



# Riviera Gardens

Homeowners Association Newsletter

February 2024

## Riviera Gardens HOA Annual Meeting and Elections – Mark Your Calendars

The Annual Meeting and Election is scheduled for March 23, 2024 at 11:00 am. The meeting will be held at Mizell Center, 480 Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262. The board has contracted with an independent vendor, The Ballot Box, to serve as the Inspector of Election for the purpose of preparation, receipt and tabulation of the ballots for the meeting and election date.

Ballots and submitted information from each of the candidates will be mailed to the membership at least 30 days prior to the meeting and election date. There are three openings on the board. As of the registration deadline, the list of known candidates for election to the board is as follows:

Ric Barnes	Christopher Brodwell	Jim Busch
Mark Graham	Chris Olson	Jody Petit

The next general meeting of the board will be held on February 22 at 10:00 am. Agenda and instructions for joining the meeting will be distributed electronically prior to the meeting.



## Property Management Changes

Powerstone Property Management has begun its relationship as the new management company for Riviera Gardens. Powerstone works on behalf of the association at the direction of the Board. Our new Community Manager is Mel Kuppinger, who brings 14 years of property management experience to this position. Mel can be reached at [mkuppinger@powerstonepm.com](mailto:mkuppinger@powerstonepm.com) or

by phone at 760-797-3061.

Powerstone also has an Associate Manager, Dina Romero, who is available for assistance with work orders, gate issues, architectural applications and other property concerns. Dina can be reached at [dromero@powerstonepm.com](mailto:dromero@powerstonepm.com) or 760-797-7797.

Powerstone's emergency line is 800-408-2242 for after-hours assistance on matters needing immediate attention.

Riviera Gardens HOA and Powerstone are working to update our association's various request forms (including board and committee application, architectural variance, satellite variance, storage unit request form) and additional information to be housed on Powerstone's web portal and on RGHOA's website.

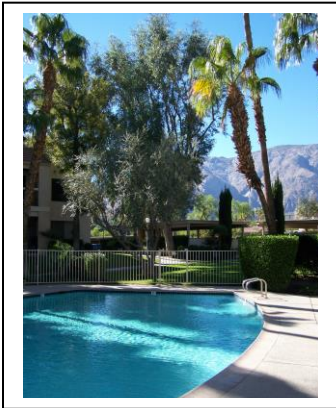
## Responses to Open Forum Questions from the December 28, 2023 Board Meeting

***Q. What is the status of the special “catch up” assessment that was proposed by a majority of the board and outlined in the December RGHOA newsletter?***

A. At the January 25 Board of Directors meeting, this approach was tabled in favor of advancing a separate assessment to cover the association’s insurance premium, which increased significantly in 2023 due to escalating insurance policy costs throughout California. The motion to go forward with an assessment for the insurance was approved by a majority of the board members. Additional information on this special assessment will be forthcoming to all homeowners.

The Board is held accountable for monies used from the reserve funds in meeting its fiduciary responsibility to maintain common area assets in good repair for the benefit of all owners. The Board puts all material contracts related to such repairs to tender (out for bids) per best practices and as required by Riviera Garden’s HOA governing documents. The audited financial statements outline both the sources and uses of reserve funds annually.

***Q. Will the Board be reconsidering the current pool heating practices?***



A. The Board respected the views of the majority of owners who responded to the September 2023 pool heating survey distributed by blast email. The survey proposed four options for reducing pool heating costs by leaving one or more pools unheated, and a fifth option to continue heating all four pools in our complex. Of the 101 homeowner responses received, 47.5 % of all owners favored the option of alternating heating of Pools # 1 and #3 to 85 degrees in odd-numbered years and Pools #2 and #4 in even-numbered years for an approximate cost savings of \$29,500 annually. By comparison, 20.8% of owners voted to heat all pools to a temperature of 85 degrees, at an additional estimated cost due to rising gas prices of \$10,200.

Absent any adjustments to other priorities, heating all four pools would have also pushed our annual operating budget increase over 20% for 2024. Section 5.3 (C) of the Riviera Gardens CC&R’s cite that the Board of Directors may not impose a Regular Assessment that is more than 20% greater than the Regular Assessment for the Association’s immediately preceding fiscal year without the vote or written assent of Members.

The Board has committed to reviewing the pool heating practice in September of each year before establishing the operating budget for the subsequent year. To date, the HOA has only received 2 months worth of gas bills since switching to the new heating practices. The actual information is insufficient to make any definitive conclusion regarding cost savings, but early signs show the savings recognized to date are in line with the estimated savings used in the survey.

***Q. What does the \$1.0 million replacement cost for plumbing in the reserve study represent and is it really necessary to include this component in the 2024 study when it was absent from prior reserve studies?***

A. Not unlike any other component in the reserve study, common area plumbing wears down over time and needs to be replaced. In the interim, the HOA has already experienced costs related to repairs of existing plumbing. These repairs can be expected to become more frequent and more costly as time progresses. At some point, just like an old car, the cost of repairs becomes cost prohibitive and replacing it becomes the most prudent thing to do.

The 2024 reserve study indicates plumbing will generally serve its intended purpose for about 50 years. The remaining useful life is noted in the study at 10 years. The intent of including common area plumbing that serves our units is not unlike any other component in the study; that is, it can only be expected to last so long before it needs to be replaced and the HOA is wise to start saving funds to replace it when determined necessary in the future. If our community does not begin to save for eventual replacement of ageing infrastructure, particularly when it is an expensive component, it will most likely result in a substantial special assessment.

The average cost per unit based on the current replacement value of \$1.0 million noted in the current reserve study is \$4,525. Given the cost of a single plumbing repair in today's dollars can easily cost in excess of \$5,000, this cannot be seen as an unreasonable estimated cost for the future given the HOA just paid approximately \$15,000 to repair a single gas line. Unplanned repairs are generally more costly than those that are planned given the immediacy of the repair.

***Q. Does the Riviera Garden's HOA have earthquake insurance, and has utilizing Motus Insurance Services for Loss Assessment coverage for earthquakes been considered? If RGHOA enters into an agreement with Motus, can individual homeowners get a better price for earthquake loss assessment coverage?***

A. Riviera Gardens HOA does not carry earthquake insurance, but homeowners may purchase their own loss assessment coverage. The Board is waiting for a response from the HOA Insurance Broker so we can pass along the most accurate information possible.

### **Planning and Implementation Committee (PIC)**

The committee is working with Chris Sigler of C.L. Sigler & Associates, Inc. to prioritize and plan the repairs and maintenance of the identified shortcomings from the Elevated Surfaces SB326 inspection project. As soon as we determine the priorities and have a chance to work with Mel Kuppinger of Powerstone Property Management on a reasonable plan, the work can begin. Most of the work should be done as regular maintenance and repair.



The committee is setting a meeting with the two electrical contractors who have bid on the Main Electrical Panel upgrade project. The committee will recommend to the board the contractor best suited to perform the tasks required to accomplish the upgrade. The recent power outage incident, as well as the recommendation of industry experts, make this project a high priority. Timeframes for delivery of replacement parts and equipment, the time needed by Southern Cal Edison to prepare the plans and for the City of Palm Springs to approve permits demand beginning the process as soon as possible and phasing of the actual work over at least the next 2 years or more. This timeframe may be advantageous for Riviera Gardens in that it may allow us to spread the cost over more than 2 years. Careful and effective scheduling and actual work will be done as efficiently as possible to ensure minimal interruption of electrical service to the buildings. We ask for the understanding and cooperation of all homeowners during the duration of the actual work in our complex.

The security of Riviera Gardens is another priority on which we are working. The committee will be working with Mel Kuppinger to develop proposals for an effective program of comprehensive security. We will prepare a survey to all homeowners to gather input. Requests to the board and homeowners for their input, concerns, ideas and aspects of security important to them, have received limited responses to date.

A master Riviera Gardens Annual plan for operations and maintenance is currently being drafted. This plan will include the necessary monthly maintenance and operational activities to be accomplished each year and will be useful in tracking all requirements as they are due and completed. Additionally, an annual

maintenance plan tied to the annual operating budget is being prepared. When completed, it will become part of the annual master plan.

The Planning and Implementation Committee is committed to operate in the best interests of the entire HOA using the best practices of the Community Association Institute. This group will work to meet or exceed the industry standards in fulfilling our duties to the Board of Directors and the entire HOA. Thank you for the opportunities to serve.

*Scott Fleming, Mark Esterl, Jake Christensen and Jim Busch (Board Treasurer and Liaison to PIC)  
Paul Roggenkamp, Committee Chair*

## **Landscaping Committee**



The Landscaping Committee met on January 9<sup>th</sup> for their first monthly meeting of the new year. All five members were present, and we welcomed our new member David Stuble. We discussed our upcoming projects such as the tree trimming, tree planting, and refreshing of the DG (decomposed granite) on Vista Chino.

On January 16<sup>th</sup> committee representatives, accompanied by Mel Kuppinger, conducted our monthly site inspection. This meeting each month is very important, as it is the time when we are able to review PRO Landscaping and their monthly

performance. We are all in agreement that Pro is working hard and that our property has never looked better. We encourage all of you to walk the property here at Riviera Gardens. It is our belief that you will see a marked improvement in the area that surrounds your home.

The annual pruning and tree trimming has been completed and went well. Five dead or dying trees were removed. Six trees or palms have recently been planted on the property to replace previous removals.

The mulching project starting at the north end of Riviera Gardens will take approximately three days to complete. No decorative stone will be covered by the mulch. The landscapers will be laying two inches of mulch in all other beds. The mulch is not made of wood chips nor is it harmful to animals. Once in the beds it will compost itself into the soil and will retain moisture and nutrients. We are optimistic that there will be a visible improvement in the shrubs and flowers that contribute to the beauty in our community.

*Julie Harris and Mike Tull, Committee Co-Chairs*

## **Building 21 Fire Update**

Over the past two months, Pacific Coast Constructions (PCC) has completed the reconstruction of all roof elements, the pouring of light-weight concrete on all floors, all framing and the installation of all-new windows and sliders.

The installation of all electrical, including homeowner-unique requests paid for at their expense, is scheduled for completion by the end of January, followed by city inspection. After completion of electrical, PCC will focus on completing all plumbing, followed by HVAC installation and dry wall installation.

The HOA's insurance adjuster has approved the payment of an additional \$220,000 to complete the project. The entire build-back project is scheduled for completion in April.



## Upcoming Riviera Gardens Social Events

Our community's social gatherings are a great way to get to know your neighbors, get outdoors and enjoy the neighborhood. January's morning event celebrated the new year with more than 35 residents coming together for awesome coffee, foods, and conversation.

Mark your calendars for the following dates and look for flyers by the mailboxes and postings on our Friends of Riviera Gardens Facebook page for additional details. We'd love your involvement! If you would like to assist in the planning and conduct of these or other events, please contact Donna Asbury at [dasbury67@gmail.com](mailto:dasbury67@gmail.com).

**Presidents Day - Red, White and Blue**  
Monday, February 19 at 3:00 pm

**St. Patrick's Day - Wearing of the Green**  
Sunday, March 17 at 3:00 pm by Pool #3



## Community Reminders

**Website:** Riviera Gardens Homeowner's Association maintains a website at [www.rivieragardensHOA.com](http://www.rivieragardensHOA.com). The website contains pertinent information including newsletters, board meeting minutes, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ's), financials, events, contact information, and current topics of interest to homeowners. Updates are ongoing. Please be advised that some sections of the website are undergoing revisions as we fully make the transformation to working with Powerstone Property Management.

**Poolside Cleanup:** Helpful homeowners sometimes clean our pool filters themselves when the filters get clogged with debris. The HOA deeply appreciates the helping hand! However, we need helpers to throw the debris directly into the waste bins provided at each pool. When they're left in piles poolside, they tend to dry out and then blow back into the pool when the wind kicks up. Big thanks to everyone for helping keep Riviera Gardens beautiful!

**Community Safety:** Yes, our citrus fruit is great, but don't risk a fall. For safety and liability purposes, please don't climb or let your guests climb the trees in Riviera Gardens.

## Share the News!

The Riviera Gardens HOA newsletter is distributed electronically via email. Twenty-five additional printed copies are also placed throughout the community at the mailbox locations. Committee chairs and community members are reminded that submissions for the April newsletter (200 to 250 words maximum) are due by March 20 to Donna Asbury at [dasbury67@gmail.com](mailto:dasbury67@gmail.com).