



## Setting the Record Straight: Clarifying Information You May Have Received

***(The following message is the second in an on-going series of e-mails from the PGA WEST Master Association Board and its representatives, describing the Board's decisions, challenges and priorities. This message is being sent by Jodi Fischer, Division President of the Management Trust -- Monarch Group Division. Monarch is the management company that reports directly to the Master Association Board and advises the Board on key issues.)***

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As part of the Master Association's ongoing effort to provide timely and accurate information to the entire PGA WEST community, we would like to provide clarification on several topics that were included in a recent e-mail sent to many homeowners via the PGA WEST Residential I Association's e-mail system, as well as a subsequent homeowner's summary of the Oct. 2 Master Association Board meeting. Unfortunately some of the information included in that e-mail, and in the summary, was inaccurate and/or misleading.

These e-mail notes were initially sent to Residential I homeowners, but may have been forwarded to others in the PGA WEST community. If you didn't receive the e-mail or its subsequent unofficial meeting summary, some of the information in this note may be new for you.

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## **Board Meeting Attendance and Location**

The Oct. 2 Board meeting was in fact well attended with approximately 50 homeowners present. The Master Association would like to thank all those who attended the meeting and took the time to learn more about what is going on with the community and share their ideas and opinions. This type of input is invaluable to the Board.

Some people question why the Residential I building is not being used for the Master Association meetings, since it would be at "no cost." It is true that Residential I does not charge a fee for the use of the room, but in fact the use of their facility would require the renting of chairs and sound system equipment and therefore would be an expense to the Master Association. The Residential I facility also does not have adequate parking to accommodate the number of homeowners who now attend the Master Association meetings. Taking all this into consideration, the offsite location remains a better option for now. Management is continuing to explore alternatives, but the Residential I facility is not a feasible location for the meetings at this time.

## **Statement Regarding Palm Trees**

Board President Mary Caldwell stated at the Sept. 4 Master Association meeting that the option to remove trees as part of the median landscape refurbishment project was off the table and would not be included in any future plans. In fact, Ms. Caldwell and Board member Penni Sturgill (Chair of the Landscape/Hardscape committee) individually spoke with each and every Board member prior to the Sept. 4 meeting regarding their feelings toward the idea of removing palm trees. It was Ms. Caldwell's intention to have a discussion regarding this topic during the Sept. 4 meeting. However, the homeowners in attendance would not even allow the meeting to begin until the topic was addressed. Having already spoken with each Board member individually regarding their opinion on the topic, Ms. Caldwell felt confident in making the statement. This was not a decision that required a motion on the part of the Board; it was a statement of the Board's position on a topic after receiving input and feedback from the community.

## **Meet and Greet**

The idea of a "Meet and Greet" event was originally discussed in August when the Board was going through the process of selecting a new Association Manager. It was not intended to be an attempt at "damage control" as some homeowners have suggested. Rather, it was intended to provide the homeowners an opportunity to meet the new Association Manager and the Board. It was also designed to foster a more active relationship with homeowners. The Board and Management are continuing to evaluate less expensive alternatives for the proposed event. Any new possibilities will be discussed at the November Board meeting.

## **Code of Ethics**

The Code of Ethics and Conduct for Committee members that was presented for the Board to approve did include the language "Once a decision is made by the committee and/or board, despite my personal disagreement with same, I will respect and support such decision." This is a common concept known as "One Voice" and it is adopted by many boards. Under this "One Voice" concept, board and/or committee members may bring their perspective to board/committee deliberations; but while they are on the board/committee they will act on behalf of the interests of all the owners. Dissension and discussion are encouraged so that the board/committee has the facts to make an informed decision. However, once a decision is made, and a board/committee member does not like the results, it is not appropriate to act in a manner that undermines the effectiveness of the organization. Joining a board/committee does not eliminate any member's right to express their opinions, but it does mean they will support the ultimate decision made by the majority vote of the group so that the work of the board/committee can be accomplished.

## **Landscape Survey**

At the Sept. 4 meeting, the Board made a commitment to all those present that no discussions and/or decisions regarding the refurbishment of the landscaping in the community would be discussed until the November meeting at which time a vision statement would be evaluated. Therefore, the Board did not feel it was appropriate to discuss the survey regarding landscape refurbishment that had been submitted by a homeowner at the October meeting. As a result, the item was tabled.

## **Landscape Committee**

The Master Association's Landscape/Hardscape committee has not been tasked with surveying the homeowners regarding the landscape refurbishment concept. So, to say that it is not a high priority for this committee is an inaccurate statement. Over the next year, the Board will be developing a plan to move forward with the landscape refurbishment. During this time, the Board will be deciding what steps to take moving forward, including how to receive input from homeowners. This will include developing an oversight committee comprised of experts, from inside and outside the PGA WEST community, which will help guide the Board forward in this process.

The Landscape/Hardscape committee's meeting minutes are posted for view by homeowners in a timely manner. Like all the Board's open committees, once the minutes are approved and signed by the committee they are posted to the Master Association website. If minutes are not posted this means one of three things: no meeting has taken place, the minutes have not been approved by the committee, and/or the minutes have not been signed by the committee.

## **The Signature Landscaping**

There are two agreements that have been signed between The Signature and the Master Association regarding development of The Signature's property within PGA WEST: the perimeter wall agreement and the development agreement. Neither of these documents required the landscaping along the perimeter wall of The Signature to be consistent with the existing PGA Boulevard look as was stated in the homeowner forum at the Oct. 2 Board meeting, and again in the e-mail summary sent to Residential I homeowners and others. The landscaping plans for The Signature perimeter wall were developed by an independent landscape architect firm hired by the developer and submitted to both the Master Association Board and the City of La Quinta for review. The original plans included turf along the perimeter wall, but the City of La Quinta insisted this be removed from the plans since current City and Coachella Valley Water District guidelines do not allow for turf in large quantities in new construction.

## **Governing Documents Committee**

The Master Association Board's Governing Documents committee was tasked with selecting an attorney to prepare restated Bylaws and CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions) for the Master Association. This requirement was clearly stated in the committee's charter document. A request for proposal was sent to four law firms and two proposals were submitted to the committee for review. The Board authorized the committee to make the selection of the attorney since both proposals were within a few hundred dollars of each other. The final selection was made for Peters & Freedman, the Master Association's counsel, to prepare the restated documents at a cost of \$8,715. It is up to the committee to move forward in the manner they feel most appropriate to accomplish the task at hand.

The Governing Documents Committee is comprised of members from each Residential Association. These members were selected by the Board of each association. The draft of the restated documents will be presented to the Board for review and then ultimately sent to all PGA WEST homeowners for a vote, as required by law. It would be inappropriate for the Board and/or homeowners to direct the committee on how to complete their assigned task. The committee has had several productive discussions on how best to move forward and has provided direction to counsel. All members of the committee have had the opportunity to share their ideas and suggestions for changes, additions and deletions to the documents. These will all be discussed by the committee and its attorney, and evaluated one by one. The meetings of this committee are open to all homeowners to observe and listen. The next meeting of this committee will be held Oct. 15 at 2 pm at the Residential I building.

## **Open Forum / Study Sessions**

The open forum for homeowners to speak at the Master Association Board meetings has always allowed three minutes per homeowner to speak. This is considered the industry standard and is observed by almost all homeowners associations. In an effort to allow more in-depth discussion on important topics, the Master Association will begin holding study sessions immediately

following its regular Board meetings, when appropriate. These study sessions will be open to all homeowners and will allow for more detailed discussion on specific topics. The study sessions will include in-depth presentations from committees, experts, and others, and will provide an opportunity for homeowners to comment and ask questions. The exact time and topics of these study sessions will be published on the Master Association website and as part of the regular meeting agenda.

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It is unfortunate that some members in the community have tried to portray the Master Association Board as acting in a secretive or untrustworthy manner. The Master Association has always held its meetings in an open and forthright manner. It has always been the right of all homeowners to attend these meetings. The Board has never discouraged attendance at its meetings.

Historically, attendance at Master Association Board meetings has been extremely low. Attendance increased dramatically in recent months as a result of inaccurate and misleading e-mails that generated a false impression of what the Master Association's plans were and the implication that meetings were being held in a secretive manner. The decision to hold the September meeting at The Management Trust offices was made in the May Board meeting and reiterated at the June Board meeting (which was also held at The Management Trust offices). The Master Association Board hopes that homeowners continue to attend the monthly meetings so that they can hear firsthand what is going on within the community and stay as informed as possible.

We realize it is not logistically possible for all homeowners to attend the meetings, so our Communications committee is working to increase community awareness of the important issues facing the Master Association as well. The Master Association Board formed the Communications committee in an effort to share more information with the community, since so few people attended the meetings. The Board is committed to sharing timely and accurate information with the entire community so that everyone is aware about what is going on within their association. We expect to launch the new Master Association website later this month - one major step in helping homeowners stay up to date on community issues.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 6 at 1 pm at the Embassy Suites hotel in Old Town La Quinta. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there.

Sincerely,

Jodi Fischer  
Division President

The Management Trust -- Monarch Group Division

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