

Graystone of Almaden

A Neighborhood Association
April 2022 Newsletter

Renewal and Email Confirmation

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Our new fiscal begins in each year in May, so it is time to renew your membership in our Association. You may have already received an automated reminder that your membership was expiring. Annual dues remain at \$100 for the year. You can pay using PayPal or write a check. Each year along with getting your renewal payment we ask that you confirm your email addresses so we can update our database ensuring everyone gets timely information. Email is our primary form of communication. We only distribute a hardcopy newsletter once a year.

On the cover page is a form showing your Name, Address, Primary email address (if you provided one) and a Secondary email address (if you have provided us two emails).

Please send in your form in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Enclose your check if you want to pay your dues by check. If paying by PayPal, just click on our website, graystoneofalmaden.org and click on the **Renew Membership Now** button at the top of the page.

President's Letter

By Scott Sherwood

Our Association was formed 25 years ago in 1997 to focus on three important topics and we are still working hard to achieve those ends. But before I comment on our work in the past year, let me say for all of us on the Board, this has been a tough couple of years with Covid affecting all aspects of our daily lives, including helping neighbors to get to know neighbors. We have had a lot of home sales and new people living in our 'hood. Maybe we can finally meet most everyone who lives so close by. Hopefully we will actually hold our annual fully catered picnic this fall and have that opportunity to meet and greet both those we know and those we don't yet know.

Social Benefits — Having a structure in place to organize, disseminate information about and fund neighborhood activities.

- We have had some success with our new Facebook group and hopefully we will continue to build upon our start. We have an article devoted to this topic later in this newsletter. More ways to communicate is better.
- Our 2019 summer picnic was a great success. Our 2020 and 2021 picnics were cancelled due to Covid. So many people have shared with me how much they missed getting together and reconnecting and meeting new neighbors. Hopefully by scheduling our 2022 picnic now we can all prioritize this date on our calendars. We will add some extras to celebrate! We will hold this year's picnic, Covid willing, on Sunday, September 25.
- Dumpster Day was, as always, a big hit. We ordered two dumpsters and filled them both. And the amount of hazardous waste filled two pick-up trucks. We will hold this year's event on Saturday, September 24.
- We last published a hardcopy Neighborhood Directory in 2018. Our plan is to update our database with information from this renewal cycle and publish a 2022 version this summer.

Economic Benefits — Increasing homeowner value by keeping our neighborhood an attractive neighborhood.

- As always, landscaping expenses are our single largest budget item. Our annual bill for regular cleanup and trimming is \$4800.

- Given we cancelled the picnic, we used those funds and added some additional money to aggressively trim numerous street trees along Pfeiffer Ranch, Boulder Mountain and Stonehill. We spent \$5400 on that project. We have included a couple of pictures in this newsletter. It was a big job.

***Political Benefits** — Having a united voice when dealing with City and the County.*

- We have continued our dialogue with the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA) and stay connected since they are the owners of much of the open space land that surrounds our neighborhood. So far, they have been good and responsive stewards of the land.
- We asked Malcolm Bordelon, a new Board member, to be our point person staying connected to our D-10 Councilperson. He has a separate report in this newsletter. In his article he will point out that our connection with Matt Mahan was instrumental in our ability to get quick action to fix the messed-up intersection “upgrade” at Graystone Lane and Camden Avenue.
- We attend the Almaden Valley Community Association (AVCA) meetings, currently on Zoom, to keep in contact with our local, state and federal officials. Specifically, we have explored how neighborhood organizations, such as ours, can be helpful in City decisions. Matt has set up several task forces to address pressing issues. We encourage you to check out his website and consider volunteering on an issue of personal interest.

***2022 Focus** - Keeping our activities impactful and easy to administer*

We will focus on:

- Our regular landscaping work, plus continuing to address our ever-growing trees that seemingly always need trimming
- Communications with our neighbors by Monitoring and improving our Facebook Group
- Distribution of the hardcopy directory. We missed last year. Oops.
- Holding the ever-popular dumpster day
- Offering our fully catered family picnic for this first time in 3 years!

In conclusion, we hope you appreciate the benefits of our voluntary neighborhood association. For only \$100 a year, we make a big difference. Our Board is a voluntary board and we depend upon neighbors to raise their hand to help out. Kudos to

Malcolm Bordelon, Joe Del Rio and Liko Chan for coming on board over the past two years. If you are willing to explore how you can serve, please contact me at scottsherwood@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks in advance for filling out the database information form so we can ensure that our communication efforts are successful.



Facebook Group Page

By Joe Del Rio



As Graystone homeowners we have common questions and concerns. Maybe it is looking for a reliable contractor for a remodel or a repair. Maybe you are considering solar energy and wondering which provider is the best for you. Perhaps you have concerns regarding neighborhood security. Some of us have a need for child homecare or babysitting. Where do we go for best advice? We ask people who we know share the same concerns we have, our friends and neighbors. That is why we created the “Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association” Facebook group page.

The “Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association” Facebook group page has been up and running for one year now. Sixty of your neighbors already joined. What do we talk about? We share recommendations on contractors. We help find owners of lost pets and enjoyed talking about our own furry family members. We exchange information on situations such as recent fires and petty thefts. The group page was a rallying point this past year to prompt the city of San Jose to return the Camden Ave / Graystone Lane intersection to its proper state after lanes were restricted without prior community input. We also shared pictures of neighborhood in a photo album, pictures that remind us why our Almaden neighborhood is beautiful and enjoyable.

It is also important to note what you do not see on the group page, the extraneous clutter of non-neighborhood chatter. Maybe you were once a Facebook user in the past or never been because of concern regarding the Facebook social environment. We understand and share that concern. Only homeowners and renters, together with our residing household members, are admitted as we keep the group private. The tone of interaction is quiet and polite, just like our neighborhood. We hope you will give the page a look and decide for yourself.

Here is how you join. Signup for a Facebook account if you don’t already have one. From your home page look for this icon on the top of the screen.



Click on the icon and it will take you to the Groups” page. In the search group field in the upper left of the screen put in this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/854908331926138/>. Alternatively, type in “Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association”. Click on the Join Group button and you will be guided through the sign-up process. Need more help? Send us an email with your questions.

San Jose District 10

By Malcolm Bordelon

Graystone Lane and Camden Avenue Traffic Mitigation Fiasco. Remedied!

As you may recall, in September 2021 the City of San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT) attempted to improve the troublesome intersection at Camden Ave. and Graystone Lane. Apparently, the DOT had received concerns about pedestrian and bicyclist safety at this intersection and at the trailhead east of the intersection. Their attempt was to improve safety for all travel modes, including pedestrian and bicyclists. In addition, they intended to slow vehicles on Camden turning into Graystone and improve the sight distance as vehicles approach the trailhead where equestrians are crossing. The DOT put their modification in place with no prior notice and no opportunity for public comment.



The repainting of the street and placement of delineators had several negative effects and appeared to be a "solution to a problem that does not exist" which resulted in several new problems that were totally unnecessary. The poorly designed modifications effectively closed off the previous right turn lane onto Camden from westbound Graystone and the right turn lane from northbound Camden onto Graystone.

The DOT Modifications / Sept 2021

Key concerns included:

1) Graystone Lane Drivers seeking to turn Right onto Camden

At peak hours - morning and evening and particularly morning when traffic flowing south on Camden toward Leland High School is very high, there is a long line of traffic in this south bound Camden lane - making a left turn from Graystone onto southbound Camden very difficult. The modifications eliminated the right turn lane onto northbound Camden. This would have severely backed up traffic on west bound Graystone as every single car would have to wait for the car trying to make a left onto Camden to advance. Frustration levels would be high and those who used to be able to easily turn right before may result in drivers taking chances - once they finally advance to the stop sign - in frustration and impatience - hurrying to beat traffic coming down northbound Camden from the left. Some might even have driven over the dirt area and curb on the right to access Camden rather than wait for a car ahead of them to turn left.



2) Southbound Camden - left turn lane onto Graystone.

The left turn lane (green) from southbound Camden onto Graystone and the continuing southbound lane (yellow) are narrow as is. With the modifications, those turning right from Graystone (red) onto northbound Camden would have to make a harder, sharper turn with the barriers in place. It would be very easy to encroach into the left-hand turn lane on Camden resulting in accidents at this point. The previous right turn lane from Graystone onto northbound Camden never presented this pinch point and was far easier to navigate.



3) Northbound Camden - traffic turning right onto Graystone

Northbound Camden traffic wanting to turn right onto Graystone would have to turn a hard, sharp right (green) to avoid encroaching onto the westbound lane on Graystone. The turn would simply be too sharp. The fast moving traffic on Camden will have to stop/slow suddenly with these turns now requiring this tighter turn angle and would present much more difficulty for larger vehicles. The original turn lane (red) allowed for easy access and traffic flow.



It was apparent the barriers would cause traffic issues where there were none and they would certainly result in driver impatience, frustration and ultimately accidents.



Our Graystone Board, many in our neighborhood and other surrounding neighbors protested quickly and loudly to the City, DOT and Councilmember Matt Mahan. A petition to return the intersection to its prior design and meet with community members to discuss the issues and receive input was also routed and signed by many – requesting that the barrier installation be reconsidered, the

intersection be returned to its previous design and alternative solutions be discussed with the community.

With the help of Councilmember, Matt Mahan, who promptly arranged a meeting with DOT, we were able to directly voice our concerns and the changes were quickly removed immediately following our meeting. In follow up meetings we provided further input and DOT completed the revised modifications resulting in a crosswalk and delineators placed to slow traffic where DOT was working to do so.

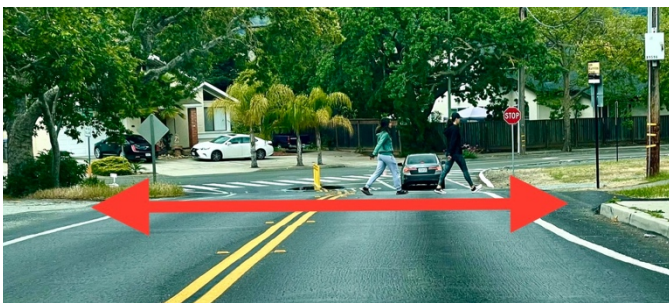
Much Better



We will continue to work with the City to see what longer-term improvements can be approved, including improving the trail crossing at the creek bridge (where perhaps cross walk markings may be considered)



A Big THANK YOU to our D10 Councilmember, Matt Mahan and his staff, for taking immediate and effective action to convince DOT to remove the barriers immediately.



And an equally Big THANK YOU to all of you who contacted DOT and/or the city about this issue and those registered your concerns using the on-line petition. It made a real difference in convincing DOT to quickly undo their changes.

CC&R Reminder

All Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R) documents are posted to our website, graystoneofalmaden.org. The CC&Rs were established in 1993 by the developer, Pinn Brothers Homes, and are valid for 35 years (2028) and are automatically extended for successive 10 year periods unless revoked.

Below is a summary of the key items:

- Only detached single family homes are permitted, not to exceed 2 1/2 stories and a garage for 3 cars.
- No buildings, fence, or wall nearer the street than the minimum building setback
- No temporary structures, trailers, tents, garage, barn or outbuilding shall be used at any time as a residence
- No animals, livestock or poultry shall be raised or kept on any lot except for dogs, cats or other household pets
- No trailer, boat, truck (other than a pickup) or inoperative vehicle shall be kept or stored on any lot unless enclosed in a garage

When you drive through many other neighborhoods, you see the consequences of a lack of CC&R's — boats in front yards with blue tarps, commercial trucks parked in driveways, chicken coops located in back yards and tents covering RV's. Our CC&R's are a real benefit to our home values and our daily living enjoyment.

Landscape Maintenance Program

The Association maintains five (5) different “open space” areas within our neighborhood boundaries. They are:

- Front entrance - Graystone sign and wall area
- Pfeiffer Ranch - block retaining wall area and hillside
- Pfeiffer Ranch - property between the trail and the street
- Stonehill - the hillside adjacent to the open space
- Boulder Mountain Way & Rocky Crest - the hillside adjacent to the open space



Financial Update

Income (\$100 dues x 116 members)	\$11,600
Expenses	
Landscape Maintenance	\$4800 (\$400 per month)
Landscape Project	5400 (tree trimming project)
Dumpster Day	\$1190 (rental fee)
Picnic	\$0 (not so nice!)
Legal	\$0 (very nice!)
Website	\$431
Technical support	\$776
Administration	\$461 (printing, stamps, PO Box, tax filing fees)
Total Expenses	\$13,058
Surplus/Deficit	\$1,458 (deficit)
Reserve fund	\$17,556 (current bank balances)

It has always been our goal to maintain a reserve fund to allow us to manage cash flow and meet unexpected or unusual expenses, such as taking care of fallen trees and legal expenses.

Our Association is in good financial shape!

Picnic & Dumpster Day

Next Big Weekend Save the Dates!

Dumpster Day
Saturday, September 24



Neighborhood Picnic
Sunday, September 25
Picnic starts at 3:30 pm
Dinner served at 5:00 pm