

Email Confirmation & Renewal Form

Below is a sticker with the information that we have on you in our database. Please take a moment to either confirm that the information is still correct or edit the information in the space below. Included with this newsletter is a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the form to us. If you are paying your dues by check, simply enclose your check for \$125 with this form.

Thank you.

Everything is correct _____

Edited Information (if needed)

Name(s) _____

Primary email address: _____

Secondary email address: _____

Graystone of Almaden

A Neighborhood Association
May 2024 Newsletter

Renewal and Email Confirmation

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Almost everything we do benefits ALL of us living in Graystone, not just members. Our monthly landscaping work and new efforts to improve home security benefit every one of our homeowners. Yet, only about 3/4 of our homeowners are members.

Our new fiscal year begins each May, so it is time to renew your membership or join our Association. Costs continue to increase, but for this year, we are holding our annual dues at **\$125 for the year**. More information on our budget and priorities is discussed in the President's letter on the next page. 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.

The cover page shows 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

Headline News

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Installed

This new capability will provide an additional level of safety and security for our neighborhood. This new service, along with our landscaping work, makes up most of our expenditures. More on all that we do is discussed below.

Our Association was formed 27 years ago in 1997 to focus on three important topics.

***Community Benefits — Having a structure in place to
organize and disseminate information and fund
neighborhood events.***

- Our Facebook group has continued to grow, and we now have 93 neighbors as members. It provides another way for us to communicate with one another. Just go to Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association to join and participate. It is an easy way to share information on safety issues, finding a babysitter, asking your neighbors a question, or just keeping up with current issues.
- It was great to have our face-to-face summer picnic in September. Our plans for 2024 will be scaled down to help fund the security camera but we will plan a new summer event on Sunday, September 8.
- Dumpster Day was, as always, a big hit. We ordered two dumpsters and pretty much filled them. And the amount of hazardous waste filled two pick-up trucks. We will hold this event on Saturday, September 7.

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

- As always, **landscaping expenses are our single largest budget item.** The annual bill for regular cleanup and trimming is \$7200.
- In most years, we complete a special project such as trimming street trees or fixing up the front entrance. Last year, we spent \$3600 trimming trees. This year we are using our funds to pay for the ALPR mentioned above.

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

- Almost two years ago we engaged with the city to improve safety at the intersection at Graystone Lane and Camden Ave and the trail crossing. We received City funding and project approval and expected to see the improvements completed in a timely manner. That did not happen. We have continued to push for construction with D-10 staff and we now understand that the improvements are scheduled to be completed this fall – more than 2 years after project approval. The project is listed on their website, but it is hard to find buried deep in a tab, so we hope this is true. So, maybe soon, we should see improved markings at the trail crossing and improvements in the intersection design to slow down traffic.
- We have continued our dialogue and relationship with the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA) 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.
- Malcolm Bordelon, a Board member, is our point person staying connected to our D-10 Councilperson. He has a separate report in this newsletter detailing the upcoming election given no candidate won a majority of votes in the primary election.
- We attend the Almaden Valley Community Association (AVCA) meetings to keep in contact with our local, state, and federal officials.

2024 Focus - *Keeping our activities impactful and easy to administer.*

- Our regular landscaping work which is now consuming about one-half of our annual budget
- Helping to address the neighborhood crime issues by working with SJPD and Flock Safety to install the ALPR camera at our front entrance to assist SJPD in gaining actionable information to help solve break-ins and other crimes.
- Holding the ever-popular dumpster day – September 7.
- Offering a summer get-together event – September 8.
- Explore how we might re-establish a revised “progressive dinner” event for adults.

In conclusion, we hope you appreciate the benefits of our **voluntary** neighborhood association. For only \$125 a year, we make a big difference. Our Board is a voluntary board, and we depend upon neighbors to raise their hand to help. If you are willing to explore how you can help, please contact me at scottwsherwood@gmail.com.

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

The “**Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association**” Facebook group page has been up and running for three years now. 93 of your neighbors have joined.

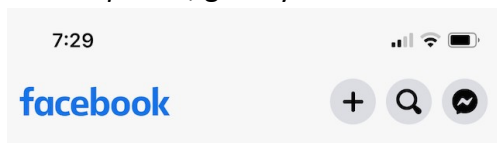


What do we talk about?

- We share recommendations on contractors.
- We help find reliable babysitters for our kids.
- We have our own buy and sell “market”.
- We help find owners of lost pets and enjoy talking about our own furry family members.
- We exchange information on situations such as recent fires and petty thefts.
- We provide the opportunity to meet candidates running for local offices such as mayor and our own council district 10.
- We are the rallying point to prompt action by our elected officials on matters of importance to the community.
- Most importantly, we extend a hand of welcome to new neighbors to our community.

What you do not see on the group page is the extraneous clutter of non-neighborhood chatter. Maybe you were once a Facebook user or never been because of your 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 respectful and welcoming, 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. If you are on a *smart phone*, go to your Facebook homepage. It should look like this along the top:



Click on the magnifying glass icon. In the

search window. Type “**Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association**”.

If you prefer to use a PC click on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/854908331926138/> Alternatively, log onto your FB account, click on the groups icon and type in the group name into the search window. Need more help? Send us an email with your questions.

San Jose District 10 Councilmember Up Coming Election

By Malcolm Bordelon

The upcoming election Nov. 5, 2024, will determine, among other offices, who will represent our community as San Jose District 10 Councilmember. George Casey and incumbent Arjun Batra defeated Lenka Wright in the nonpartisan primary for San Jose District 10 on March 5, 2024. Now Batra and Casey will face off in the general election Nov. 5th.

	Candidate	%	Votes
✓	<u>George Casey</u> (Nonpartisan)	38.6	8,805
✓	<u>Arjun Batra</u> (Nonpartisan)	36.6	8,354
	<u>Lenka Wright</u> (Nonpartisan)	24.7	5,640

Total Votes: 22,799

The Candidates:

- Arjun Batra

Councilmember Arjun Batra is running for District 10 after being appointed to the role in January 2023. Batra filled the open seat vacated by then-Councilmember Mahan when he won the mayoral election. Batra is a retired Intel executive and software engineer who forayed into government a few years ago after working for former Mayor Sam Liccardo’s office of technology and innovation. He is a more business-leaning voice on council—focused on increasing the city’s housing stock, improving public transit and addressing public safety, particularly around schools. He and his family have lived in the district for 40 years.

To learn more about Arjun Batra: <https://www.arjunbatrasj.com/>

- George Casey

George Casey currently serves as a representative on the planning commission. He is a corporate lawyer, with master’s degrees in urban planning from San Jose State and Real Estate from UC Berkeley. Casey has indicated his priorities are public safety and homelessness. He said housing is the remedy to many of San Jose’s issues and wants to provide incentives such as down payment assistance or rent-to-own policies for police officers and city employees so they can live where they work. Casey has been endorsed by the police officers’ association and Mayor Matt Mahan.

To learn more about George Casey: <https://caseyforchange.com/>

The business-friendly Silicon Valley Biz PAC offered a dual endorsement of Casey and Batra.

On a couple of key issues – these candidates had the following to say:

On homelessness and Measure E:

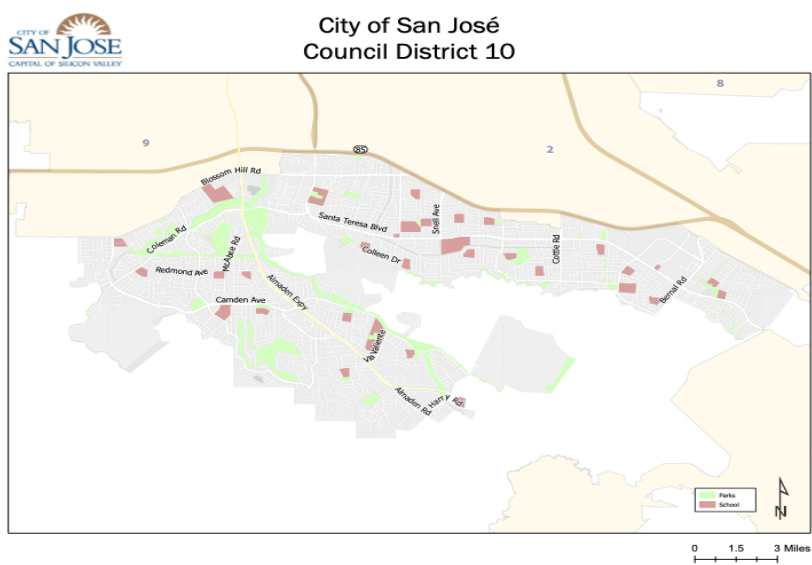
- **Batra:** Prioritizes interim housing, because the city can't wait for the time it takes to develop longer-term housing "when we have 4,000 people sitting unsheltered," he said.
- **Casey:** "You can't solve homelessness with the million-dollar-a-unit housing, it takes too long. We need the quicker-build homes."

On public safety:

- **Casey:** Advocates repealing Prop 47. "A state-level law is preventing us from policing and dealing with retail theft." To help retain more cops, he advocates creating a down-payment assistance program.
- **Batra:** In addition to attempting to fill vacancies in the police department, wants to invest in more technology to fight retail theft.

District 10

As of February 11, 2022, San José has new Council District boundaries. The boundaries changed due to redistricting – the required process of redrawing the political boundaries for elective offices. This process takes place once every ten years, after the U.S. Census, with a goal of equalizing population among districts. A northeast section of District 10 moved into District 2 and most neighborhoods between Highway 85 and Santa Teresa County Park shifted from District 2 into District 10. The map below represents the current District 10.



Keeping Our Neighborhood Safe

The Camera Was Installed on April 26th.

By Joe Del Rio





As you are aware, we have experienced home break-ins and personal property thefts right here in Graystone. While we frequently have some information, such as home security camera video of those crimes, these cameras do not capture sufficient actionable information to help the San Jose Police Department (SJPD) to fully investigate those crimes. Many times, someone has a video of the person or of the vehicle, but no specific identifying information. After discussing this with the SJPD, we have approved the installation of an automated license plate reader (ALPR) at the entrance/exit of our neighborhood. You received a letter on this decision a few months ago.

What is an automated license plate reader (ALPR)? An ALPR takes a snapshot of each car entering and exiting on Pfeiffer Ranch Road, recording the license plate number as well as the make, model and color and places a time stamp on each photo. No facial recognition technology is used. If the license plate matches that of a stolen vehicle or a vehicle associated with a previous crime or Amber Alert, SJPD is automatically notified. If a crime is reported to SJPD by one of our neighbors, then SJPD (not us) can search the photo database to identify which vehicles entered and exited our neighborhood at the time of the crime. ALPRs are the missing link tying home video information to a specific actionable lead that could solve the crime. Finally, as a neighbor, you can opt out of the camera recording your car. Note: we will provide details soon on how you can request to opt out.

In a recent front-page article, the Mercury News reported the city of Morgan Hill implemented a network of 50 ALPR cameras and has reported many arrests and a marked drop in some property crimes. SJPD has now installed 235 of these cameras to try to replicate this success. In a more recent Mercury News article, the city now plans to install 500 cameras by summer. The recent article states that the ALPR technology has helped the city arrest

around 200 suspects and recover \$2 million worth of stolen vehicles. SJPD has confirmed that they will seamlessly add our camera to their network.

The cost for us to install and operate an ALPR is approximately \$3000 a year. The ALPR is solar powered and connects to the cloud via a cell connection. Data collected is only stored for 30 days unless the information is being used in an on-going SJPD investigation. **To be clear, no one outside of SJPD can access this data.**

Your Board voted to install the ALPR, for a one-year trial, utilizing the services of Flock Safety (flocksafety.com), the same provider for both San Jose and Morgan Hill. After several months of discussion and work with Flock Safety and the city, we were finally able to get a permit to put the camera on a light post. As noted earlier, it was installed late last month.

CC&R Reminder

This past year the Association has been quite active in reminding our neighbors of our CC&R restrictions. Our role in all situations is to help educate our neighbors to these restrictions when they are brought to our attention by nearby neighbors. We, the Association Board, do not proactively look for potential violations. We listen to neighbors who have a concern and then approach the “offending” neighbor to discuss the issue. We are pleased to say that we received a 100% positive response and resolution of all issues that were brought to our attention. Neighbors being good neighbors is alive and well in Graystone.

All Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R) documents are posted to our website, graystoneofalmden.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.

Landscape Maintenance Program

The Association maintains five (5) different “open space” areas within our neighborhood boundaries for \$600 a month. 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



Just a couple of weeks ago, our landscaper did a major clean up. Here are a few pictures of the work.



Financial Update

Income (\$125 dues x 121 members) **\$15,125**

Note: Our membership is at an all-time high!)

Expenses

Landscape Maintenance	7200	(\$600 per month)
Dumpster Day	1320	(rental fee)
Picnic	5636	(net; catering, tables & chairs, rental truck)
Flock Safety (camera)	2650*	
Website	41	
Technical support	586	
Administration	200	(printing, stamps, PO Box, tax filing fees)
Tree trimming project	3600	

Total Expenses **\$21,233**

Surplus/Deficit **\$ 6,108 (deficit)**

Reserve fund **\$ 7,682 (current bank balances)**

* The payment to Flock Safety was for a one-year subscription that will cover the 2024 – 2025 fiscal year. The expense is listed in these expenses as we have spent the cash even though the service term did not start until April 26.

It has always our goal to maintain a reserve fund to allow us to manage cash flow and meet unexpected or unusual expenses. While we spent over \$21,000 last year and incurred a deficit for the year, we do not plan to spend at that level this year. As we have noted, the ALPR is really a FY 2024 expense, and we will reduce our spending on the summer event and modulate discretionary expenses such as tree trimming to spend within our means.

Our Association is in good financial shape with a reasonable reserve fund. If we could gain 20 new members, and we have 36 neighbors who are not members, we would receive an extra \$2500 annually.

Summer Social Event & Dumpster Day

Dumpster Day
Saturday, September 7



Summer Social Event
Sunday, September 8
5:00 pm until 8:00 pm