

Hiddenbrooke TIMES

August 2020



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Property Owners
Association, Inc.

UPCOMING HPOA BOARD MEETINGS

Third Wednesday of the month

- September 16 at 7:30pm
- October 21 at 7:30 pm

HARC MEETINGS

7:00 pm

Second Wednesday of the month

All meetings are currently held
via Teleconference due to Corona

Associations in Hiddenbrooke

**Hiddenbrooke Property
Owners Assn - Master
CC&Rs**

Fairway Villas HOA
Bridgeport, 925.824.2888

Reflections HOA
Helsing Group, 800.443.5746

Village HOA
Summit Properties, 707.448.8906,
ext. 12

Summit HOA
Boardwalk Invest., 925.937.4378

CC&R Complaints: Complaints should be submitted using the complaint form on the Hiddenbrooke website under Property Owners and CC&R information. You will need to include on this form a description of the complaint, the address, your contact information. You may also attach and submit pictures of the violation. Complaints about a home in the Village, Villas, Reflections or Summit should FIRST be submitted to their respective HOA. Emails will be forwarded to: CC&R Manager, Liaison Directors and the President.

President's Message

I am pleased and honored to have been elected by the Board to serve as President for the next year. During this next year we will continue to work on various initiatives that have been in process for a while: the Parkway re-landscaping project (see below), reducing our HPOA costs, and being more effective in obtaining compliance with the CC&Rs (the main reason HPOA was created). The past year has seen major efforts completed with updating our governing documents and with the transitioning to a new way of working where the Board is no longer under the State's costly and complex Davis Stirling laws. We have set aside a budget to conduct more social events, but that will depend on progress with controlling the coronavirus and having some volunteers from the community who want to take a lead and help organize them.

After sending out candidate nomination forms in May, we did not have any volunteers, so two of our outgoing Board members ran again for the new 5-member Board (reduced from 7). In this situation, the Bylaws allow the Board to appoint new Directors by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of vacant positions. The Board then elected new officers for next year as shown below:

President: Mike Nisperos (term ends in 2021)

Vice President: Chris Brittle (term ends in 2021)

Secretary: Jagdip Singh (term ends in 2022)

Treasurer: Dustin Bertolucci (term ends in 2021)

At Large Board Member: James Campagna (term ends in 2022)

On July 15 we had our latest Annual Meeting for members. Because of COVID-19, we have not been able to have in-person meetings since March, so the Annual Meeting was conducted via Zoom. If you would like to see the Summary of what the Board has been up to over the past year, it is still posted on the Hiddenbrooke website www.hiddenbrookeonline.org in the Announcement Section for viewing. To keep informed about future HPOA Board meetings, you can also find the Agendas on the Hiddenbrooke website and the meetings are always announced ahead of time on the community Message Board and via email. Over 600 owners have signed up for email notifications, which includes receiving the Agendas, so we encourage you to sign up if you have not done so already [please click here](#). Signing up for email notifications helps us keep a lid on member dues.

I have to say how lucky my wife (Eleanor) and I feel to be part of this community as we are relatively recent members. I'd also like to personally welcome our 60 new HPOA members who purchased homes in Hiddenbrooke over the last year. It is so impressive to see neighbors helping neighbors during our ongoing health crisis, people out walking and getting exercise, and everyone wearing a mask and social distancing. I look forward to meeting many of you over the next year and discussing how we can make Hiddenbrooke an even better place to live.

Stay healthy and safe.

Mike Nisperos, President

SAFETY AND SECURITY IN HIDDENBROOKE

By Ed Medina

Hello and Welcome to all our community members. Let me start with a few safety tips and reminders that I mentioned at our HPOA Annual Meeting:

- To keep your vehicles safe from theft, please keep them locked or better, put them safely in the garage.
- To keep your mail safe from theft, get a locking mailbox.
- To keep you and your home safe, please install a camera system on and around your home, minimally on the front of your house. Also, think of keeping a front porch light on at night.
- And, to keep our community as safe as possible, please create or join a Neighborhood Watch group (information can be found on Nextdoor Hiddenbrooke).

Recently there was a hosted meeting at the Hiddenbrooke Park to discuss various security and security-related issues. There have been continuing questions about what our Security Guards can and cannot do, so let me try to clear that up. Our Security Guards are eyes and ears only. They are there to observe and to notify the local emergency services if needed. Our guards ARE NOT police officers. They cannot and should not involve themselves in a crisis. We all can call 9-1-1 if necessary and we should remember that fact.

While we are talking about our security guards, this was the year that the three-year contract with our security company expired. Under the new 20-year agreement between the City and HPOA, we had to follow a rigorous and detailed competitive bidding process culminating with the City Council approving our new contract in May. Six firms submitted proposals to HPOA, and after evaluation of all six the Board awarded the new contract to our current security company, Allied Universal. After that, the Board and I set up a conference call with Allied Universal to discuss what we might do differently and what improvements we could make including past ideas from the community.



New Post Orders should be coming soon incorporating some of our suggestions. Suggestions made towards the new Post Orders include one less patrol per shift allowing for more time spent at the Welcome Center and moving the guard station outside with a chair and umbrella during better weather, allowing for a more visible presence.

Some of you may still have the old (discontinued) phone number for Security. If you need to call Security, **the correct number is 707- 694-1530** and all calls are forwarded to the Guards if they are out on patrol.

With the fire season already off to a dangerous start, everyone should be thinking about how to prepare for a possible emergency. As a reminder, HPOA has prepared a Disaster Preparedness Plan which is on the [Hiddenbrooke website](#). Also, as a reminder, should there be a need to evacuate the community, the Police, and Fire departments have identified the Hiddenbrooke Parkway as the main evacuation route and would only allow the use of St John's Mine Rd. under some very unusual circumstance and only with their approval and coordination.

The other topic on everyone's mind is undoubtedly will there be another PG&E power shutoff during an extreme wind/fire event. It is hard to know whether this will occur, but after last year's experience, many of us have become more prepared by purchasing portable generators or installing backup battery storage systems. These do not need approval by HPOA, but you are encouraged to use the quietest portable generators so as not to disturb your neighbors.

Finances and Homeowner Dues

Overall this was a better year financially (fiscal year ending June 30) as HPOA has taken advantage of some of the cost-saving benefits of not being under the California Civil Code Section known as the State Davis Stirling Act which governs Common Interest Developments (most other HOAs).

However, the income we take in is still less than our expenditures, so to balance the budget for this coming year the dues have been set at \$85. The Annual Financial Review report is prepared in September and will be posted on the Hiddenbrooke website once available.

We appreciate everyone who paid their homeowner dues by the end of July deadline (73% of you), as this is the key to managing HPOA's financial commitments throughout the remainder of the year. As a friendly reminder, if there are accumulated fines from uncorrected CC&R violations or several years of unpaid dues, the Board may send homes to Collection for recovery and that can add significantly to the amount a homeowner will owe. Typical Collection Agency fees are around \$500, and the fee for our management company to prepare an account for Collection will add another \$150. These are avoidable costs, and we will always work with homeowners to pay down any balance before sending a home to Collection.



CC&R Corner

Most of the important work HPOA does – ensuring compliance with the Hiddenbrooke Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) -- goes largely unnoticed, yet this is HPOA's Job # 1.

When a violation is noted from one of our management company's monthly inspection drives, a Courtesy Letter is sent out and if the condition is not corrected after a reasonable period of time, typically 30 days, an owner may be requested to attend a Hearing in Closed Session. An updated Fine Schedule for CC&R violations was adopted in May to help foster greater compliance. It includes an escalating schedule of monthly fines but also a new provision to forgive any fines if a violation is corrected within 3 months of the first Hearing where a fine is imposed. If there are questions about why a letter was sent, owners can contact OMNI to find out more information. If it comes to the need for a Hearing, please remember that the Board can only talk to owners; tenants are not able to negotiate fines that may be assessed to owners.



From time to time, we receive questions about the number and types of violations that are occurring in the community, and the table below summarizes that information from September of last year until current:

Type of Violation and Provision from CC&Rs	# of violations
Animal - Barking Dog	1
Work done without HARC approval	36
Fence repairs needed	10
Holiday décor not taken down	20
Landscape maintenance	134
House maintenance - painting needed	56
Debris or personal items left out, including Sports Apparatus	21
Parking Issues	23
Illegal short term rentals (e.g., Airbnb/Vrbo)	4
Trailers or Boats in Driveway	12
Trash can(s) left out	95
Severe trimming of a City Street Tree	21
Vehicles with expired registration	11
Unallowed window covering materials	11



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Another reminder, that continues to be needed on a regular basis, is that most all types of improvements to the exterior of your home and yard should be submitted to the Hiddenbrooke Architectural Review Committee (HARC) for approval prior to starting work. This can be a gazebo, patio, front or back yard landscaping, new hardscape, repainting with changes to exterior colors, solar installations, etc. Some minor

projects may not need to be submitted to HARC for review and can be approved by the HARC Chair.

There are a few additional areas that the Board is starting to look at more closely as a result of the passage of the new CC&Rs:

House Paint

After years of weather (rain and sun) many homes need to have their paint refreshed as part of the requirement to keep homes in a good condition and state of repair. Courtesy Letters have recently been sent to the homes deemed to be in the most need of painting. Summer months are always an excellent time to get the painting done.

Street Trees

A new CC&R was added to try to better protect our Street Trees (aka "City" Street Trees), based on poor maintenance practices that have been observed in various parts of the community. Owners are cautioned not to "top" or otherwise "severely" trim a Street Tree in a manner that will permanently alter their natural structure. With larger trees, a professional tree maintenance company is recommended for trimming and there are several good ones to choose from in our area. When it comes to other mature trees in a yard, please also remember that HARC approval is needed for any removal (a requirement in both the old and new CC&Rs). Trees that are approved for removal should also have their stumps removed.

Lastly, we know that the COVID crisis is causing stress for a number of families. In particular we are noticing more brown, partially dead, and dead lawns throughout the community, which affects the overall appearance of our neighborhoods. We are asking everyone to do their best to keep up their home and yard, and if there are extenuating issues with compliance, owners can always contact our management company.

Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District Matters

Members: Byrne Conley (Chair), Doug Link, Jen Pollard, Bob Schussel, Kathy Wildermuth, and Chris Brittle (HPOA Board Liaison).

The HMD Advisory Committee continues to work on a number of efforts with the City of Vallejo to maintain and improve our community landscaping so that it is attractive and well maintained. The Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District (HMD) is one of 26 Landscape Districts in the City, thus the City resources are spread thin. Maintenance of various areas has suffered from staff turnover and work slowdowns due to the coronavirus, causing key projects to be delayed.

Starting July 1, the City renewed a one-year contract with Landcare for landscape maintenance and the Committee is actively pushing the City's Senior Landscape Inspector to do better, especially in the area of weed abatement with the fire season underway. All the HMD-maintained firebreaks have been completed according to the Fire Code and will be monitored for possible additional work.

But also, a little good news...

Working with the City Landscape Maintenance District (part of the Public Works Department) via numerous teleconference calls since the first of the year, we're anticipating there should be better progress with re-landscaping the Parkway. The City will re-classify this project as a capital improvement project which will allow all the remaining work to be completed in one project, rather than in phases as was the past plan. The Sycamore trees will stay and all the barren areas (with the white bubblers) will be filled in with new plant material. The plant material may be different from the old plants due to State-mandated water conservation and drought requirements. The irrigation system has been an ongoing issue, which hindered the previous phased infill efforts. Work has started on an irrigation audit that will define the capabilities of the old system and could lead to replacement with new more water-

efficient systems.

Additional efforts include:

- the Waterfall will receive more plants along the left side that is barren, and more plants will be installed opposite it on the right side behind the grassy area to better screen the concrete utility structure.
- the large white arbor up from the Entrance will be repaired (it is rotted) along with the up-lighting of the monument
- the City will bid out the much needed and long-delayed repair work for the inside of Welcome Center (a City building).



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Lastly, we extend our thanks to Birgit Rickert for hanging in there as Chair of this Committee for many years, despite the constant frustrations. Byrne Conley is the new Chair, assisted by Douglas Link and the other members of the Advisory Committee.

If you would like to work on the Committee, new volunteers are always welcome.

Hiddenbrooke Architectural Review Committee (HARC)

Members: Marcelline Mahern (Chair), Kurt Eleam, Christine Fitzgerald, Troy Killorn, Ernest Stockinger, and Chris Brittle (Alternate, HPOA Board Liaison).

The Committee has reviewed over 100 applications during the past year for a variety of home improvement projects from landscape improvements, to repainting, to tree removals/replacements, to solar projects. When submitting plans for front and back yard landscape improvements, please review the *Design Guidelines* so you know what is approvable, including the types of plants and trees.

A number of homes have submitted applications for repainting their home a different color, with many desiring more modern colors. To help homeowners with picking new more modern colors, HARC worked with Kelly Moore Paints to develop suggestions for a palette of new colors that would fit in with our old color schemes. This new palette can be found on the Hiddenbrooke website [Home Page](#). Even if you are

repainting your home the same color, please submit the colors to HARC for our records.

Solar applications are another frequent review item. While the best location for solar panels for energy production is determined by the solar installers, HARC does have requirements for concealing electrical wiring and painting any visible conduits and inverter boxes the same color as the house or roof.

Last year HARC reviewed one plan for a new Custom Home but has reviewed and approved over 6 plans in the past. However, none of these homes have come to fruition to date for various reasons.

Finally, HARC has not received any applications for Accessory Dwelling Units, a major concern in the community awhile back. If an application is received at some point in the future, there are specific requirements that will come into play as a result of the Board's Rules and the new CC&Rs.

City of Vallejo

Your property tax bill for next year will remain the same for two of the "extra" taxes—the amount paid for the Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District and the amount for the Hiddenbrooke Improvement District Bond (HID Series A bond; note some homes do not have to pay the full amount for the HID Bond due to developer buy-downs). Because the HID bond was refinanced in 2004, the amount the City pays in debt service is lower than the amount collected from Hiddenbrooke homeowners, creating a surplus.

Starting in FY 2011 HPOA has successfully submitted annual requests to the City to lower the HID tax and to date has saved Hiddenbrooke taxpayers \$3.25 million. The surplus has been useful as it has been the source of

money for several major community-wide street repair projects in Hiddenbrooke, the solar radar speed signs, and a few other projects for which there would have been no other money available. It will also be the source of funds for the Hiddenbrooke Parkway re-landscaping project (above).

Another City effort, the Roundabout project at the I-80 freeway interchange, continues to move forward albeit at what seems to be a very slow pace. At the end of the year, the City and their Consultants will submit a large amount of information and required studies to Caltrans for their official review. The Caltrans review will take about a year and then the project can go out to bid. The estimated completion is early 2024.

Golf Course for Sale

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As most everyone probably knows, the Hiddenbrooke Golf Course has been listed for sale by the current owner. According to the CBRE broker, there have been several tentative offers that are being reviewed. As a precaution, HPOA has had exploratory discussions with the City about what could happen if no sale occurs with the idea that the City might be a possible owner as a last resort. Obviously, the Golf Club is a vital element of our community, and it is essential that there be a way to keep it open.

Hiddenbrooke Real Estate Trends

There were 60 homes sold in Hiddenbrooke this past 12 months, meaning about 5% of our homes turned over to new owners. Home prices have held steady increasing about 1% for the last year (currently selling around \$280-\$285 per square foot). The pandemic has decreased the volume of properties sold while a lack of inventory and a sharp decline in interest rates are keeping property values relatively

strong. One good trend to note: the coronavirus has shown the potential for working at home for many jobs, making the Bay Area suburbs more attractive compared to having to pay for expensive houses in the central Bay Area that are currently closer to the jobs.

Source: Tim Moore, REX Homes



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS



In this section, we wish to acknowledge those who devote their time and skills to making Hiddenbrooke a special, well-maintained, safe, and beautiful community. If you have considered helping out, please contact us. It's work but it is also rewarding, and you will get to know some wonderful neighbors in the process. The Board is the key organizing entity that makes all the other parts work and is in need of energetic, community-oriented members.

HIDDENBROOK COMMITTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (HARC)

Marcelline Mahern, Chair

MAINTENANCE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HMD)

Byrne Conley, Chair

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOND COMMITTEE

Byrne Conley, Chair

WELCOME CENTER MANAGER

Ed Medina

WELCOME COMMITTEE

Chris Anthony & Barbara Schwenk

OTHER

Message Board: Chris and Kathleen Brittle

Doggy Bags: Randy Foo and John Estes

Trash Picker Uppers: Many, and thank you!

Newsletter and Website Updates:

Birgit Rickert, Results Marketing

Key Telephone Numbers

Welcome Center/Security 707.694.1530

HPOA Management Company (OMNI)
916.965.8964

Hiddenbrooke Golf Club 707.558.0330

HMD/Water Leaks 707.553.7219

Street Lights Out 707.648.5235

County Animal Control (Vallejo) 707.784.4733

Cows Out (Five Dot Ranch / East & North Side) 707.224.5550

Cows Out (Azevedo Ranch / West & South Side) 707.695.0650

HB Plaza Retail Center Numbers

Ashmun Realty 707.333.3258

JD Nails Spa & Salon 707.644.6488 &
510.206.6453

J&O's Market & Deli 707.534.1674

The Loft Thai Fusion 707.647.2072

Pike Fitness 707.413.7453

Michael Warring Restaurant 707.655.4808