCOME	\$8,126	\$8,118
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)
Total Expense	\$1,820	\$4,047
The Enclave Operating Net Income	\$2,306	\$71
Trillium		
Total INCOME	\$15,263	\$15,222
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$6,250)	(\$6,250)
Total Expense	\$14,266	\$10,303
Trillium Operating Net Income	(\$5,253)	(\$1,331)
Wilderness Compound		
Total INCOME	\$3,515	\$3,510
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$750)	(\$750)
Total Expense	\$1,586	\$2,943
Wilderness Compound Operating Net Income	\$1,178	(\$183)
The Legends		
Total INCOME	\$8,511	\$8,496
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$1,750)	(\$1,750)
Total Expense	\$7,080	\$8,127
The Legends Operating Net Income	(\$319)	(\$1,381)
Wilderness Cañon		
Total INCOME	\$3,824	\$3,819
Total TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	(\$1,350)	(\$1,350)
Total Expense	\$105	\$1,763
Wilderness Cañon Operating Net Income	\$2,369	\$706

Reserve Account Balances

	12/31/2022	3/31/2023	6/30/2023	9/30/2023
MASTER	\$ 194,318	\$ 230,498	\$ 266,617	\$ 235,073
CANYONS	\$ 148,607	\$ 174,750	\$ 174,528	\$ 171,615
CHACO CMP	\$ 57,264	\$ 58,675	\$ 61,086	\$ 63,000
DESERT MOUNTAIN	\$ 272,177	\$ 282,821	\$ 287,330	\$ 289,984
ENCLAVE	\$ 53,294	\$ 47,064	\$ 51,254	\$ 53,173
LEGENDS	\$ 115,711	\$ 117,825	\$ 120,160	\$ 122,719
TRILLIUM	\$ 196,902	\$ 253,635	\$ 256,953	\$ 259,498
WILDERNESS CANON	\$ 20,336	\$ 21,594	\$ 22,911	\$ 24,327
WILDERNESS COMPOUND	\$ 117,952	\$ 134,082	\$ 135,529	\$ 137,181
TOTAL	\$ 1,176,561	\$ 1,320,944	\$ 1,376,368	\$ 1,356,570

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Tell Your Contractors To Abide By High Desert Parking Rules



Justin Rodriguez

Many thanks to all those in High Desert I've been working with these past few months. You all have been accommodating and helpful as we iron out problems with your properties. It's always better to have frank, up-front conversations rather than letting things go by the wayside or be ignored. I just have a few, quick things to remind everyone about this month.

- If you have hired a crew to perform some work or maintenance, please do your best to impress upon them the need to abide by the rules of our community. Do not let them park on any landscaping, block neighbor's driveways, crowd the street, etc. You are responsible for them just as you would be if they were guests of yours and are subject to the rules.
- I also want to remind everyone to download and use the 311 app on your phones. This app helps notify the City of issues such as buckled sidewalks, extinguished streetlights, and cracked pavement, among other things. Check it out. Of course, if you are in a private, gated village, those same issues should be forwarded to management for attention.
- Lastly, if you are unsure about a rule or a specific policy (such as how to apply for approval for modifications, how to properly file a complaint, whether something is your responsibility, the associations or a neighbor's) please just give us a call or send an email. We'd be happy to clarify just about any misunderstandings you may have. Call us at (505) 314-5862.

High Desert Bylaws Amendment Approved By Voting Members

By Mark Soo Hoo, Interim Voting Member Chair

Voting Members Make a Difference!! The High Desert Bylaws have been amended for the fourth time since its creation. This was accomplished in record time, all thanks to the Voting Members for fulfilling their obligations!

By Written Consent, an overwhelming majority of Voting Members consented to all three amendment proposals. Of all the possible weighted votes of 1623, 75 percent is needed to pass a change to the Bylaws. Proposal One passed by 87 percent, Proposal Two by 93 percent and Proposal Three by 77 percent. Here are the hard numbers: out of 45 Voting Members, only two Voting Members did not return their Written Consent forms. Out of the returned forms, three Voting Members did not consent to Proposal One, zero Voting Members did not consent to Proposal Two (some Voting Members did not make a selection for this proposal), and six Voting Members did not consent to Proposal Three. Proposal One changed the function and organization of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will no longer be chaired by a Board Director; Proposal Two allows for vacant Voting Member positions to be filled by Board appointment; and Proposal Three allows Voting Members to be able to vote by absentee ballot or electronic methods.

Due to the diligent work of the newly formed Document Review Committee, chaired by Harry Jones, the proposals were drafted and circulated to all Voting Members and Alternates for consideration well in advance of submitting Written Consent forms to the Voting Members and Alternates for their final decisions.

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Bike Lanes in Community Are For Bicycles – Not Pedestrians or Parking

Bike lanes in High Desert are often used by dog walkers, pedestrians or as convenient spots to park a car. But High Desert bike lanes are intended for bicyclists – not as an extra lane for moving cars or for parked vehicles or for pedestrians. There are exceptions, of course. Emergency vehicles are allowed to park in bike lanes when necessary. Pedestrians are allowed to walk or jog on the side of roads, including bike lanes, if a sidewalk is not available. But if a sidewalk is there, the bike lane is for bicyclists.



We often have a large number of walkers (some with dogs), runners, and bicyclists enjoying our High Desert environment at the same time, and sometimes, there just isn't enough space on our sidewalks to accommodate all users. Please be courteous in these circumstances and remember that we all have the right to enjoy our outdoor spaces.

If you are a pedestrian, please use a sidewalk if one is available. If you find yourself needing to walk or run on the side of a road or in a bike lane, please go against the flow of traffic, staying as close to the edge as possible and stepping off to make more room for cars or bicycles if they approach. Above all, be safe!

If you are driving a car or riding a bike, please be alert for pedestrians who might find themselves in these situations.

Congratulations to Our Newly Elected Voting Members!

By Mark Soo Hoo, Interim Voting Member Chair

Congratulations to the 23 newly elected Voting Members! For a two-year term, these Voting Members will be representing their respective villages:

- The Canyons: Dan Krupp, Linda Otterson
- Chaco Ridge: Kristy Frame
- Desert Highlands: Bob Murphy and John Caffrey
- Desert Mountain: Bill Freer, Laura Horton, Mary Martin and Michelle Croteau
- Desert Sky: Johnny Brannon and Tammi Dorsey
- Trailhead: Kate Mitchell
- Mountain Highlands: Art Gardenswartz and Mark Soo Hoo
- Trillium: Margaret VanderVoort, Caroline Enos, and Sharon Littrell-Marsh
- West Highlands: Deborah Buchhorn
- Wilderness Canon: Cindy Suiter
- The Aerie: William Zara and David Miller
- Highlands: Judy Pierson and Joceyln Chao

Voting Members are elected throughout High Desert with half the villages electing their representatives each year. Ballots are sent to homeowners in the selected villages each August.

Voting Members meet together four times a year by Zoom. They represent their village neighbors on important issues such as electing board members, amending the bylaws, quarterly assessments and tax issues.



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Village Spotlight

Living in Sunset Ridge

By Janet Brierley, Sunset Ridge Homeowner

Sunset Ridge is a village of 110 homes located toward the northern end of High Desert, with Blue Gramma Road to the north and Cortaderia to the west.

Most of the construction took place in 1998, making it one of the earlier villages to be built. During the building process, one street, Alpine Trail, was featured in the Parade of Homes to showcase the products of several different builders and that has resulted in an eclectic mix of home styles. There is direct access onto arroyo trails and close proximity to High Desert and Pino Pond Parks.

I moved to Sunset Ridge from the East Mountains in 2003. I found a friendly community where I could enjoy the security of having neighbors close by, yet the house had a generous lot with space for my children to play. Of course, I have the wonderful High Desert views of the mountains but I think the realtor somewhat oversold the promise of "city views." I do indeed have city views, but to access them I have to go upstairs and stand in the bath. It's a sight to behold when the family wants to watch fireworks together and we all troop upstairs and climb into the tub.

Over the years, Sunset Ridge has come together as a community in several ways. We had no difficulty instituting a Neighborhood Watch on my road, where we had 100 percent participation by all the neighbors. At Christmas, a Sunset Ridge resident organizes fundraising and buys almost 2000 luminarias which are set out and lit by a group of Sunset Ridge volunteers on Christmas Eve. The



Sunset Ridge residents purchase and set out 2000 luminarias on Christmas Eve.

neighborhood looks so special that night and we all have a real sense of pride in our village.

We also have a very active Little Free Library which is charmingly decorated for each holiday. A 'flag fairy' visits all our homes before July 4th to insert a small American flag at the edge of our driveways.

Most importantly, however, we know our neighbors, stop to chat, and help out where we can. It's a privilege to live in this friendly, supportive, and fun community.



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Legacy Tree Company Assessing High Desert Piñons

Editor's note: The following article was submitted by Legacy Tree Company. Legacy was recently hired by the Board to review the declining piñon tree population in High Desert and is currently in the process of assessing the irrigation systems for the trees and evaluating the root systems and environments of the piñons.

By Aaron Bumgarner, ISA Certified Arborist & Legacy Tree Company Field Manager

Legacy Tree Company is working on a full inventory and assessment of the community trees in the High Desert public spaces. Just along the main roads, we inventoried nearly 600 piñons. Broadly, we are seeing many of these piñons showing signs of stress. Unfortunately, this is common across the urban landscape here with rising temperatures and a long-term drought. Even piñons in the East Mountains are feeling the stress. One of the unexpected downsides of a locally native plant like a piñon is that all of its pests are local and native as well. The main pests we see in piñons here in Albuquerque are moths, beetles, and needle scale.

Healthy piñons usually have a strong internal defense system and they are rarely affected by these issues. In this case, the tree health is directly related to water stress and hotter temperatures. Part of our assessment includes an audit of the irrigation system in High Desert. Proper watering for trees needs to be adjusted and moved over time, making sure water is getting to the entire root zone. The way trees grow means their fine absorbing roots are near the edge of the canopy and beyond. Often we find the original emitters are still at the base of the trunk, even though the tree has

grown much wider.

Tree Removal

We are in the process of creating a plan to manage these piñons. Part of the plan will involve recommending removal of the worst trees. After losing too much green foliage, the tree's ability to bounce back is compromised. And the most stressed trees can be hubs for pests, which can move to the nearby trees. Our goal is to identify the best trees and amend the irrigation to them. We may recommend treatment on a select few trees, but we will not recommend broadly spraying or putting insecticide on every tree. Our recommendations for removal will create good spacing between trees and reduce water and resource competition for the remaining trees. After removals, we can discuss selective replanting: possibly a few trees in high profile areas and some small, well-adapted plants and shrubs in other locations.

Fertilizers and Pesticides

A note on fertilizers and pesticides: It can be tempting to throw chemicals at tree issues, and various solutions are sold in the form of tree vitamins, bug killer, or organic fertilizer. Here in Albuquerque, the first thing to do 99.99 percent of the time is to get more water spread across the entire root zone. Without that, no other efforts matter. And if a pesticide is strong enough to kill a beetle, it can certainly kill pollinators like bees. We want to be very strategic about considering this option, making sure it is a tree that we think will survive in the landscape long term.



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Meet and Greet Welcomes Newcomers to High Desert

The High Desert Welcome Committee held its first post-pandemic party to welcome newcomers October 18 in the home of Mary Martin and Bill Freer, Desert Mountain.

Welcome Committee Chair Sharon Littrell-Marsh said more than 50 residents attended, including the Board of Directors, a variety of Voting Members and about a dozen newcomers. "We were very pleased with the turnout," said Sharon. "We plan to do another party in the spring." Her committee includes Sharon, Bill and Mary, Phyllis Ryder, Nancy Lindas and Dee Dee Stroud.



Left to right: Sharon Littrell-Marsh, Bill Freer, Dolores Stroud and Nancy Lindas



Jon and Carter Drake, The Enclave



Becky Sigler, Mary Martin and Lanny Sigler. The Siglers live in Mountain Highlands



Newcomers Margaret and Mark VanderVoort, Trillium



Anna Praamsma, Desert Mountain



Dr. Tami Howard, The Enclave

Photos by Mark Soo Hoo

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Sharon Littrell-Marsh is New Voting Member Chair And Tammi Dorsey Is Nominating Committee Chair

At the recent Meet & Greet party for newcomers to High Desert, homeowner Mark Soo Hoo asked all the participants to consider volunteering on committees or projects within the community. Sharon Littrell-Marsh agreed to be considered as the new Voting Member Chair and was elected at the October Voting Member Quarterly meeting, replacing Interim Chair Mark Soo Hoo. Tammi Dorsey asked to be considered as the new Chair of the Nominating Committee. The Board accepted her Statement of Interest and Voting Members informally endorsed her by voice vote at their October meeting. Both women are fairly new residents of High Desert. Sharon moved to the Trillium with her husband George (president of the Board of Directors) and Tammi moved to Desert Sky in Jan. 2023.



Sharon Littrell-Marsh

“We wanted to move out of our tri-level and we needed a bigger house,” said Sharon.

Sharon is also the Chair of the High Desert Welcome Committee which held the Meet & Greet where Mark asked for volunteers. As Chair of the Voting Member group, Sharon will run the quarterly meetings. She also hopes to encourage Voting Members to foster a greater sense of community in their villages.

“I want to make sure all villages do something to engage their neighborhood,” she said. “Desert Mountain does it very well, as does Wilderness Canyon. They have events, parades and block

parties. I want our all of our Voting Members to know they don’t have to do it all alone. We can help.”

Sharon also plans to initiate some training sessions for existing and new Voting Members to explain the governing process in High Desert and how Voting Members can best represent their villages.



Tammi Dorsey

After her first husband died, Sharon attended seminary school in Denver and led three churches for the United Church of Christ in Denver, Pennsylvania and Rio Rancho.

Tammi is a retired services delivery director for several software companies and is a native New Mexican with family throughout the state. She decided to move to High Desert because she wanted to live close to the mountains. Tammi chose to step forward as a volunteer after talking it over with Mark at the party.

“I decided it would be a good way to support our community and share the work with other residents,” she said.

The Nominating Committee encourages homeowners to become candidates for the Board of Directors election held next April at the Annual Meeting. Her committee will meet with all interested homeowners and present candidates to the Voting Members who, in turn, will elect the three new Directors. The Committee will continue to operate in late summer and early fall as villages elect new Voting Members.

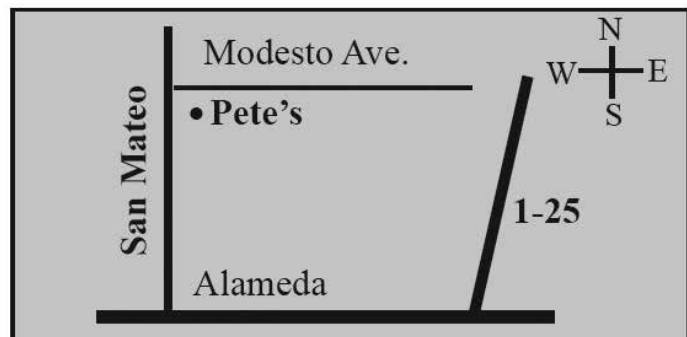
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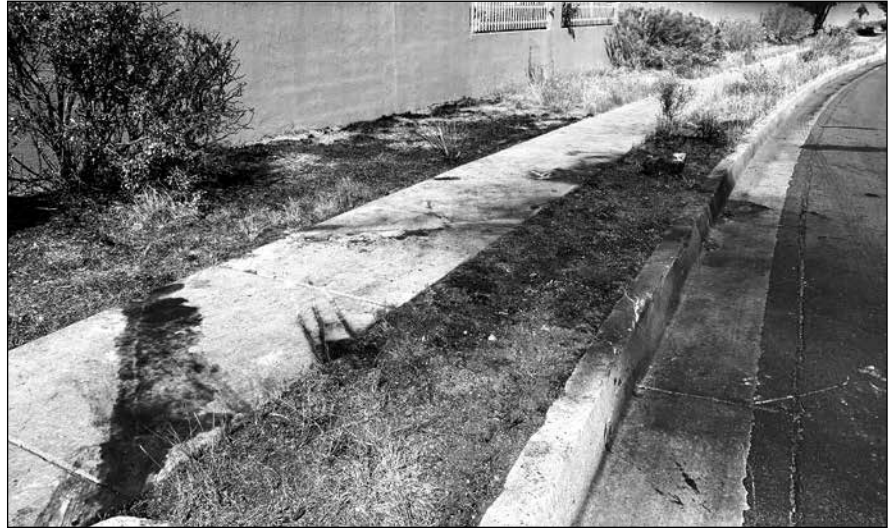
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September Car Accident in High Desert Causes Fire And Damage to Sidewalk

A car accident along High Desert Place in late September resulted in a small fire and damage to the sidewalk, curb and landscape.

“The fire was the result of a bad car accident. Kids were excessively speeding and inattentive. The fire department responded quickly and put out the fire in the common area,” Brandy Hetherington, Community Manager with HOAMCO, said. There were no serious injuries reported, she added.

“Since the grass was reasonably short and the vegetation was not dense, firefighters could get there in time to do their job,” said Harrison Jones, Board Director, who saw the damage the following day and took the photo shown here. “Fires can and do start in High Desert but good landscaping practices work to keep damage from spreading.”



The sidewalk, curbs, roadway and landscaping were damaged as a result of a car accident on High Desert Place in September.

—Photo by Harrison Jones

Always Potential For Fire Spreading

Judy Pierson, former Chair of the High Desert Fire Preparedness Committee, said there is always the potential for fires spreading from plants in the medians to homeowners backyards, and then into arroyos or ponding areas still not fire-safe.

Excessive Speeding

The speed limit in High Desert is 25 miles per hour. Operating

cars at high speeds can result in rollovers, dangerous crashes and death. If you are a parent of teenage drivers, please stress the need for safe driving in the community. A car crash can cause more than damage to the vehicle and passengers. It can also cause fires that spread rapidly and damage homes and property.

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Landscape Committee Plants Native Seeds as Part of New Study To Determine Which Natives Survive Best

By Tammi Dorsey, Member of the Landscape Committee

The Landscape Committee is dedicated to the High Desert Mission which reads:

“As stewards of this land we are committed to the vision of a community conceived, designed and built to preserve nature’s intricate balance. Our goal is an integrated and sustainable community which honors its southwestern roots and natural habitats while providing a place that will endure.”

High Desert’s native plants are affected by the hotter, drier conditions. Heat and drought are stressing the pine and piñon trees, and many have died this year. Some will be cut down. We are working with Legacy Trees to develop a plan to inventory and replant trees.

Because of our commitment to our High Desert commu-

nity, the Landscape Committee is looking for opportunities to use existing resources and interested community members to offset the scope of the work needed to address significant financial and environmental challenges.

One project includes experimenting with collecting seeds from native plants and planting them around High Desert.

The Landscape Committee spent hours collecting High Desert native seeds and planted them around the sculptures on Academy and Spain arroyo on October 21. One volunteer works at the Albuquerque Garden Center on Lomas and has been supportive of the effort to propagate these native flowers. Next spring the group will evaluate how many plants came up to determine the success.

This initiative cost no money, provided neighbors the opportunity to build connections and contributed to restoration efforts.



(Above) Elaine Culver and Camille Singaraju prepare to scatter native seeds at the Academy and Tramway entrance.



(Above) Landscape Committee members Camille Singaraju and Janis Gogal were two of the four members who scattered native plant seeds by the entrances at Spain and Academy in October.

The Committee planted the following native seeds they gathered around the community:

*Chocolate Flower,
Globemallow,
Paper Flower,
Purple Aster,
Yellow wildflower seeds,
Mirabilis,*

*Red yucca hesperaloe, Rocky Mountain
Penstemon – blue, a variety of Penstemon,
Yellow Yarrow,
and Showy Milkweed.*



Tami Howard (above) and Janis Gogal (center photo) scrape the ground with a rake before scattering native seeds.

The Members of the Landscape Committee are Camille Singaraju, Chair, Meghan List, Tami Howard, Janis Gogal, Tammi Dorsey, Molly McGrath, Mark VanderVoort, Elaine Culver, Marie Bartholdi, Deborah Morton and Karen Bentz. Bob Howell is the Board Representative.

**Pictures taken by
Tammi Dorsey**

*The High Desert Gardener***Danger, Danger in the Landscape**By Margo Murdock
High Desert Resident**Margo Murdock**

We do not typically think of our landscape as a place of danger, but there are some situations you need to be aware of – for yourself and your guests. I have categorized them as: clear line of sight, curb issues, fire hazards, trip hazards, water hazards, falling debris, and wall raisers.

Clear Line of Sight

Clear line of sight is the landscape term used to describe visibility at intersections, driveways, mailboxes, and walkways related to on-coming foot or vehicular traffic. An example would be when backing out of your driveway, can you clearly see on-coming traffic (people and vehicles)? If there is a stop sign or yield sign at an intersection and it's on your property, is the intersection clearly visible before entering it? In the common area as you leave your village, can you clearly see oncoming traffic both ways? If you cannot see, then you need to remove whatever is blocking the view. If it is in the common area, then notify our property manager so the landscape contractor can remove the offender. Yes, you can prune it back, but if it continues to grow, over the life of the plant you will be doing a lot of pruning and the plant won't look better for it.

Curb Issues

Curb issues can best be seen if you get out of your car as a guest would in front of your house or in the driveway – what do you encounter? Here are some things to think about – do you have cacti, yucca or roses that the guest has to step into or over? Do you have large shrubs or trees hanging over the curb or street that the guest has to open their door into? Any plant that hangs over the curb and will continue to grow over the curb as it matures needs to be removed and the younger the plant, the easier this is. Are there boulders in the way? If so, maybe move them further back on your lot (keeping them in odd numbered groupings for a more natural look). Do trucks driving by “prune” your trees?

Fire Hazards

Do you have large ornamental grasses near your walls? These make it easy for fire to breach the wall and continue onto your property or into your family space. Are there conifers near your windows, eaves, or roof lines? Conifers contain a resin that burns hotter and dry needles encourage the tree to become a torch. Keep plants closest to your house well-watered and remove those that put your family at risk. If there's a fire hydrant on your property, is it visible? I know it is not the most beautiful ornament in your landscape, but it needs to be accessible if there is a fire nearby.

Trip Hazards

There are an amazing number of trip hazards in a landscape – some obvious, some not so obvious. After a rain (or your irrigation) is there erosion that causes loose pebbles on your driveways, walkways, or mailbox area? Keep this swept up or blown off, add plants to help retain the soil, or create a dry stream that helps lead the water to where you want it (maybe a favorite tree). Erosion may also cause uneven terrain – an example is the Spain trail split



I love my tile on the back patio, but it gets very slippery when it rains. Keep that in mind on damp mornings.

east of the Water Kiva memorial park. The crevices created with erosion, especially along sidewalks or across trails, are an unexpected danger. Also as our trees and shrubs mature they may raise walkways, patios, or even walls. If tree staking is retained more than a year, vegetation can grow to make the staking invisible. These are the trip hazards that hide. You have to be watching your feet while walking and who does that?

(Continued on Page 25)



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Danger in the Landscape -From Page 24

Water Hazards

Water hazards typically cause slippery spots. For example, I have a tile patio whose surface gets really slick when wet. Irrigation leaks or overspray can create slippery spots as well as creating erosion issues. And seasonally there can be ice on walkways and driveways, sometimes not easily visible. I almost took out a FedEx delivery person this way. He slipped on ice on my brick walkway caused by melting snow from the roof.

Falling Debris

This occurs most often from large trees and shrubs with dead branches. It is very expensive to remove a dead tree, but the danger to guests and your family should be your first thought.

Wall Raising/Damage

Finally there is wall raising that can happen when the roots of trees and shrubs grow as they mature. Usually the offender was planted too close to the wall (or your foundation). By the time you realize that a growing root is raising your wall it is already too late. You can remove the tree, but the damage to the wall has already occurred.

Walking your landscape and pretending you are a guest may be an eye-opener for you. If you do this at night you may also find you have lighting issues for walkways, patios, curbs, and walls.

Errata (August Healthy Trees article) – Mea culpa, I used height not width for the piñon so the space required for root growth should be a 10-foot radius. Tom would have caught that mistake!

Do You Have Expertise In a Particular Field? High Desert Needs You!

High Desert needs homeowners with expertise to advise the Board of Directors and different committees on matters concerning finance, engineering, hydrology, landscaping, human resources, communications and more. Are you a retired accountant? A former CEO? Do you have working experience in contracts, structural engineering, or project management? Have you managed large groups of people, written grants or contracts, been involved in civil engineering or financial analysis?

If the answer is yes, please consider putting your name forward as a potential volunteer advisor to the Board or a committee as needed. You do not need to volunteer long-term or even as a committee member. The Board just needs to know who in High Desert has certain skills and expertise in areas they may need. High Desert is run by volunteers and a management company (HOAMCO) that oversees the security contract, landscaping and compliance. But long-term planning, finances and contract decisions are all made by the Board. That's where you could help.

Call Erin Brizuella, Assistant Manager at HOAMCO, at (505) 314-5862 to be added to the Advisory Directory.

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High Desert Committee & Project Contact Information

If you have a question about High Desert, who should you ask? The answer to many questions is easily found on the High Desert website at www.highdesertliving.net. A calendar of events, all our governing documents, easy access to the request form for modifications, and a great deal more is found on the site. When it comes to High Desert, the website is the place to start. For other questions:

- Owners should contact HOAMCO at (505) 314-5862 for any inquiry about High Desert development, questions about the CC&Rs, or concerns with the operation of the association. See the following page for names and contact information

- See the names and telephone numbers on the opposite page for board members, patrols, website and newsletter information.

- High Desert residents can contact their elected Voting Members for specific answers to questions concerning their villages. Village Voting Member contact information can be found online at: www.highdesertliving.net. At the top, click on "Villages" and choose the village from the dropdown menu. Residents can also call the office at 505-314-5862 to learn their village representative. High Desert Committee chairperson contacts are listed below.

- **Crime Awareness Liaison:**

Position open: Contact HOAMCO if interested.

hdcimeprevtn@googlegroups.com

- **Welcome Committee:**

Sharon Littrell-Marsh: sharonlittrell@hotmail.com

- **Landscape Committee:** Camille Singaraju:

bsingaraju@msn.com

- **Voting Members Chairperson:**

Sharon Littrell-Marsh: sharonlittrell@hotmail.com

- **Gated Village Committee:** Dan Kropp: GVEman@gmail.com

- **Tramway Cleanup Project:**

Michele Leshner: (505) 844-2854: mlesher222@comcast.net

- **Fire Preparedness Committee**

Position open: Contact HOAMCO if interested.

- **Communications Committee:**

Reg Rider and Susan Camp:

CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com

- **Documents Review Committee**

Harrison Jones: hjonesaz@gmail.com

- **Natural Resources Committee**

Russ Rhoades

rrhoades10@comcast.net

High Desert Security Provides Vacation Watches for HD Homes

Are you leaving on vacation or business and would like High Desert security to keep an eye on the outside of your home? You can call the management office to arrange for patrol officers to keep a watch on your house.

Contact management at:

- (505) 314-5862
- highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com

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Vice President • Bill Pederson	4/2022-4/2024
Treasurer • Steve Hartig	4/2023-4/2025
Secretary: • Bob Howell	4/2022-4/2024
Director: • Ray Berg	4/2022-4/2024
Director: • Camille Singaraju	4/2023-4/2025
Director: • Harrison Jones	4/2023-4/2025

Contact Board Members by emailing:
highdesertboard@HOAMCO.com

Board & Committee Meetings

• Modifications Committee Meetings:

All requests processed by email. Write HOAMCO at highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com. For information on submissions, see HD website at www.highdesertliving.net. Submission deadlines: Dec. 1, Jan. 5, Feb. 2

• Board of Directors Meetings:

Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 20, at 5 p.m.
 Zoom meeting
 (Note: Board meetings are now held monthly at 5 p.m.)

• Voting Members Quarterly Meeting:

Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.
 Zoom meeting. Obtain link on website.

• Town Hall Meeting:

Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024 at 6 p.m.
 (Note: all Town Halls will now begin at 6 p.m.)
 Zoom meeting. Obtain link on website.

Note: For a complete list of all upcoming events and meetings, see the website calendar at: www.highdesertliving.net.

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 Email: HOAMCO@HOAMCO.com

• High Desert Office (Northeast Heights):

10555 Montgomery Boulevard NE
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 (Located on the north side of Montgomery, west of
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After-hours emergency maintenance phone contact:
 Call (505) 221-0189 (an on-call staff member will
 answer or return your call shortly.)

• Northeast Heights Office Hours:

Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Management Staff:

- Community Manager: **Brandy Hetherington**,
 (505) 314-5862 bhetherington@HOAMCO.com
highdesertmanager@HOAMCO.com
- Assistant Manager: **Erin Brizuela** (505) 314-5862
erbrizuela@HOAMCO.com
- Violations Coordinator: **Justin Rodriguez**, (505) 314-5862
JRRodriguez@HOAMCO.com
- High Desert Security:
 Security Patrol: (505) 485-5658
- High Desert Apache Plume Newsletter:
 Rebecca Murphy: Editor, (505) 377-7227;
EEnews@outlook.com
 Newsletter Liaison: Susan Camp
CommunicationsCommittee@HOAMCO.com
- High Desert Website:
 Website Liaison: Bill Freer & Mary Martin:
hdwebcom21@gmail.com

The next issue of the Apache Plume will be mailed to all High Desert homeowners in mid-February 2024. Contact Rebecca Murphy (505-377-7227) to place an ad. Or email her at eenews@outlook.com

- Ad deadline for the February 2024 issue: Jan. 22, 2024
- Copy deadline for the February issue: Jan. 29, 2024


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High Desert Homes are selling fast. High Desert real estate market activity continues to be solid with increases in home values. Low inventory and strong demand are driving sales. Buyers are looking for High Desert Homes in all price ranges. Now is still a good time to sell your home while the the market sales are still strong and with a low home inventory supply. Call Sharon McCollum for a free consultation on preparing your home for sale for the best terms for you .

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UPDATE HIGH DESERT MARKET ACTIVITY - PAST YEAR 11/2022 TO 11/2023

HIGH DESERT HOME SALES ACTIVITY

- 1 Home FOR SALE average asking price \$665,000 at \$281.18. per sf
- 8 Homes PENDING average asking price \$627,433 at \$279.12 per sf
- 33 SOLD this past year (12 mo) average sold price \$600,253 at \$280.74per sf

HIGH DESERT ESTATE PROPERTIES SALES ACTIVITY

- 5 Homes FOR SALE average asking price \$1,614,000 at \$312.43 per sf
- 3 PENDING average asking price \$1,454,667 at \$352.63 per sf
- 22 SOLD this past year (12 mo) average sold price \$1,220,382 at \$303.56 per sf

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