



~ photo by Bruce Bender ~

From the President

Let's talk about assessments . . .

We all know that if income is *fixed and costs increase*, *cutbacks* on spending are required to "*make ends meet*". That's the situation the Association has had to face in order to keep our assessment low.

Since 2012, our assessment has been \$105 monthly. However, from January 2012 through October 2021, the Consumer Price Index (All Urban Consumers) rose 22%. While not necessarily the best measure of our increased cost environment, this means that *goods and services that cost \$1.00 in 2012 cost \$1.22 today!*

If our assessment had kept pace with inflation, it would be \$128 now, not \$105. We would have \$677,000 in assessment revenue this year, not \$557,000. In other words, *we would have had \$120,000 more to maintain our community properly.*

A low assessment – a laudable goal in some respects – means we've deferred maintenance and reduced staffing. We see the evidence – deteriorating cul-de-sac and pathway pavement; an aging, problem-plagued common area irrigation system; outdated, peeling and fading signage; malfunctioning pathway lighting; inadequate grounds maintenance; 442 water submeters showing their age; limited grounds staff; part-time management; and so forth.

To maintain our quality of life, keep Park Plazas a "destination" for those looking for homes and preserve property values we must reverse this trend.

The Finance Committee will propose a budget to the Board at the December 22nd meeting. This budget will be balanced as far as Operating Fund is concerned but with a \$72,000 deficit in the Reserve Fund. This deficit results from budgeting \$100,000 to replace our 36 cul-de-sac signs – purely an estimate and not an approved project at this point. The Committee will recommend increasing the assessment \$10 in 2022 to balance our Operating Fund budget, and evaluate additional \$10 increases in 2023 and 2024 to bolster the Reserve Fund.

Of course, the Board makes the final decision and may disagree with the Committee's proposals. Nevertheless, I want to give everyone a "heads-up" so that no one is caught by surprise if the assessment goes up in January.

As I discussed in the October *Park Plazas News*, our Reserve Fund exists to repair, restore and replace capital assets. The company doing our first professional Reserve Study believes the balance is too low and additional assessments should be earmarked for the fund. However, about 75% of fund expenditures relate to paving projects. Our longstanding paving contractor differs with the Study in terms of *what needs to be done, at what cost and when*. Thus, we plan a thorough review of the Reserve Fund requirements for paving before accepting all of its findings. At this point, the Committee believes that this further review will result in revisions to the Study that demonstrate that our Reserve Fund is more well-funded than projected, despite the anticipated deficit in 2022.

The Committee will recommend engaging professionals for two additional studies in 2022. First, to map the common area irrigation system, evaluate its condition, and make recommendations to enhance its functionality and efficiency. Second, to work with the Landscape Committee's consultant concerning how to upgrade our entrance signs and landscaping at the Rodeo Road and Camino Carlos Rey entryways (primary influences in people viewing Park Plazas as a well-maintained community and a wonderful place to live), and to develop a long-term landscape plan.

The Committee feels that these studies are important step to take before accepting the Landscape Committee's request that the irrigation system be replaced and incorporating the entrance monumentation upgrade into the Sign Study Group's set of recommendations.

As always, if you have questions, comments or concerns, email them to me at President@ParkPlazas.org. Be safe.

Tom Carr, President

Manager's Report

- **Transition to TOPS**, our HOA management software, continues to progress according to plan. The Association will mirror the accounting function with that from WestGate for the month of December.
- An **invitation to register** for our updated website will be emailed and placed in mail slots during the month of December. A printed notice will be mailed as well. This will be a perfect time to review your system profile and make updates if needed.
- **Resurfacing** some of the walking paths near Molino, Lirio and Campanilla cul-de-sacs is underway and will be completed the first week of December.
- Our electrician continues to work on various **outdoor lighting issues** to locate and repair the electrical shorts that seem to plague the system.



- From **reinforcing railroad-tie retaining walls** to **cleaning out over-grown common area** locations between houses, Oscar and Arturo continue to tackle a variety of projects with enthusiasm and a commitment to enhancing the look and feel of Park Plazas. They recently **scraped and painted** the backs of peeling signs.

Richard White

CommunityManager@ParkPlazas.org

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Board Notes

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held online on Wednesday, November 17th. Actions taken were the following:

The President confirmed the appointments of:

- ▶ Architectural Control Committee – **Richard Becker, Dick Lueck, and Jane Steinberg**
- ▶ Communications Committee – **Marianne Murray and Laurie Glaze**
- ▶ Finance Committee – **Chris Bartsch and Peter Whitman**

The President appointed the Nominating Committee for the 2022 Annual Meeting, consisting of Chair **Bruce Bender** and members **Deidre Stiles, Laurie Glaze and Judy Carr**, a group of Association members who had expressed an interest in serving on the Committee.

Our Community Manager has prepared a proposed budget for 2022. However, as a result of considerable feedback from Directors concerning the issues presented, it was agreed to postpone consideration of the budget until the December 22nd regular meeting. This delay will allow time for the Finance Committee to further examine the necessary level of expenditures from the reserve fund during 2022.



Landscape Committee - Wrapping It Up

The fire mitigation work has been completed for this season. And the back-up rake brigade has also completed their work for the season. We are grateful that the board voted to complete this work in one year versus spreading it out over three years.

The pollinator plants are dormant for the winter. With a little watering during the winter, we hope to see them all come alive in the spring.

Oscar and Arturo have been busy clearing old brush from the common areas as well as doing extensive pruning of dead branches in the common areas and along walking paths.

The drought still has us in its grip.

Nora Haskins
Chair, Landscape Committee

New Dog Walkers in Park Plazas

Numerous new residents have moved to Park Plazas in the past several months and we've noticed new dog walkers and new dog trainers ... and a marked increase in dog waste on our walking paths. Please help keep Park Plazas clean by picking up after your dogs with the supplied Mutt Mitts and tossing them in the trash cans.



Beth Brock
Chair, Dog Park Committee

New Email Addresses

With PPCSA's migration to new HOA management software, email addresses associated with ParkPlazas.org became available. You can contact the following people at their new email addresses:

Cathy Kosak, Park Plazas Office Manager – OfficeManager@parkplazas.org

Tom Carr, PPCSA Board President – President@parkplazas.org

Richard White, Park Plazas Community Manager – CommunityManager@parkplazas.org

Bruce Bender, Chair - Architectural Control Committee – ACC@parkplazas.org

Variable Sewer Charge

Check for water leaks now to ensure an accurate rate.

On your monthly billing statement from PPCSA, you'll see a line item – “Your variable sewer charge”. This is a 12-month fixed charge from the City of Santa Fe based on your average monthly water consumption during December, January and February, the months when we use the least amount of water for irrigation.

This month is the perfect time to take a look at your meter to ensure your next variable sewer charge is based on your actual water use and does not include water from leaking toilets and dripping faucets.

There are a couple of ways to check if you have a leak:

#1 – Check the water meter in your house. In almost all cases, they are located in the same area as your hot water heater and furnace. Meters will have either an analog or digital display.

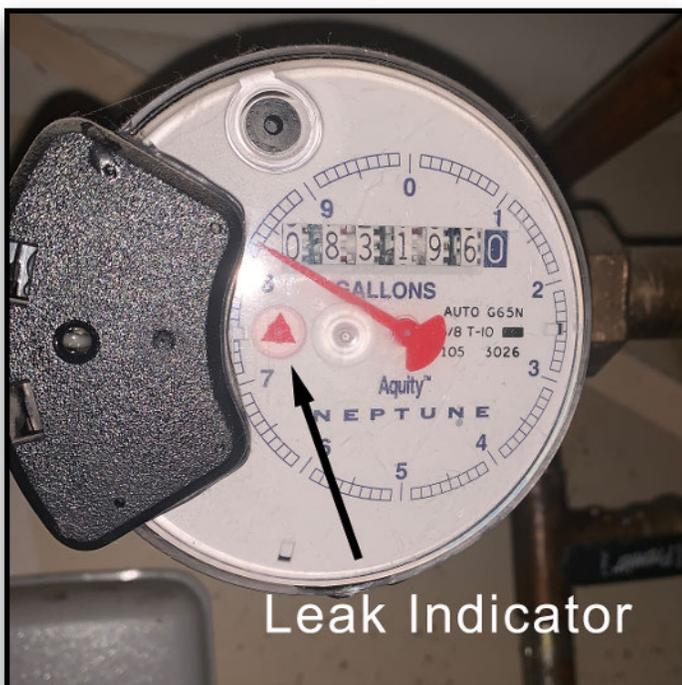
The **analog display** (see below, left) has a little red triangle just below the left-most digit of the meter reading numbers. If you turn on a faucet or flush the toilet and check the triangle while the water is flowing, you will see it spinning. Once the faucet is off or the toilet stops flowing, the triangle stops spinning. If you have a toilet with a leaky flap the triangle will spin; it will spin slowly or quickly depending on the flow.

The **digital display** (see below, right) is turned off by design. Open the cover of the meter and activate the LCD display by shining a flashlight on the solar panel on the display for at least 5 seconds. A faucet icon on the LCD indicates a leak. If you cannot see the icon, there is no leak. If the icon is flashing, the leak is intermittent. If it's on continuously, the leak is continuous. There is also a Flow/Leak indicator (two arrows pointing in opposite directions). ON indicates water is in use. OFF indicates water is not in use. FLASHING indicates water is running slowly.

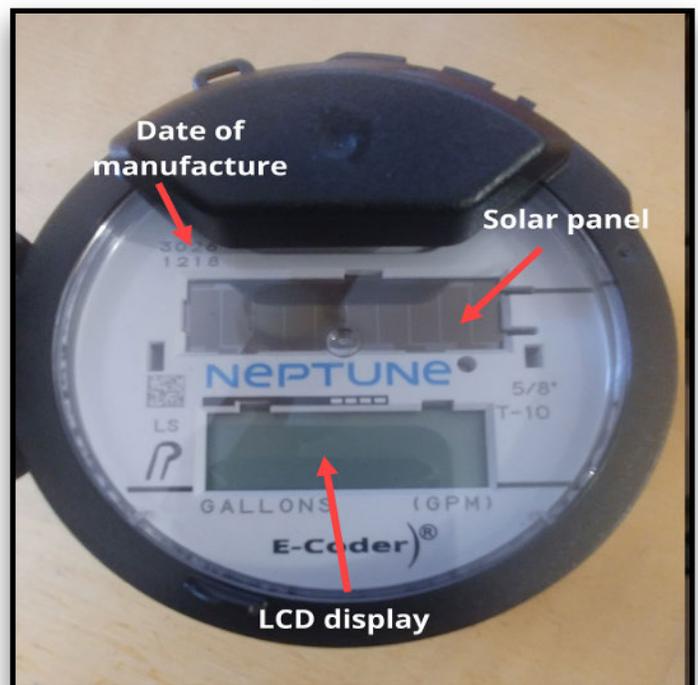
#2 – Another tell-tale sign of a leak is the sound of running water. Take a moment and listen at a sink, toilet or other faucet. Or, with a leaking toilet, but you may see little tiny ripples of water in the toilet bowl.

If you have any questions about how to read your meter, please contact the Park Plazas Office: (505) 471-8809, or by email - CommunityManager@parkplazas.org.

Analog



Digital



NEW DESIGNS for CUL-de-SAC SIGNS

ArtMan Productions has been retained as consultant for new design concepts for the updated Park Plazas cul-de-sac signs. In December, Peter Tengler of ArtMan will present several graphic design ideas as well as propose materials and installation techniques to the Sign Replacement Group, Board President **Tom Carr**, and Community Manager **Richard White**. ArtMan will also prepare life-sized mock-ups to help visualize the concepts.

Check out a gallery of ArtMan Productions designs and installations at <https://artmanproductions.com/our-works>.

NOMINATIONS for BOARD of DIRECTORS

Terms for several members of the PPCSA Board of Directors will be ending in March leaving openings on the Board. A Nominating Committee will interview candidates interested in running for a position on the Board.

Three residents volunteered to serve on the committee – **Judy Carr, Laurie Glaze, and Deirdre Stiles**. PPCSA Board Vice President **Bruce Bender** will act as Chair.

The election of new Directors will take place at the Annual Membership Meeting in March. Anyone interested in running should contact **Bruce Bender** – ACC@parkplazas.org.

PPCSA is made up of a volunteer Board of Directors and dozens of volunteers from the community who form the various Committees and Study Groups. In 2021, these resident have contributed countless hours to help create the wonderful neighborhood we live in. When you see them, please thank them for all their hard work!

Happy Holidays
from PPCSA

December Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 22
6:30 PM

~ virtual, via Webex ~

(Community input is invited
at the beginning and end of the meeting.)

Details are posted at www.ParkPlazas.org.

PARK PLAZAS COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

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BOARD of DIRECTORS

Tom Carr, President
Bruce Bender, VP
Chris Bartsch, Treasurer
Beth Brock
Mary Dolman
Nora Haskins
Bob Jacob
Peter Whitman

Richard White, Manager/Secretary
Cathy Kosak, Office Manager

Kathy Bell Hargrave, PPN Editor