



The Ranch Meadow

Bugler

ESTES PARK, COLORADO

July 26, 2008

ISSUE NO. 26

Board Meeting to be Held at Estes Park Fire Station

Election of Officers for Coming Year, Owner Appeal Top Agenda Items

A new slate of officers will be elected, and an appeal by owner in response to issuance of a “warning” for violation of Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association Governance Standards, Policies, and Rules are the main items on the agenda for the regular Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, August 7, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Fire Station, 901 N. St. Vrain Avenue.

Posts to be filled at the meeting are president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. All of the officers will serve for one year. Committee chairs and members will be appointed by the newly elected president in the coming months.

EARLIER IN THE SUMMER, THE LOCAL MANAGER for Association Management of Estes Valley issued a “warning” letter to an owner after it was discovered that animal traps had been set out in the General Common Elements (GCE) adjacent to the owner’s condo. The Declaration of the Association prohibits any owner encroaching upon the GCE without a 100% vote of approval by the 156 owners in the community. Further, the Declaration prohibits an owner from making any use of the GCE which will or has the potential to increase costs to the Association.

AFTER THE BOARD HEARS THE OWNER’S PRESENTATION in which he/she will seek to convince the Board that an exception should be made to enforcement of the Association regulations, the Board will act on a motion to either negate the “warning” or to continue to enforce it.

The Board is also expected to approve a calendar for meetings for the remainder of the year through the Annual Meeting in 2009. All owners are eligible to attend all Board of Directors meetings.

4 New, 1 Returning Board Members Elected at Annual Meeting July 5

Five owners were elected to serve on the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting July 5 bringing the Board to full membership. Three of the newly elected directors are first-time members, and one comes to the Board after having served as a director several years ago. One director was re-elected for his third term.

Five owners (Katrina Conland, Charles Hartman, Karen McClure, Gordon Slack, and Jack Vaughan) had volunteered for the posts earlier this summer, and two additional owners (Nell Burt and Nancy Nemacheck) were nominated from the floor, which brought to seven the number of volunteers listed to fill the five open posts. A secret ballot vote was conducted with Deb Luchsinger and Jo Rumley serving as election judges who passed distributed and counted the ballots.

Owners present cast their ballots as well as casting the proxy votes they had been assigned, and the results were as follows:

Katrina Conland, elected for a one-year term to complete the term of Rebecca Conley who moved out of the community late last year.

Elected to two-year terms were Nell Burt, Charles Hartman, Gordon Slack, and Jack Vaughan.

Suzy Blackhurst, Sonja Murphy, and Marlan Nelson, outgoing board members, did not volunteer for another term on the Board. Gordon Slack was re-elected for a third term on the Board.

Storing Items Outside Condo Unit Not Permitted Under Covenants

A reminder was issued this week by the Association that no items are permitted to be stored any place outside a condominium unit, except that a picnic table, grill and chairs may be kept on a unit deck.

Paragraph C, Section 26 of the Declaration that is a part of the legal document that created the Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association as a non-profit organization under Colorado law, states that “No trash or rubbish shall be stored on the outside of any unit. No incinerator or tanks shall be kept upon or beneath any of the condominium property. No equipment or machinery shall be permitted on the condominium property unless it is kept within a unit.”

Reserve Funds Provide A Savings Account for RM Owners

Since a number of new residents have moved into the community, now is a good time to explain the purpose of the Association's Reserve accounts. Maintenance costs in the Association are of two types: (1) unscheduled or day-to-day repairs, such as wind damage to a roof which is paid for out of the operating account, and (2) scheduled repairs that are based on the "normal" lifetime of such maintenance as painting, roof replacement, siding replacement, etc., which are paid out of the Reserve account.

The Reserve account is just a savings account, but "reserve" is the term commonly used by homeowners' associations and lenders. Shortly after the builder turned the finances over to the Association, the Board established Reserve accounts for both multiplexes and duplexes to cover anticipated expenses. About 40 percent of each owner's monthly assessment is set aside in the Reserve accounts.

AN ASSOCIATION HAS FOUR CHOICES for funding major repairs such as painting or roof replacement:

- (1) Special assessment at the time of the repair which divide the cost of the repair among all owners.
- (2) Varying the annual assessments to include the cost of scheduled repairs.
- (3) Taking out a loan and charging the payments back to the individual owners.
- (4) Establishing a Reserve account in which to accumulate funds like a savings account to pay for anticipated repairs.

Without a Reserve to cover long-term maintenance costs, financing can have a "surprise" element – surprise in the form of a sudden call to Association owners to contribute immediately to a fund to cover the project costs.

Here's a possible scenario if no Reserve funds are available: Suppose you buy a unit in July and move in, and come August you are hit with a bill for \$1,800 for your share of the painting costs for the summer. Or worse, suppose you have just sold your condo but have not closed, and several of the driveways in the community have just been replaced. You receive a bill for \$1,700 as your share of the repaving—paving that you will never use, but which you must pay.

That's when the real value of a Reserve account—the fairest way to distribute the costs of major maintenance as paving—really demonstrates its value to all owners.

Just how does an Association do financial planning to make certain that there are funds to cover projected long-term maintenance costs?

THE AMOUNT THAT THE RANCH MEADOW ASSOCIATION needs to maintain the Reserve accounts is determined by analysis that considers all anticipated major expenses. This analysis is updated at least once a year at budget time, but it could be updated more frequently if needed. The analysis includes estimated price increases and forecast earnings on the Reserve funds. There is a downside to the Reserve accounts in that the Association has to pay taxes on the interest earned at a 33 percent rate, but that is considered in the analysis.

Banks and other lenders usually want to know the Reserve balance because they factor the risk of special assessments into their considerations of credit-worthiness for borrowers. The Reserve balance is not published on the website for security reasons, but the information is available from the management company.

45 Residents of Ranch Meadow Community Attend Annual Picnic

Each year the annual picnic for residents of the Ranch Meadow Community becomes more popular if the number of people turning out for the get-together that provides a chance for neighbors to become better acquainted, to enjoy sharing ideas, and the food prepared by the local cooks.

The picnic, held at noon on July 5, was planned by the Welcoming Committee. Marcia Logan, secretary of the Association is chair of the committee, and owners helping with the activity were Chuck and Susan Coffey, Sonja Murphy, Mary Lou O'Neill, and Marlan Nelson.

The picnic this year was a "full potluck" with owners preparing a dish to serve 6 to 8 people, and the variety of gourmet dishes set out on the table by Marcia's committee topped the menu at any specialty restaurant.

A bit of education was added to the program for the day when Susan Harris, a member of the Landscape Committee, set up a display to acquaint owners with noxious weeds that are growing in the community. Owners are encouraged to become acquainted with the noxious weeds and destroy them where possible.

Estes Park Zone Police Representative Gives Talk to Owners at Annual Meeting

Russell Tyson, a member of the Estes Park Police department, who is assigned as the "zone Police" representative for the Ranch Meadow Community, told the owners at the annual meeting July 5, that the program he works with has as one of its objectives to meet with small groups of people in a neighborhood to discuss issues or ideas the residents may have about the town of Estes Park. Tyson said that he invites residents in the community to call him if they have questions about any aspect of the police work in the area. His telephone number is 970-577-4460.

Owners Reminded They Need Condominium Unit Owner Insurance

Ranch Meadow owners were reminded this week that they need to have a Condominium Owners Insurance policy to cover their personal property because the Association Master Insurance policy does not cover personal property such as jewelry, computers, furniture, clothing, etc.

In insurance parlance, the type of policy that a condominium owner needs is called an HO6. Typically an HO6 policy will protect an individual owner against loss of personal property as well as providing personal liability protection. Other coverage may also be provided.

Owners should confer with their insurance agents to determine the amount of coverage they need. American Family Insurance, the company that is now insuring the physical facilities of the Association with the Master Insurance policy, offers some discounts and other incentives if owners insure with them. But it should be emphasized that an owner has no obligation to insure with the same company that insures the Association property.

Landscaping Changes Require Landscape Committee, Board Approval

Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association owners are reminded that since the group is organized under the Colorado Common Interest Ownership Act (a state law) no trees or shrubs can be added in the community without prior approval by the Landscape Committee and the Board of Directors.

Complete details on the Landscape Request and Approval process can be obtained from the Association website (www.ranchmeadow.com) or by calling Association Management of Estes Valley at 577-0515.

Owners are advised that the application must be filed and approved by the Committee and the Board **before** any new plantings are done. Failure to do so may result in the owner being required to remove the plantings. When the Committee receives the application, it makes an inspection of the site to determine such things as whether the plantings will block a neighbor's view, whether the planting is viable in the Estes Park area, etc.

ARC Approval Required Before Visible Changes are Made to a Unit

"Hey Mary," John called to his wife as he sat thinking about what project they should begin at their Ranch Meadow condominium unit, "what do you think about my idea of cutting a gate through the deck so we can get into the area outside the deck without walking all the way around the condo?"

"Sounds like a good idea to me, John," Mary replied. "I get tired of feeling penned in when I am enjoying the view from the deck, and I think we should do something to get rid of that awful wobbly deck railing."

Now that John and Mary have decided on the deck gate, steps, and railing reinforcement, their first step is to make certain that the project conforms to the architectural standards set up by the Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association.

Before any work is done on the project, they need to get an application for architectural change, complete it, and file it with the chair of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC).

THE APPLICATION FORMS can be obtained by going to the Association internet website www.ranchmeadow.com and printing out the form from the ARC site, or by contacting Gene Whannel at 577-0515 and requesting that he send them a copy of the form. After the form is completed, it should be filed with Chuck Coffey, chair of the ARC. The ARC will review the proposal, suggest any changes that need to be made to bring it in conformity with the ARC guidelines, sign it and return it to the owner with approval, approval with changes, or rejection.

If the project is approved, the owner will be told to contact his/her contractor and begin the work.

CUTTING GATES, ADDING STEPS and supports to stabilize the deck uprights are among the most common projects that are currently being added by owners, but many other projects require the same ARC approval **before** work is begun.

For example, owners wishing to add an air conditioning unit, to replace exterior doors and windows, garage doors, exterior lighting, exterior window coverings, and deck awnings, to name a few, are required to file an application with the ARC.

Owners who have questions about the application process for making exterior architectural changes should feel free to call Chuck Coffey, 635-0814.

Ranch Meadow Condominium Association Calendar—Thursday, August 7, mowing scheduled.

Thursday, August 7, 7 p.m. – Meeting of the Board of Directors, Estes Park Fire Station, 901 N. St. Vrain Avenue.

18 Owner Volunteers Help With Clean-Up of Community on June 21

The 2008 owner volunteer clean-up brigade grew by 50% over the 2007 group when 18 owners showed up on Saturday, June 21, to trim shrubs and trees, pick up trash, and in general “spruce up” the Ranch Meadow Community. Not only did the group do a great deal of landscape maintenance during the three-and-one-half hours they worked, but they also had the opportunity to get better acquainted.

More trimming work needs to be done in the neighborhood, and another work-day will probably be held later this summer.

Owner volunteers on June 21 were Bob Addleman, Kathleen Baker, Karen and Bill Bretz, Jana and Chuck Britton, Willis Colburn, Milt Garrett, Jack Kronser, Dennis Lee, Marcia Logan, Sonja and Bill Murphy, Marlan Nelson, Mary Lou O’Neill, Nancy and Fred Nemacheck, and Eric Waples.

RANCH MEADOW CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

Nell Burt, 1385 Raven Circle, term expires 2010.

Katrina Conland, 1515-A Raven Court, term expires 2009.

Charles Coffey, 1437-I Raven Circle, term expires 2009.

Charles Hartman, 1550-O Raven Circle, term expires 2010.

Marcia Logan, 1360-C Raven Circle, term expires 2009.

Mary Lou O’Neil, 1437-G Raven Circle, term expires 2009.

Gordon Slack, 1535-B Raven Circle, term expires 2010.

Jack Vaughan, 1519-I Raven Circle, term expires 2010.

Eric Waples, 1519-H Raven Circle, term expires 2009.

Gene Whannel, Ranch Meadow Representative, Association Management of Estes Valley. The Person to Call to report a problem. Telephone: 577-0515.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 315, Estes Park, CO 8051.

Message Board Now Available for Ranch Meadow Property Owners

Ranch Meadow Owners can submit maintenance requests through the internet by using a special bulletin board for communication to Association Management of Estes Valley.

To submit a message to the management company, please follow the procedures listed below:

1. Log on to the internet and type in www.ranchmeadow.com, and on the first page, scroll down to center column labeled “Association Management” and click on it.

2. On the second page scroll down to “Problem Needing Action?” and flick on “Assoc. of Estes Valley Management Message Board.”

3. The page will give you several choices: to post a message, click on POST.

4. The form that comes up will ask for a Short Message Title, and the Text of the Message.

5. You will be asked for a PASSWORD. Each individual makes up his or her own PASSWORD which can be 1 to 8 characters in length.

6. Type in your Name.

7. Type in your email address.

8. Submit the message.

After the message has been filed with the management company, an owner sending the message can go back to the website and follow the progress of his/her request. Owners can also still call the management company at 577-0515 to report maintenance and other problems.

Assessment Checks Should be Made Payable to Ranch Meadow Condo Assn.

Owners were reminded this week by Gene Whannel of the management company, that all checks sent to the company to pay for the monthly assessments for Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association should be made payable to **RANCH MEADOW CONDOMINIUMS ASSOCIATION**, not to Association Management of Estes Valley.

To ensure that payments are credited timely, please make certain that checks are written payable ONLY to Ranch Meadow Condominiums Association.