

Hillcrest IX Highlights

Newsletter of the Hillcrest IX Homeowners' Association Winter 2020

2020 Annual Meeting Recap



2019 Board President, Jesse Cuiilty opened the meeting by recognizing past and current Board and Committee

members, noting that a self-managed organization cannot run without the volunteer service of its members, to which we are grateful. Cuiilty then gave an overview of the challenges the Board worked through in the first half of 2019, and the administrative and property improvements made to date. Among the noteworthy changes that will put our community in a strong position going forward was the 5-year analysis of the dues structure to ensure that our operational and reserve expenses are properly funded. The Board also shopped insurance, obtaining quotes from 4 major insurers before selecting Farmers Insurance. Our policy went through an underwriting analysis to determine an appropriate level of coverage, something that hadn't been done in many years. The updated policy has a lower premium and will result in cost savings for our community. Also highlighted was the administrative streamlining Secretary/Treasurer Ryan Hildreth has initiated with the creation of a Statement of Account, billing and collection processes and engagement of a CPA firm to ensure financial accountability. The new website on which is posted the Board meeting minutes, monthly financials and the reserve study also ensures greater transparency of our Association's operations. Major property improvements highlighted was the painting of the perimeter wall, grading and drainage project to repair and mitigate erosion at the

south end of the arroyo, and the dedication of a new bridge connecting both sides of our community. The Board has also received many favorable comments on the new venue for monthly Board meetings, which affords a neutral meeting space, consistent location and schedule.

Kamal Sethia and Brent Scholar graciously volunteered to tally ballots and announce the results of the election:

Ballots cast: 75
Valid ballots: 74
Invalid ballot: 1

Directors Elected

Jesse Cuiilty
Barbara Gearhart
Ryan Hildreth
Michael Hinson
Keith Kennedy

The 2020 Board of Directors is excited to serve the community and get started on several goals for the year: updating our Governing Documents (CC&R's and Bylaws); converting the Association records to electronic format; and finding a viable solution to maintenance of the trail easement between Hillcrest IX and Pointe Mountainside Golf Community.

From the Archives
Hillcrest IX's First Annual Meeting of the Members was held at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, 1983 at the Mt. View Tennis Club, 7th Street and Bell Road. Nominations were accepted from the floor to elect 3 members to the Board of Directors for a term of one year each.

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February 6th Board of Directors meeting with District 3 Councilwoman Debra Stark

At the invitation of Councilwoman Stark, representatives of Hillcrest IX and Point Mountainside Boards of Directors met with the directors and staff of the City of Phoenix Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Flood Plain Management and Streets Departments. There was no formal agenda, just an opportunity to have open dialogue and ask questions of city staff regarding shared issues of concern around flood control management, speeding on Hearn, and maintenance of the trail easements that are used to access Lookout Mountain.

Streets: Stark's office has received a number of complaints about speeding on Hearn Road, and reports that some drivers use the traffic calming chicane installed 10 years ago as a racing challenge rather than a speed mitigator. In addition, there have been complaints regarding drivers failing to stop at the stop sign at the intersection of Hearn Road and Golf Pointe Drive. As these issues affect quality of life and the safety of our neighborhoods along Hearn, Stark has scheduled a meeting to obtain public input and discuss potential options to address the problem.

If speeding on Hearn directly impacts you or you are concerned about neighborhood quality issues generally, please plan to

attend the meeting. Ultimately, any options agreed to will affect all of us, so better to offer our input sooner, than later in the process.

Date: Tuesday, February 25
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Location: Fountain of Life Church
1055 E. Hearn Road

Flood Control Management: Pointe Mountainside HOA President, Rich Schnakenberg commented favorably on the drainage repair and erosion mitigation Hillcrest IX recently undertook at the south end of our arroyo. He gave an update on PMGC's efforts to do the same on their side of Hearn. Due to the Developer changing the direction of the natural wash that runs off of Lookout Mountain (angling it 90 degrees west along Hearn and 90 degrees south along 12th Street), Pointe Mountainside has had to contract an Engineer to determine how best to find a permanent solution to the flooding and erosion that impacts their community. Having completed the engineering assessment, they are now obtaining bids to select a contractor. They plan to start the modification work in the next month or so.

Trail Easements: Most of the discussion revolved around the numerous Multi-use Trail Easements that were dedicated by Developer Gosnell back in 1987 and run throughout Pointe Mountainside's property. The trails include the Trail 25 connector linking the Pointe Mountain Preserve area to Lookout Mountain (over a mile in length); the trail that runs east-west along the golf course between Pointe Golf Club Drive and 12th Street, and the trail easement (Tract D) that runs between Pointe Mountainside and

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Hillcrest IX, among other trail easements on their property.

Parks & Recreation Director Inger Erickson asked the HOA representatives to state their concerns about the trail easements. Mr. Schnakenberg cited the cost of maintenance over time, given the sheer volume of trail easements Pointe Mountainside has to maintain. They also expressed concern about the Parks Department's recent proposal to move the Trail 25 connector that currently runs through the main golf course to the sidewalk that runs along Pointe Golf Club Drive. They requested that a study be undertaken to determine which of the easements are "official trails" designated by the city, and requested that the city take over the cost of maintenance of those trails.

Jesse CUILTY and Keith Kennedy emphasized the need for regular maintenance of the Tract D trail easement between our two HOA's in order to deter fire and crime. In addition, the trail needs to be cleared down the middle, not clear cut on one side or both. David Urbinato of the Planning & Development Dept. stated that Multi-use Trail Easements are protected and vegetation cannot be removed without a salvage permit and landscape plan for restoration. Ms. Erickson seconded that point.

Ms. Erickson discussed the limited funding in the Parks Preserve budget, and Councilwoman Stark discussed the competition for funds at the City Council level among council representatives trying to serve their districts.

Mr. Urbinato explained that Multi-use Trail Easements dedicated to the city overlay private property and thus are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. He further explained that the

purpose of the easement is to allow homeowners and the public access to the Mountain Preserves. However, if maintenance of the trail easements is an issue for Pointe Mountainside, they can petition for abandonment (that's a public hearing with a fee), and if approved, the land would convert back to private property. Removal of the easement also removes the protection of the vegetation, so any trees and shrubs could be removed without a salvage permit.

Mr. Schnakenberg reiterated that he would like to see if the city can take over maintenance of some of the trail easements and also that Pointe Mountainside is interested in deeding Tract D to Hillcrest IX. Ms. CUILTY informed the group that adding common area would require a majority vote of Hillcrest homeowners and amendment of the CC&R's to reflect the new common area. She further noted that at the present time the CC&R's do not have a provision to contribute cost sharing to maintain common areas owned by other entities, but that and the possibility of acquiring the easement could be raised for discussion among Hillcrest homeowners to see how they would like to proceed.

Representatives of both HOA's expressed that the Multi-use Trail Easements, which afford homeowners access to Lookout Mountain are important and worth preserving. Terry Horne, President of Save Our Mountains Foundation expressed his support as well, and suggested a volunteer trail maintenance day could be organized to help mitigate maintenance cost. Patrick McMullen, Acting President of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve Council was also supportive of the effort to preserve trail access.

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At the end of the meeting, the group agreed to report back in a month and a half, and everyone thanked Councilwoman Stark for calling the meeting so that these important issues affecting our communities could be discussed. (*Minutes of this meeting are posted on our Association's website www.hillcrest9.org*).

Block Watch News



After many years of serving our community as the primary liaison to the city's Block Watch program, Bob

Shepherd is taking a well-deserved break. Thank you, Bob, for your years of service! Michael Hinson will now serve as liaison and will be working with Alice and Cheryl to ensure that our Block Watch stays active. In addition to holding a periodic get-together of neighbors to share food and crime safety tips, we have a Hillcrest IX Block Watch Google Groups distribution list. If you would like to be added to that list please send an email request to Anne Dudley, at annedudley1@gmail.com.

The city hosts several Block Watch meetings per month around the community. Dates, times, and locations can be found at the Black Mountain Community Alliance website and the Phoenix Block Watch website. Contact Michael Hinson if you would like to learn more about the meetings.

Hillcrest 9 is registered with the City of Phoenix as a Block Watch Group. The contacts are:

Michael Hinson	206-913-9486
Alice Couto	774-526-0617
Cheryl Joseph	602-448-3619

Homeowner Q&A



The 2020 Board of Directors would like to thank all of the Association members who submitted kudos, suggestions, questions and concerns along with their ballot. As other members may have similar questions or concerns, below is a Q&A. If you would like to comment on the Q&A or have other questions or suggestions, please email the Board at hoaboard@hillcrest9.org. We would love to hear from you!

“Allow homeowners to paint their homes in shades of brown to blend into the desert environment (colors approved by the Board).”

This inquiry does come up from time to time from individual homeowners. There was an actual movement to change the house color back in 2007. Longtime residents may recall that was the Board meeting in which then President, Ginger Bowers had 40 residents in her living room! They had a ***lively!*** discussion about changing from the traditional white to a “palette” of colors, but ultimately the proposal did not pass a straw vote. As Ginger put it to those still asking about changing the color of the houses, ***“That ship has sailed!”***

On a historical note, Hillcrest IX was never meant to blend into the desert and if anything, our community likely could be placed on the City of Phoenix Historic Register. Hillcrest IX is one of a handful of communities in metropolitan Phoenix built by Developer Dell Trailer, who studied architecture in Spain and the Middle East and sought to build communities with a classic, timeless look to them. Trailer worked to create an oasis look in his developments. *“We don't try to make our*

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homes blend into the desert,” he is quoted saying in the Arizona Edition of the American Biographical Encyclopedia Volume III, published in 1974. “We strive to create a white oasis that has for centuries been associated with construction in desert areas. The Greeks did it for ages, and still do. So did the Mediterranean Arab peoples. And India’s Taj Mahal is a classic example.”

For more information on Dell Trailer and his vision for the communities he built, please visit the Hillcrest IX History page on our Association’s website, www.hillcrest9.org.

“Please work on Hearn landscaping in 2020. Plant new trees along Hearn.”

We recently planted 8 new trees and 3 Ocotillos along Hearn. All of the trees are native to the Sonoran Desert. Varieties include Mesquite, Palo Verde and an Arizona Ironwood. Improvements along Hearn scheduled for 2021 include contouring, boulders, and gravel replenishment where needed.

“Are there any plans to re-vegetate any arroyo common areas between houses and the arroyo path where plants over time have been removed, storm damaged or died?”

Section 1(e) of our CC&R’s state in relevant part, “The majority of common areas shall remain as natural desert and will not be improved upon in any manner.”

Due to this provision in our CC&R’s, Boards over time have generally decided not to permit new plantings in Tracts A (arroyo) and E (the gorge area above Acoma). There is no irrigation system in these Tracts. They are natural desert areas that experience a cycle of life and death as does the flora of the Desert Preserve. Occasionally we have lost some beautiful old trees to storms, as

was the case when the tornado came through on November 26 last year, taking an old Mesquite and a Blue Paloverde with it. Vegetation along homeowners’ walls is removed by our landscape contractors during major arroyo maintenances to implement a 3-foot fire defensible space. Trees are occasionally removed upon a homeowner’s request due to impaction against property walls. Dead and diseased vegetation is also removed. Any revegetation of Tracts A and E would need to be done in conjunction with the Board and Landscape Committee, and due to our CC&R’s provision 1(e) only Sonoran Desert native plants would be permitted.

“If the Board decides something should be done, please take the time so that we (homeowners) will not have to do repairs on Christmas, Easter and any other holiday.”

Good point. We did get contacted by a number of homeowners or their representatives who informed us they needed an extension due to the holidays. The timing of the notices was purely an oversight by the Board and we will be more cognizant of that in the future.

“Change Board meeting times to be more accessible to all homeowners. 5 PM people are still at work.”

Boards over the years have tried various times and days of the week to accommodate Board members and homeowners’ schedules, such as 6-8 and 7-9 p.m. For several years prior to the 2019 Board, the meetings were held at 4 p.m. We are also subject to the schedule of the venue, Fountain of Life Church, and Monday evenings rarely if at all conflict with their meetings and events. Presently two of the five Board members have day jobs and make arrangements with their employers to adjust their schedules once per month to

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attend the meeting. 5-7 p.m. seems, for the most part, to be a happy medium and we have had a fair number of homeowners drop in to keep up on the affairs of the Association. However, if homeowners would like to suggest a different time frame on the first Monday of each month for consideration, please email Board.

“Create a community bulletin board for posting notices and homeowner updates (for sale, help wanted, etc.)”

This idea was given some serious consideration by a past Board. There were two types considered; the old Park Ranger style made of wood and a freestanding metal one with glass doors to protect the posted notices from the dust and rain. The proposal was tabled for several reasons; wood bulletin boards would need to be maintained, and notices exposed to dust and rain would look unsightly. The freestanding glass case style was cost prohibitive. A quick check on Google revealed that an outdoor, sturdy, low maintenance freestanding or wall mounted glass case bulletin board runs approximately \$700-\$1000. Websites have generally taken the place of bulletin boards and a community page could be considered for such announcements. It would be helpful for the Board to hear from homeowners as to whether a traditional or E-board would best serve the community.

“Fine homeowners who throw yard debris and tree branches behind the fence into the no man’s land walkway between Hillcrest IX and the next neighborhood to the east.”

Most of the downed branches and vegetation debris in this area is either from storm damage, Pointe Mountainside homeowners throwing landscape trimmings over their property walls, and hikers helping themselves to clearing the trail. Hillcrest IX homeowners have been periodically

reminded by our Boards to not use this area as a dumping site. Hillcrest IX does not own the land and we cannot fine violators on land we do not own.

As noted in the article on page 2 (*Feb. 6th Meeting with Councilwoman Stark*) this “no man’s land” to which you refer is Tract D (common area) with a Multi-use Trail Easement overlay owned by Pointe Mountainside Golf Community. That this 25’ wide tract of land with the trail easement exists at all, is because in 1987, Hillcrest IX homeowners, led by then President, Bob Koger, negotiated with Developer Gosnell and the city to ensure our community would continue to enjoy open space and immediate access to Lookout Mountain Preserve. Unfortunately, 33 years later that tract of land, once promised to be a bridle path/hiking trail and maintained as a natural desert corridor was never completed by Gosnell’s successors and assigns, leaving us, Hillcrest IX homeowners to deal with the fire hazard, blight, homelessness and crime opportunities afforded by the overgrowth. Another problem is wildlife concealment. Not only are the Hillcrest IX homeowners along the trail easement directly impacted, but the lack of regular maintenance also affects all homeowners and the public who enjoy hiking this trail to access Lookout Mountain. As stated in the article above, our current Board of Directors is in direct talks with Pointe Mountainside and the city to find a permanent resolution to this issue of maintenance of the Tract D trail easement.

Rat Control



There have been several postings on NextDoor as of late regarding rats in the Moon Valley area. We typically see Roof Rats and Pack Rats.

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Raptors, such as Owls, Hawks and Falcons that live in the Preserve area provide natural rodent control, but they and their young die from internal bleeding when eating rats that have been poisoned. Children and pets are also at risk when poison is used.

If you are experiencing problems with rats in your yard or entering your home, consider these preventative measures:

- Remove items and debris away from the house and walls that are around the property.
- Keep yard vegetation trimmed up and yard raked.
- Regularly pick up dog feces.
- Keep citrus picked up of the ground and ask your neighbors to do the same.
- Contact rodent/pest control companies who seal entry points into the house with heavy gage wire or other products that allow for air flow but prevent rodents from entering into the home.
- Consider using non-poison methods such as Victor rat traps or heavy-duty plastic traps (these should be removed from the yard between dawn and dusk to prevent bird and other small wildlife deaths).

Should you find yourself with a rat situation, take preventative measures to deter rats. To learn more about the effects of poison on birds and animals of the Phoenix Mountains Preserves, please refer to page 15 of the Maricopa Audubon Society Spring 2018 publication of the *Cactus Wren-dition* found under the publications tab, at www.maricopaaudubon.org

Parking Restriction Reminder

Our CC&R's prohibit parking on the street between the hours of 2:00 – 5:00 AM, but does allow for an occasional parking variance. Should you have overnight guests in town and need a parking variance please call any Board member. We will be happy to work with you on short term parking arrangements.

Home Improvements/Architectural

Guidelines

Please review the CC&R's Architectural Control sections 4-6. Many exterior changes require an Architectural Change Application.



Both the CC&R's and applications are posted on our website for your convenience, or you may request a copy from any Board member. The purpose of the review process is to ensure that improvements are made in harmony with existing structures, height of structures, and location with respect to topography and finished grade elevation among other requirements. Applications are reviewed monthly, but if you are concerned about the timing of getting your application reviewed and approved, you may wish to submit it well in advance of commencing your project.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Annual Picnic

Saturday, November 7, 2020

Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 16, 2021

Bulk Trash Pickup 2020

Placement begins on **April 25**

Collection begins on **May 4**

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Hilltop Highlights



Hello, neighbors! We, Anne and David Dudley, are excited to be a part of the Hillcrest IX community. After living in a historic neighborhood in downtown Phoenix, we decided to move to location midway between our jobs. We looked for five years trying to find a house that hit all our “wants” and none the “do nots.” Five minutes into our first visit, we knew we would buy this house on the hill. We were looking for a house with a view in a quiet neighborhood. This house has great views from every window. Before moving in we were invited to a dinner where we met many of our neighbors in the cul-de-sac. Since that April of 2011, we have gotten to know even more neighbors and thoroughly enjoy living in quiet Hillcrest IX.

Anne is a Phoenix native, born at Good Sam, who grew up in St. Louis and returned to attend college. David, a Texan, came to Arizona State for graduate school. We met as co-workers at Phoenix College. We both have a passion for mathematics and spent our 30+ year careers teaching in the Maricopa Community Colleges. In our retirement, we enjoy traveling, remodeling, playing bridge, and volunteering for non-profits including our fire department in Sherwood Forest Estates in northern Arizona. When you see us at the next

neighborhood gathering, feel free to ask us about any of our pastimes.

Since moving here, David served as Treasurer of the Hillcrest IX for three years and Anne has worked with the HOA Landscape Committee and the neighborhood Block Watch. We are currently on the Bylaws and CC&R revision team. We appreciate these opportunities to work with our neighbors to strengthen the community, protect our home investment, and be a part of the decision-making process.

2019 HOA Board & Architectural Committee Meetings

HOA Board and Architectural Committee meetings are held at 5:00 p.m. at the Fountain of Life Church (in the foyer where Annual Meeting is held), 1055 E. Hearn Rd. We look forward to seeing you there!

- Monday, March 2, 2020
- Monday, April 6, 2020
- Monday, May 4, 2020
- Monday, June 1, 2020
- Monday, July 6, 2020
- Monday, August 3, 2020
- Tuesday, September 8, 2020
- Monday, October 5, 2020
- Monday, November 2, 2020
- Monday, December 7, 2020
- Monday, January 4, 2021

Board Contact Information

Jesse Cuiilty – President
602-882-9027

Michael Hinson – Vice President
206-913-9486

Ryan Hildreth – Secretary/Treasurer
603-781-5506

Barbara Gearhart – Director
602-863-1729

Keith Kennedy – Director
602-809-2741