

The Old Orchard Outlook



MAY 2014

The Official Newsletter Of The Old Orchard Homeowners Association.

Update from the Board

Traffic Calming Solutions (Stop signs and Speed breakers) – WHY?

Why did the board implement these options? This is a common question. These were not unilateral decisions by the board, but solutions brought forward and voted on by concerned residents. Below is a list of reasons these came up:



- Did you know that we have had 3 head-on collisions in Old Orchard?
- Did you know that we have had 2 cars flipped-over in Old Orchard?
- Did you know that multiple residents have almost been rear-ended?
- Did you know that we have had a few resident walkers almost run over by distracted and/or speeding drivers?
- Did you know that a resident was actually run over by a vehicle ending up in the windshield?
- Did you know that we have drivers that do not stop when the school bus is picking up/disembarking OUR school kids?
- Did you know that the speed limit in OO is 30 MPH and some drivers have been clocked at 50 mph on Old Orchard Drive (main entrance road)?
- Have you noticed the number of times our gate has been hit by residents? (See below).

A concerned groups of residents demanded action from the Board, and the Board asked for solutions. The first action suggested and voted by the residents was Stop Signs. They were installed, and there was no curbing of behaviors by drivers. In fact, more near-misses were reported as drivers were running the stop signs. A second group of residents demanded and voted on the Speed bumps/humps to be installed. It is still early to determine their effectiveness, but a remarkable slowing has been observed. Please note that all this is done to protect our precious children, elderly residents, pedestrians and bicyclists in general. Remember that they have the right of way when cars are present. Please exercise caution when navigating our streets.

The Board of Directors, along with concerned residents, will always look at solutions to safeguard our residents while maintaining a pleasant neighborhood. *(continued on page 5)*

Community Website

**WWW.
OldOrchardTexas
.com**

For All of Your Neighborhood Information

Important Contacts

Have a question? Please refer to our website at: www.OldOrchardTexas.com (OOT) for answers to your questions and important community updates.

Management Company: MASC Austin Properties, Inc.

Bill Gard (Community Manager)
Email: BGard@mascapi.com
Tel: 713-776-1771
Website: www.mascapi.com

Board of Directors

Frank Kalkattawi
Rodney Warner
Julio Acosta
Email: oldorchardboard@yahoo.com

Architectural Review Committee

Julio Acosta
Email: oo_arc_chair@yahoo.com

Common Area Landscaping Committee

Carole Roberts
Email: caroleroberts53@gmail.com

Clubhouse Committee

Zeeshan Khurshid
Email: Zee.khursid@gmail.com

Social Committee

Renel Edmonds
Email: OldOrchardSocialCommittee@yahoo.com

Newsletter

Contact the Board

OLD ORCHARD SPEND REPORT

O.O. (Old Orchard) Community Association Inc.			
2014 Assesments	\$634,276.00		617 homes at \$ 1,028 each
EXPENSE	BUDGET AMOUNT	% of BUDGET	Spent YTD (March 2014)
Administrative	\$55,800.00	8.80%	\$1,009.35
Contract Services	\$263,828.04	41.60%	\$57,190.42
Maintenance	\$47,520.00	7.49%	\$18,216.30
Utilities	\$141,000.00	22.23%	\$34,158.03
Total Required Expenses	\$508,148.04	80.11%	\$110,574.10
Planned Capital Repairs/Improvements			
*Fence	\$50,000.00	7.88%	\$0.00
*Speed Bumps	\$16,200.00	2.55%	\$0.00
*Entrance Lighting	\$5,000.00	0.79%	\$0.00
*Signs	\$5,000.00	0.79%	\$0.00
*Pool	\$12,000.00	1.89%	\$0.00
Total Improvements	\$88,200.00	13.91%	\$0.00
Reserve Funding	\$37,927.96	5.98%	\$43,967.96
Total 2014 Income - Expenses	\$0.00	100.00%	\$479,733.94

TEN WATER CONSERVATION TIPS:

1. Water your yard thoroughly, but only as needed - usually no more than 1 inch, once a week.
2. Use drip irrigation for plants and gardens, and water early in the morning to minimize evaporation.
3. Collecting rainwater for landscape use is great for the plants and can save you water and money.
4. Install aerators to cut in half the amount of water used by each faucet.
5. Fix faucet leaks, which can waste up to 3,000 gallons of water a year.
6. Install water-efficient plumbing fixtures to reduce water consumption by 25% to 60% and save energy.
7. Check your toilet by using a leak-detection dye tablet. Leaks can waste up to 200 gallons of water a day.
8. Replace older toilets with water-efficient models and save up to 4,000 gallons of water a year.
9. Washing only full loads of laundry can save an average household more than 3,400 gallons of water each year.
10. Invest in an ENERGY STAR-qualified clothes washer, which typically uses 50% less water and 30% less energy.

BARKING DOGS

The dog is man's best friend. But a barking dog can put a strain on neighborly goodwill. We have received complaints of dogs barking.



Dogs are dogs and they do what they do. But we all have the right to enjoy our private property without any trespass and noise is a trespass. If the noise comes through the fence, it's a problem. Here are some tips from the Humane Society, to help eliminate dog barking:

1. Remove the motivation. Your dog gets some kind of reward when he barks. Otherwise, he wouldn't do it. Figure out what he gets out of barking and remove it. Don't give your dog the opportunity to continue the barking behavior. If he barks at people or animals passing by the living room window, manage his behavior by closing the curtains or putting your dog in another room. If he barks at passersby when he's in the yard, bring him into the house. Never leave your dog outside unsupervised all day and night.

2. Desensitize your dog to the stimulus. Gradually get your dog accustomed to whatever is causing him to bark. Start with the stimulus (the thing that makes him bark) at a distance. It must be far enough away that he doesn't bark when he sees it. Feed him lots of good treats. Move the stimulus a little closer (perhaps as little as a few inches or a few feet to start) and feed treats. If the stimulus moves out of sight, stop giving your dog treats. You want your dog to learn that the appearance of the stimulus leads to good things (treats!).

3. Teach your dog the "quiet" command. It may sound nonsensical, but the first step of this technique is to teach your dog to bark on command. Give your dog the command to "speak," wait for him to bark two or three times, and then stick a tasty treat in front of his nose. When he stops barking to sniff the treat, praise him and give him the treat. Repeat until he starts barking as soon as you say "speak." Once your dog can reliably bark on command, teach him the "quiet" command. In a calm environment with no distractions, tell him to "speak." When he starts barking, say "quiet" and stick a treat in front of his nose. Praise him for being quiet and give him the treat.

Talking to neighbors can help solve the problem. Open lines of communication may mean the problem is solved more quickly.

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News That You Can Use

Board meetings

HOA Board Meetings are usually held on the last Thursday of most months, 6:30pm, at the Clubhouse. Please contact the board and/or the management company in advance to be sure there haven't been any changes in date/time/place. All residents are welcome, and encouraged, to attend these meetings.

Calendar of events

Please check our website, www.OldOrchardTexas.com for updates.

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Math Tutor In The Neighborhood

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CALLING ALL USED BAND EQUIPMENT!



The Fort Bend ISD's Fine Arts Department is accepting donations of used band instruments from the public. Community members can drop off their used band instruments at the FBISD Administration Building (16431 Lexington Blvd., Sugar Land, 77479) during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

Former band members are encouraged to check their attics, closets and storage units for instruments to donate, which will help ensure current students have the band equipment they need to be successful. Donated instruments will assist students, who otherwise might not be able to afford a band instrument, a chance to participate in beginning band programs across the District.

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BOARD UPDATE (CONTINUED)

Front Gate Accidents – Visitors or Residents?

A question has been raised about who has been responsible for the multiple gate accidents. Overwhelmingly – 80% of the time - the responsible parties have been residents of our community. These are the most recent accidents that have occurred:

- Accident # 1 - Occurred on August 9, 2012 at 4:41 am. – Visitor from Katy, TX
- Accident # 2 - Occurred on June 11, 2013 at 4:33 pm. - Community resident.
- Accident # 3 - Occurred on August 16, 2013 at 10:30 am. - Community resident.
- Accident # 4 - Occurred on December 18, 2013 at 1:23 pm. - Community resident.
- Accident # 5 – Occurred on February 25, 2014 at 1:50 pm. - Community resident.



Most of these accidents appear to have occurred as a result of inattention or impatience at waiting for the gate to open. The gate design and/or opening and closing mechanism have not been a factor on these occurrences. The exit speed bump was placed at a safe distance to allow for the gate to open before proceeding forward. Please exercise patience when exiting the community. All of these accidents have been recorded on video so that the responsible party is identified.

Entrance Gates Safety – Things to remember

- Please ensure your remotes are functioning. Check the battery and replace if necessary. If you need a remote, please contact our Community Management Company (713-776-1771) to obtain one.
- On the exit side, please approach the gates slowly. After clearing the speed bump, please allow time for the gate to open completely.
- On the entrance side, **please form TWO lines when entering**. Do not form a single line in the middle of the two lanes as this will back up the cars to FM 1464 allowing only 3 or 4 when up to 6 or more could be fit when using the two lanes. Please allow the gate to open completely before proceeding forward.
- Please maintain proper speed when approaching the gates.

Yard and Grass Clippings – Friendly Reminder

It has been noticed a large number of homes with grass bags and tree clippings on the sidewalk for up to a week. Please note that this is considered trash and you must place those in the back of your home and bring them out on trash days. You could receive a deed restriction violation letter if this is observed in accordance with the regulations set on **Article VI, Section 6** of the Declaration of Covenants. Please ask your landscaper to leave the bags in your backyard once they are finished. If they leave it outside, please take the time to pull them into your backyard. Following these guidelines will maintain an orderly and beautiful community and prevent you from being fined.

Pool Cards – Registrations

Homeowners who do not use the online form to register for pool cards, and wish to register, should visit our Community Management Company: **MASC Austin Properties**, Inc., 945 Eldridge Road, Sugar Land Texas 77498

May 21st ----- 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
May 22nd, 23rd, 29th, 30th ---- 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
June 4th, 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th --- 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Parking Enforcement Guidelines

The board, along with our Legal representative, has reviewed and amended the rules and regulation regarding the No Parking in the Street policy listed in the Declaration of Covenants **Article VI, Section 4**. These rules and regulations are also listed on the Guest Parking Notification form.

Questions, Concerns, Complaints, Praises

The board asks for your cooperation and comments. Please submit your comments and concerns to the Management Company and our Community Manager, Bill Gard at bgard@mascapi.com or 713-776-1771. Please do not go knocking on HOA board members' homes. Please respect the privacy of your HOA board of directors. It is also suggested to attend the monthly Board meetings held the **last Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm** at the clubhouse. There is a resident open forum where you can voice your concerns.

OLD ORCHARD 2014 POOL SCHEDULE:

For 2014 Pool Access Card Registration, please log onto www.OldOrchardTexas.com and complete the Resident Information/Pool Access form for the 2014 pool season. Upon verification, MASC Austin Properties, Inc. will reactivate your current pool access card. If a new card is required there will be a fee of \$10.00. Once payment has been received, the new card will be issued by mail. Please contact the office of MASC Austin Properties, Inc. at 713-776-1771 for additional information.

Opening Day: Saturday, May 24, 2014
Closing Day: Sunday, September 28, 2014

Closed on Mondays for super-chlorination

Open May 24, 25, 26, 31

Saturday 11 AM – 9 PM
Sunday 11 AM – 9 PM
Monday 11 AM – 9 PM (Memorial Day May 26th)

June 1st & Start full time on June 6th thru August 24th , 30th & 31st

Tuesday thru Sunday 11 AM – 9 PM

Open September Weekends Only & Labor Day

Saturday 11 AM – 9 PM
Sunday 11 AM – 9 PM
Monday 11 AM – 9 PM (Labor Day Sept. 1st)

SUMMER SAFETY

Summer is approaching quickly. Playing outdoors is a fun way to have fun and exercise, but it comes with risks. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that your best defense against summer related accidents and illnesses is prevention.

Sun Safety

Ultraviolet radiation (UV) comes from the sun and tanning beds. Less than a handful of sunburns can increase you and your child's risk of skin cancer later in life.

Prevention:

- Avoid sun exposure between 10 am - 4 pm. You are

still at risk on cloudy days.

- Pick a sunscreen that has the words, "BROAD SPECTRUM" to block both types of UV rays.
- Look for a SPF of at least 15. SPF 30 is better.
- Apply sunscreen generously 15 minutes before outdoor activities, and reapply every 2 hours and after swimming.

Heat Exhaustion

Summer heat waves are dangerous. Children under 5 and adults older than 65 years of age are at the highest risk. *Warning signs* of heat exhaustion and heat stroke include:

- Oral temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit
- Dizziness, throbbing headache, confusion, or unconsciousness *(continued on page 7)*

SUMMER SAFETY (CONTINUED)

- Muscle cramps or muscle twitching
- Nausea or vomiting

If you see these signs, you might be dealing with a life threatening illness. Get medical help asap.

Prevention:

- Drink more fluid than your thirst indicates. Water is the best choice.
- Encourage your family members to drink fluids throughout the day.
- Take breaks while working outdoors.
- Choose lightweight, light-colored, and loose fitting clothes.

Hot Cars Safety

Safecar.gov reports that even when temperatures are in the 60's, the inside of the car can rise above 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature in the car rises 20 degrees in the first 10 minutes.

Prevention:

- It is never okay to leave your child in a car, even for less than a minute.
- Never leave car keys where your children can get them.
- Make it a habit of looking in the front and back of the vehicle before locking the doors.
- Place your purse, brief case or something else you need in the backseat so you will have to check the back seat of the car before you leave.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration advises you call 911 if you see a child alone in a hot vehicle. If the child is in distress due to heat, get them out asap.

Bug Bites

The warmer weather attracts bugs. Mosquitos and ticks can transmit diseases. Mosquitos are out between dusk till dawn, and ticks are out at all times.

Prevention:

- Avoid tick-infested areas, such as woody or grassy areas.
- Check everyone in the family every night after you come indoors.
- The CDC recommends looking under the arms, between the legs, around the waist, inside the navel, hairline/scalp.
- Tick removal requires a certain technique. Use a fine-tipped tweezers (never your fingers) to remove the tick. Grasp the tick in the tweezers and pull upwards. Be careful not to twist so the tick's mouth doesn't break off under the skin. Wash the area well with soap and water.
- Insect repellants that contain 20% DEET can reduce your risk of bug bites, but should be used sparingly on kids.
- For more information about using DEET on children, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website.



Water Safety

Swimming is a popular summer activity. The CDC reports that drowning is responsible for more deaths among children 1-4 than any other accidental cause.

Prevention:

- Never leave kids alone near the pool regardless of their age and swim capabilities.
- Actively supervise kids around the water even if life-guards are present.
- Don't drink and swim. Alcohol affects swimming and diving skills.
- Learn CPR. Check your local fire department, YMCA, or Red Cross for classes.

Last but not least, keep the number for Poison Control near your telephone, 1-800-222-1222.

LAWN CARE TIPS:

The most important thing you can do for your lawn is to feed it. A well-fed lawn is healthier, which means it has a better root system to combat heat, cold, drought, mowing, foot traffic and other stresses.

Lawns wake up hungry in the spring. Feeding your lawn in the spring strengthens roots and gets it off to a good start before the heavy growing season.

Unfortunately, broadleaf weeds are actively growing,

too. Hit them and feed your lawn with a combination of fertilizer with broadleaf weed control (a "weed-n-feed").

Contrary to popular belief, setting your mower at a very low height can actually increase weeds by exposing the soil surface to sunlight and removing stored nutrients in leaf blades. Warm season grasses, like St. Augustine should be kept at 1.5 to 2.5 inches tall.

Here's to lush green lawns this season!

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