
The Master Plan...

Posted by John - 2008/08/02 14:45

OK Folks.

Some of you have been to the meetings. Let's all discuss the master plan.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/04 16:04

Marc Herrick, the president of the HOA, has already sent everyone a "warning" about the document that I am distributing.

And yet, I'm still going forward with putting it out. I'm on version 2 now, and will upload that soon. It has some clarifications that I thought it was important to make.

Please note, fellow homeowners, that this is not "just my opinion", even though I take full credit for the document and the campaign to stop this travesty... many have spoken - a few on the phone - and I am simply giving VOICE to some of our neighbors thoughts here as well.

Please participate in these discussions!

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by trippnorris - 2008/08/04 20:43

Thanks for your email and for posting this site. It's a shame a defensive email went out; we've always been a friendly neighborhood and we should be able to disagree openly in that spirit.

Regarding the renovation plans: I am opposed to speed humps. Perhaps there are other ways to enforce stop signs - even we, as a neighborhood, pay for extra police patrols/speed monitoring.

The renovations of the clubhouse seemed a bit extensive, but I would support them if others are in favor - we certainly need to maintain the pool, tennis court areas. The playground does need to be replaced and the enhancement of the pool area for covered picnic would be nice.

The dues increase is fine, especially if it's gradual as proposed.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by John - 2008/08/04 20:47

Thanks for joining, and replying.

Yes, I agree - we should be able to discuss openly. Not everyone can go to every meeting. One huge concern that was expressed to me was that THE BOARD, who are obviously in favor of the plan, are the ones counting the votes....

Visit the notice article on the site front page to download the comment document if you've not had one delivered... I'll be putting more out tonight. I printed another 50...

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by JMorian - 2008/08/04 21:58

Hi John-While we can appreciate your counter view to the master plan, we support it wholeheartedly. We have lived here for 8 years and have watched the neighborhood sort of go up and down over the years in looks and upkeep. We moved here because we wanted a neighborhood with strong covenants and thought that is what we were getting, only to find out

that what we had was a neighborhood with covenants that are almost an afterthought. We have spent a TON of money to renovate and update our home-but, much to our frustration, we live next to someone that can barely keep their grass cut and has never done so much as the basic upkeep on their home in the entire time we have lived here. In addition, I have watched people practically run over me and my children for running the stop sign at the top of my street as we wait for the school bus, so yes, I support speed bumps. I don't play tennis, but I can certainly see the value of spending money to keep up the tennis courts. Sometimes you have to spend money to keep up the value of EVERYONE'S homes. The pool and the bathrooms are disgusting and greatly in need of renovation. I am embarrassed to bring my friends to it. So yes, I am in favor of spending the money now, of stronger covenants, of keeping our neighborhood nice. Sometimes you have to spend money-that's just the way it is.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/04 22:09

Thanks for your input.

Regarding "speed", I am in favor of replacing stop signs (which people basically ignore) with some strategically placed speed bumps. But the BOARD is not interested in considering that. Instead, they want ADD 30 speed bumps! That will only hamper emergency services (Firetrucks typically have to STOP and roll over them...), and, in conjunction with the Stop Signs will only add to the over 600 per year I've been spending on brakes for my cars... (I live well down Shotwell, near the pump...)

I am also in favor of repairing the playground equipment. Things need to be kept up, and kept safe.

Please note that the proxy has you voting 3 separate times for stuff related to the pool/bathrooms. I would have liked to see 3 separate plans, not 3 votes that can all be used to say "look, they want us to invest 140k in a new building..."

We've lived here nearly 10 years, just so you know. I'm sorry that you have a bad neighbor. Have you talked to them? Do you know why they don't cut their grass? Perhaps there are financial problems.... and no covenant in the world is going to make money appear so they can fix up their property. That's just a fact.

And again, thanks for your input!

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by JMorian - 2008/08/04 22:40

Hi again-I appreciate your response. I assume you have been to the meetings-right? Do you understand what they are doing? They are not asking for 30 speed humps to be confirmed in the neighborhood. They have to ask for a larger number than they need in order to get what they hope for. The Dept of Roads and Bridges will not approve all 30-they are only going to approve the ones that are within the parameters that meet what we want-and then-the homeowners have to approve having a speed hump in front of their house. Please make sure you get ALL your facts straight before sending out information.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/04 22:46

I have been to the meeting - last week, and I even volunteered to help figure out good places for speed bumps. Speed bumps control speed. Stop signs to not - they are to control "traffic", and we really don't have all that much "cross intersection" traffic to need them in most of the places that they exist. And some of the signs were installed, shall we say improperly.

FYI to all who read this, if you feel any of the individual topics should have it's own thread, feel free to open one! This forum will not be "censored", unless of course you use foul language. The forum software will filter that, or prevent a post.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by JMorian - 2008/08/04 22:52

I'm glad you were there. I don't really know Marc all that well. All I can say is that I see more positive work being done since he volunteered to take on this office since I have lived here. I have served on the board before as secretary. Have you served on the board?

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/04 23:00

I've thought of it several times, but with raising 3 children and having to earn the \$ to keep up the house, well, no. I've just not been able to invest the time.

I did, however, take time to comment on the revision of the covenants - you can download those and the originals from the article on the front page of the website here.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by JMorian - 2008/08/05 06:36

Well, I think that it's good that things are being done. It's clear to me that Marc has gone to a lot of trouble to make sure people get a voice in this neighborhood. We all have jobs and children. What I see is that Marc and the rest of the board are putting in a ton of time to help make this neighborhood a better place to live. Marc took on a job that no one else wanted, but someone had to do, and I think he's doing a fine job of it. Not to offend but, I might suggest that if you are very against change in the neighborhood, you become active on the board in the future to have your say and see things firsthand. It's a year commitment and many of us have done our part, a number doing it over and over again because no one else will. It's great to have fresh faces to help.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/05 07:52

But if you have a plan, you have to have a thorough plan.

Marc's plan, while interesting, uses flawed financials. The economy is not good, and, the attitude of saying "well, the covenants say we can increase dues 10% without your permission, so we will do just that", well, that's just wrong.

His forecasts for the increased dues will leave us with DOUBLE the fees, and that's only if his 1.5% 'budget/inflation' model proves true.

There are no "checks and balances", no guarantees, not one single thing that keeps this fee growth in check.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by NoBS - 2008/08/05 12:21

admin wrote:

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And yet, I'm still going forward with putting it out. I'm on version 2 now, and will upload that soon. It has some clarifications that I thought it was important to make.

Please note, fellow homeowners, that this is not "just my opinion", even though I take full credit for the document and the campaign to stop this travesty... many have spoken - a few on the phone - and I am simply giving VOICE to some of our

neighbors thoughts here as well.

Please participate in these discussions!

Bravo John for putting out your document!

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/05 12:30

Thanks.

I appreciate your support.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by Marc - 2008/08/05 14:59

This is posted here by the ADMIN - comments on the articles have length limits. In the interest of fairness, I've copied the entire thing from the database and posted it here. I have inserted some comments in context

John

Thanks for always being so willing to express your thoughts and concerns for the community. I can appreciate that from the stand-point that I have seen several more police cars and teenager issues recently and hope that we don't turn into one of these other neighborhoods that each of us is trying to stay away from. With high-speed cops flying through here chasing kids around for doing drugs, fighting, and speeding all the time, it's a wonder to me that you don't want us to be MORE strict and serious about the covenants.

How will more strict covenants help that in any way, Marc? Create a HOA Board Storm Trooper group? And what would they do? String Barbed wire on the streets?

The Board has received over 100 surveys from the residents and all that we have put together in the Master Plan derives from that feedback. Of course we were ALL for it as it makes our neighborhood better and we can all benefit from nicer, cleaner, newer amenities. These are the things that I present on at my meeting and explain that this was a resident request for these things, and not just an SHOA Board decision.

There are parts of the plan that are intriguing, and the way the survey was phrased was general enough to gather lots of interest. I chose YES, for example, on speed bumps - but also noted on my survey that it was a conditional YES... Stop Signs have to be removed in order for my vote to STAY 'yes'. And on top of that you're assuming, however, that the other 124 people who DID NOT RESPOND also want change?

I'm sure with your knowledge and expertise of our Covenants we'll be calling on you to participate and make your voice known to the Board, and then eventually the residents. Please refrain from handing out literature to the community, as you truly are expressing your personal views and agenda.

My views and those of more than 20 people who've contacted me... With regard to literature, I must say respectfully, no. I'll distribute and those who want to read it, or discuss, can do so here in a wide open uncensored forum, at their leisure and at any time of day or night.

We just want everyone to hear the plan first and then make decisions about what they would like for the community.

No problem with that at all - I just want to let others in the community be heard too. Please follow procedure and present your proposed changes to the Board, we will compile those suggestions and then as a Board discuss them, and determine what would be in the best interest of the residents. At that point, we would present the best covenant proposed changes and allow EVERYONE to VOTE on those changes. Respectfully. Marc

Who determines BEST? And who's counting the votes? These are valid concerns, not just mine.....

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by NoBS - 2008/08/05 15:25

Marc wrote:

John

...

Please refrain from handing out literature to the community, as you truly are expressing your personal views and agenda.

...

Respectfully. Marc

Isn't that his right under the First Amendment?

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by jm1239 - 2008/08/05 17:47

There are many more issues with Southlands HOA than the Master Plan. I think everyone who has concerns or issues with the Master Plan and the current board should meet and combine their resources and ideas.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by jm1239 - 2008/08/05 17:50

The board cannot obligate the HOA to increasing the annual assessments every year. Any loans requires 2/3 of the homeoners consent. Furthermore, any Master Plan or loans must be reflected in the HOA budget. At that point, the HOA budget still has to be approved by a qorum of homeowners.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/05 17:56

jm1239 wrote:

The board cannot obligate the HOA to increasing the annual assessments every year. Any loans requires 2/3 of the homeoners consent. Furthermore, any Master Plan or loans must be reflected in the HOA budget. At that point, the HOA budget still has to be approved by a qorum of homeowners.

Which is exactly why they tried to reduce the size of a required quorum last year in their proposed -rewrites- of the Covenants.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by JMorian - 2008/08/06 00:02

John-I found your response to "Sally Sue" (Hmm, I wonder if that is the real name-apparently I am one of few that has the gumption to use my real name here) interesting. She had a differing viewpoint-which she shared, in response to your invitation that it be both pro and con. Your reply was caustic, I thought. If you truly want a discourse, you need to welcome both sides. Otherwise it appears that you are no better than what you keep saying the HOA is-you merely want to advance your own agenda. In the spirit of true conversation, you need to openly welcome both sides of the situation, even if you don't agree. "Sally Sue" said that if you didn't want to live in a neighborhood like this, you could move. I happen to agree. When you bought your house, you agreed to a neighborhood that had covenants. There are many neighborhoods that don't have them. I lived in one and chose to move here because I wanted what covenants offered. I have actually been disappointed by the lack of structure that we have in Southlands. If you want the freedom to do whatever you want , you need to live in a neighborhood that doesn't have covenants. Then you can also live with the negative side effects that go along with it and see what you think. I am all for stronger covenants and will do whatever it takes to advance them in this neighborhood.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by John - 2008/08/06 00:17

Thanks for your comment.

My reply simply flipped it over. If she wants to make this subdivision something that is not - an "ALTA community with a clubhouse", well, that's not right either.

Repeating her comment back to her is no more "caustic" than her saying it in the first place.

And the "master plan" with "promises" of minimal rate increases, does not take inflation into account. Heating and cooling and insuring that building. Nope, they account 1.5% increase in the budget...

I agree with her 100% that we have to repair the playground equipment - but do we need to invest 25,000? Nope. No way.

And as you can see, I'm not alone in my thoughts.

I am told "there are so many children..." but 5 of my 6 immediate neighbors (houses near by) have grown kids or no kids at all... And the younger kids near here - the grade schoolers - like my youngest don't use the park or even want to go up that far into the front of the neighborhood.

Stronger covenants won't do anything except give the board a bigger feeling of power. You can't make a home owner who, for whatever personal circumstance, make repairs that they cannot afford.

I address a lot of this in the document I wrote, and in the comments on the covenants I made last year.

John
(PS - Thanks for continuing to participate)

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by jm1239 - 2008/08/06 14:12

I served as VP and my wife headed the social committee for a few years as well. I resigned when Marc took over. For the record, I helped build the pavillion by the tennis courts and spread 4 tons of mulch this year and the last time 2 years ago. It is great to have fresh faces. However, having someone do a job because no one elses will doesn't mean they will do a good job.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by John - 2008/08/06 14:23

I agree completely - and thanks for your service in the community.

As I've noted, both my wife AND I have thought about getting involved directly, but I spent 3 years "under employed" and we're both so busy trying to make a few bucks to catch up and get ahead that there just isn't all that much time.

Having handed out my excuse, one thing that WILL get me motivated is something I see as flawed planning.

Is the "goal" that Marc has to be damned? Not entirely, for sure... but the over all execution here is pretty hollow and flawed.

The ballot cannot be considered "appropriate" because it's unclear and redundant in some parts. And for something like this I would not trust the people who made the plan to count the votes...

Not saying that Marc is dishonest, mind you, but we ended up with Tennis lights without a vote on such a big thing ever occurring.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by dZiTao - 2008/08/08 20:49

I for one am glad that you added your voice John. If you hadn't sent out your e-mail, I would never have truly looked at what is being proposed right now.

I will admit that after living her for nearly 15 years, I've gotten lethargic and haven't paid attention when there have been HOA meetings and I wouldn't have gone to these meetings if there had not been that lone voice in the wilderness that said "Take another look".

Thank you John!

I moved here before there was an HOA. The covenants were put in place by the developer (Billy Holder was it?). Anyway, I'm starting to wake up and I appreciate the wake up call.

I am grateful to Marc and the board for taking on these roles and tasks as I know it takes time from there lives.

It does seem that perhaps we need a better way to communicate. Look at the conversations here on this forum in only a few days.

Perhaps we should put a form on the SHOA web site so that everyone's voice can truly be heard.

Thanks again for calling out to your neighbors and providing a forum for discussion.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by John - 2008/08/08 21:04

I offered to do a website, much like this one, for the board shortly after they launched the current one.... One with more flexibility, forums, etc.

Since I own the 'hosting' I even offered to do it for less.

But the previous board said NO.

Oh well.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by dZiTao - 2008/08/08 21:49

I would definitely vote for a better web site with a forum for open discussion. That's something I could even could help with.

I didn't get the feeling that the current board would go for it, but since it wasn't mentioned that is just my assumption.

Sounds like we have several tech types in the neighborhood who could put that together pretty quickly.

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Re:The Master Plan...

Posted by admin - 2008/08/08 21:54

Took me 20 minutes to get this one up..
Yeah, not to hard.:laugh:

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