

The Whispers

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS, INC. FOR THE WHISPERING OAKS HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

WOHA Members Vote to Pursue Community Covenant Ballot

Scores of WOHA member-households, convened on Sunday, 17 September, mainly to debate seven proposed changes to the Whispering Oaks Community Covenants. Those original simple rules were installed by the community builders decades ago and apply to all properties regardless of HOA membership status. It was an extraordinarily productive Annual Meeting.



Board members Adele Barnett, January Smith, and Janis Witt at the check-in.

In brief fashion, the routine business of the organization was conducted: approving the minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting, approving the Treasurer's report, and conducting board elections. Several current Directors were re-elected (Adele Barnett, Peter Lund, Evita Morín, Ami Sewell) and will be joined by several new ones (Corey Dilley, Juan Maldonado, Michael Nash, Kennedy Asel).

The group then approved minor revisions to its By-Laws, including realignment of its fiscal to calendar-year timing. The date of the annual meeting was also modified to fall, in subsequent years, in January. As a result, the group isn't expected to formally reconvene until January 2025.

But the majority of the meeting was allocated to discussing potential changes to the Community Covenants that have long been recommended by community leaders. Several common-sense amendments were recommended by the Board and most in attendance were clearly glad to see action being taken after years of deliberations.

WOHA President Peter Lund first explained that any amendments would need to be approved by the majority

(Continued on page 3)

Last Call for 2024 WOHA Memberships

The annual WOHA membership drive is drawing to a close but it's most certainly not too late to do your part. Dues typically provide 80% of the operating budget and pay for important services which protect everyone's property values and enhance the quality of life we all share.

Membership in the past year exceeded 50% as residents rallied behind key initiative, such as on-going renovation of the community entrances and proposed revisions to the Community Covenants on hot-button concerns, such as short term rental properties.

WOHA spent nearly \$70,000 during the last fiscal year. See inset chart for allocation of funds. But spending doesn't tell the whole story to justify your support. Volunteers spend countless hours advocating for our neighborhood, which pays off handsomely in city-funded improvement projects and governmental protections which are easy to overlook.

Membership dues for 2024 will remain just \$10 a month which, despite inflation haven't increased in seven years. That says a lot about how tightly the Board manages contributions from civic-minded neighbors. Please visit whisperingoaks.org to renew your membership online or print a mail-in form.

How did WOHA invest your contributions this year?

28% Common Area Landscaping

21% Capital Improvements

14% Common Area Utilities

12% Community Insurances

10% Administrative

9% Social Events & Welcome Wagon

6% Fundraising



2024

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Peter's Prez-spective

A Letter from the WOHA President

Let's not make Whispering Oaks attractive to Criminals

Despite the headlines intended to attract eyeballs, most common types of crime are dropping in San Antonio. In the most recent data, SAPD reports that violent crime rates are lower following the pandemic: assault -11% and homicide -35%. However, property crimes, particularly those involving vehicles are up significantly. Vehicle-related theft has increased 62% during 2023 with over 14,000 incidents locally so far. And, sadly, Whispering Oaks has seen its share.

Last month, a vehicle was stolen from an eastside driveway on a Sunday afternoon. Around that same time a few blocks away, an intruder holding what appeared to be a gun was seen on camera entering an open garage, presumably to access the owner's vehicle. These events follow a spate earlier this year, late at night, of cars being rummaged through and belongings stolen.

These crimes serve as an important reminder that criminals take advantage of easy opportunities: Keys left in cars. Unlocked vehicles with enticing possessions. Open garage doors with power tools and bicycles visible. We all can be complacent, and I'm certainly guilty myself. Here in suburbia, we sometimes make ourselves an attractive target for lazy thieves. And once they find a payoff, they often return for more. Camera footage indicates our recent recurring crime spree is being perpetrated by a small group of teenagers likely emboldened by social media and seeking bragging rights.

Once a downward spiral starts, it can gain momentum. Before moving to Texas, I lived on an urban residential street prone to mid-day burglaries. Entry was typically predictable: windows left ajar and old front doors mounted in weak frames being shoved open. Police warned that, once word got out that residences on my street were easy pickings, more crime would follow. And it sure did. Nearly a third of the homes were broken into within three years, and one was burglarized three times in less than two years. It was likely the same thieves returning for the brand-new replacement electronics purchased with insurance money.

That community began working with the city officials to mount cameras which could identify the vehicles driven by the perpetrators. Technology has advanced significantly since then, and some cameras today are specially designed to clearly capture license plates day or night, despite the glare of headlights. More and more communities are utilizing the technology and most establish clear protocols to protect privacy or guard against misuse of the data. Many communities will only release footage from cameras mounted in common areas directly to law enforcement to aid investigation of a properly filed case. Now that Whispering Oaks has electricity at nearly all of its entry points, WOHA may initiate a community-wide conversation about similar enhancements, but that debate isn't likely for at least two years, given other volunteer priorities.

Even so, it's important to be aware that capturing evidence and having it put to use by law enforcement are two different challenges. Over 20 million U.S. households now have doorbell cameras installed that capture clear images of criminals committing crimes such as mail and parcel theft. The wave of resulting footage has overwhelmed police investigators nationwide, and residents who invested in

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of property owners in a ballot process during 2024. Each residence would be provided one vote and allowed to approve or reject each proposed amendment individually. Because the tally would need to take into account the legally defined groupings created by the builders, it's possible that not all of the amendments would be ratified across the entire community. However, Lund explained similar variances already exist.



WOHA members checking in.

After some brisk debate, WOHA members authorized their organization to initiate the community-wide ballot containing up to seven amendments. WOHA volunteers will undertake the burdensome process during 2024. Any approved amendments would be filed with the county and likely take effect among the respective properties in 2025.

1. Each proposed amendment secured overwhelming approval among votes cast at the meeting, with only a handful of dissent for each. Among the most popular revisions would be new restrictions on short term rentals of 30 days or less. Properties with an existing permit would be allowed up to three years to phase out operation. Rentals longer than 30 consecutive days would not be affected.
2. The internet will continue to generate additional home-based businesses that could become as disruptive as short-term rentals have proven to be. As a result, a proactive amendment would guard against businesses operating from any property that unreasonably disturb neighbors or cause a regular loss of street parking in front of nearby homes. Typical remote working or non-intrusive, home-based businesses which have operated in the neighborhood for decades would not be affected.
3. To reduce the possibility of another costly Oak Wilt outbreak, another amendment would limit pruning of the species during high-risk months, except to respond to an act of nature, life-threatening emergency, or removal of the entire tree. Additionally, property owners who become aware of an Oak Wilt infestation on their land



President Peter Lund leading the meeting.

would be required to notify owners of adjacent properties so they can be prepared as the disease spreads.

4. To address perennial complaints about unkempt yards, an existing lot maintenance Covenant would be emboldened and expanded. If ratified, yards visible from the street would keep grass cut below 10" and dead trees or shrubs removed promptly. Household furnishings clearly intended for indoor usage would not be stored outside.
5. A similar eyesore which generates frequent complaints, which involved vehicles, would also be mitigated. An amendment would require inoperable vehicles be stored inside a garage or carport. This revision aligns with an existing Covenant prohibiting prolonged parking of trailers and campers in driveways. Additionally, expansion of enforcement rights to all property owners would help ensure better compliance across the neighborhood.
6. The WOHA board also proposed creation of a Common Area Fund to ensure consistent upkeep of the community entrances and perimeter which benefit all residences. Contributions to the fund would be limited to the related expenses of landscaping, utilities, insurances, and enhancements. The fund would be overseen by community-at-large representatives.

As the campaign gets underway in 2024, more details on the community-wide ballot will be published.

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(“Peter’s Prez-spective” continued from page 2)

the technology are routinely frustrated that their images are rarely utilized to pursue property crime.

Perhaps, eventually, further technological developments will help law enforcement be more efficient. But while we wait, we all would be wise to avoid being easy marks. The most effective deterrents are relatively simple and common sense: Keep vehicles locked day and night. Lock up even when home and keep garage doors closed. Upgrade to a locking mailbox. Place a bin or basket near the front door to collect parcel deliveries which hide them from street view. Avoid leaving attractive possessions outside, and tether outdoor items which tend to be stolen. And lastly, encourage each other to be more vigilant. Doing so will help keep Whispering Oaks from being attractive to habitual thieves.

Note: See ‘Crime Prevention!’ p. 5.



Cool Summer Vibes at Whispering Oaks Pool: *Beating the Heat Together!*

Dear Whispering Oaks Neighbors,

As the sun blazed relentlessly over San Antonio this summer, our neighborhood found solace and enjoyment in the cool waters of the Whispering Oaks Swim Club. Amid one of the hottest summers in the city’s history, our pool has been a sanctuary, a place where we’ve come together to beat the heat and create lasting memories. From exciting events to fostering a sense of community, this season has been truly remarkable at the pool.

A Refreshing Dip: Dive-In Movie Nights

This summer, we dove into the fun with a Dive-In Movie Night. This evening brought a unique cinematic experience right to our poolside, allowing families and friends to relax on floaties while enjoying a movie under the stars.

Supporting Our Oasis: Essential Pool Repairs

While we’ve relished countless hours of fun and relaxation at Whispering Oaks Pool, it’s important to acknowledge the ongoing efforts required to maintain our community gem. Over the years, dedicated neighbors have generously volunteered their time and energy to ensure the pool’s upkeep, and we extend our heartfelt appreciation to each of you. However, the time has come to address some significant repairs that are crucial for the pool’s continued vitality.

Our foremost objective is to resurface the pool – a project with an estimated cost of around \$80,000. Additionally, the pool house roof needs replacement, estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000. As custodians of this cherished space, we’ve set an ambitious fundraising target of \$115,000 to not only cover

these repairs but also account for unforeseen expenses and other essential projects like fence repairs, light replacements, and painting.

Pooling Our Resources: Your Impact Matters

Whispering Oaks Swim Club is more than just a swimming spot – it’s a central pillar of our community that enhances property values, nurtures a sense of togetherness, and promotes the spirit of good neighborliness. As proud stakeholders of this communal treasure, we are steadfast in maintaining its allure and functionality for generations to come. By contributing to our fundraising endeavors, you play an active role in enhancing our community and helping us establish a lasting legacy.

Each donation brings us closer to our goal, and there are numerous ways you can contribute:

- 1. Direct Donations:** Make a direct contribution to our pool repair fund. No amount is too small, and every donation counts. You can donate on our website, woswimclub.org or by mailing a check to: PO BOX 781323, San Antonio, TX 78278
- 2. Participate in Fundraisers:** Stay tuned for upcoming community events designed to raise funds for pool repairs, like our annual Halloween party. Your involvement makes a meaningful impact.
- 3. Spread Awareness:** Share the significance of our pool with your neighbors and friends. By raising awareness, you’re helping us garner the support we need.

Together, We Make Waves

Whispering Oaks Swim Club stands as a testament to the remarkable sense of community that defines our neighborhood. As we reflect on the memories forged and the bonds strengthened within its waters, let’s unite to ensure its enduring vibrancy. Your support today will secure this beloved facility’s future, allowing future generations to experience the joy and camaraderie it fosters.

Let’s come together to rally behind our pool repair efforts. Together, we’ll create ripples that resonate for years to come. Contribute, participate, and join us in shaping the future of Whispering Oaks Pool.

For updates, events, and ways to contribute, please visit www.woswimclub.org and stay tuned for community announcements.

Thank you for being an integral part of this wonderful community and for helping us preserve the spirit of summer at Whispering Oaks Pool.

Warm regards,
Your Whispering Oaks Pool Board



Crime Prevention! Here Are a Few Ideas

Preventing crime at home and in our neighborhood is essential for the safety and well-being of your family and for all of Whispering Oaks. It not only protects your property and belongings but also fosters a sense of security and trust among neighbors. By taking proactive measures such as installing security systems, locking doors and windows, and maintaining well-lit surroundings, you create a strong deterrent against criminals. Moreover, a safer neighborhood enhances the overall quality of life, encourages social interactions, and boosts property values. Securing your home is vital to safeguarding your family and belongings.

Here are some practical and low-cost ways to enhance home security:

- **Lock All Entry Points:** Ensure that all doors and windows have reliable locks. Deadbolt locks are often more secure than standard ones.
- **Install Window Locks:** Add locks or pins to sliding windows and reinforce glass windows with security film.
- **Use Peephole and Door Viewer:** Install a peephole or door viewer to identify visitors before opening the door.
- **Secure Sliding Doors:** Place a bar or rod in the track of sliding glass doors to prevent forced entry.
- **Upgrade Exterior Lighting:** Install motion-activated lights around your property to deter intruders.
- **Trim Landscaping:** Trim bushes and trees near windows and doors to eliminate hiding spots.
- **Reinforce Door Frames:** Strengthen door frames with longer screws in the strike plate and use door reinforcement plates.
- **Secure Garage Doors:** Don't overlook your garage's security; use a garage door lock or a smart opener.
- **Burglar-Proof Your Windows:** Reinforce glass windows with laminated or tempered glass and use window alarms or glass break sensors.
- **Home Security Signs and Decals:** Display signs and decals indicating a security system, even if you don't have one; they can still deter intruders.
- **Secure Your Wi-Fi Network:** Protect your home Wi-Fi with a strong password and encryption to prevent hacking.
- **Secure Valuables:** Store important documents, jewelry, and small valuables in a home safe.
- **Lock Gates:** If you have a fence, ensure that gates are locked and secure.
- **Install Door Reinforcement Bars:** Door reinforcement bars or barricades can make it difficult for intruders to force entry.
- **Be Cautious with Social Media:** Avoid sharing vacation plans or personal information on social media that could tip off potential burglars.

If you're interested in more advanced solutions, consider these high-tech options:

- **Smart Locks:** Control and monitor door locks remotely with smartphone apps, grant access, and set schedules for automatic locking/unlocking.
- **Security Cameras:** High-resolution, internet-connected cameras offer real-time monitoring, motion detection, and night vision.
- **Video Doorbells:** Combine a doorbell with a security camera, allowing remote interaction with visitors.
- **Home Security Systems:** These include sensors, alarms, and monitoring services, with remote control via smartphone apps and integration with smart devices.
- **Motion Sensors:** Use infrared or microwave technology to detect movement and trigger alarms or lights.
- **Smart Lighting:** Control lights remotely, set schedules, and use motion-activated lighting.
- **Smart Sensors:** Monitor various conditions such as temperature, humidity, and carbon monoxide levels, sending alerts to your smartphone.
- **Facial Recognition Systems:** Enhance security with cameras that recognize familiar faces.
- **Biometric Access Control:** Use fingerprints, retina scans, or facial recognition for highly secure access control.

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(Continued from page 5)

- **Smart Garage Door Openers:** Control and monitor your garage remotely, receiving alerts if it's left open.
- **Voice-Activated Assistants:** Devices such as Amazon Echo or Google Home can integrate with your smart home-security system for voice control.
- **Smart Home Hubs:** Centralize control of multiple security devices and sensors through a single interface.
- **Drone Surveillance:** Advanced systems use drones with cameras to monitor your property from the air, providing real-time video feeds and capturing unusual activities.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Security:** Analyze data from sensors and cameras to detect unusual behavior and respond to potential threats.

—Adapted from *Neighborhood News*

Updated Community Directory in the Works

Watch your mailbox this fall for an announcement regarding the upcoming Community Directory. The last edition was produced over two years ago and WOHA expects the updated version to arrive early in the new year.



The mailer will notify each residence of the default information WOHA currently has on file and allow for revisions to be made. Many property-owner names are sourced from Bexar County Tax Records or similar public information. Residents will be given the opportunity to suppress sensitive information, such as email and phone, if desired. But please be mindful that doing so makes it more difficult for neighbors to contact you away from home during an emergency.

The directory will be distributed only to current residents and hand delivered to qualifying households. As with previous editions, its content will *not* be accessible online.

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Covenants: Why is the Concept So Complicated?

1. Covenants are not by-laws. (See the definitions, below)
2. There is not one set of Covenants for every household in Whispering Oaks, but rather there are two dozen sets of Covenants, each slightly different from the others.
3. Any changes in Covenants must be made by a majority within a given Covenant unit—which means that Covenants for one set of households could continue to be different from those for another set of households.

By-Laws and Covenants: What's the Difference?

“By-laws” are the rules by which an organization—in our case, the HOA Board of Directors—conducts its business. “Covenants” are the rules by which people in a given constituency—in our case, Whispering Oaks homeowners—relate to each other, in terms of what they can and cannot do.

Got a Question for the Councilman?

Every Council member has an entire staff to aid them. And our City Council representative has a satellite office right in the new Walker Ranch Senior Center. It just happens to be staffed by Whispering Oaks’s very own Pam Harrison-Martínez and Louis Bixenman—Senior Service Liaisons.

Every weekday between 8:00 and 4:00, either Pam or Louis will be in the satellite office to field your questions. They know exactly to whom your concern should be directed.

An advertisement for CPS Energy's 811 service. It features a background image of a shovel in a field with utility markers. The text reads: "SAFE DIGGING STARTS WITH YOU." followed by "ARE YOU PLANNING ANY LANDSCAPING, CONSTRUCTION, OR DIGGING PROJECTS?". Below that is the "811" logo and the text "Know what's below. Call before you dig." and "IT'S FREE AND IT'S THE LAW". At the bottom, the CPS Energy logo is shown next to the website "Visit cpsenergy.com/811 for more information."

New info from the Texas A&M Forestry Service

Oak Wilt versus Oak Decline

By Fred Previc

Let's face it: A lot of our Oaks in the neighborhood are looking sick. But unless your home is in or near the infected Oak Wilt area and see tell-tale signs in the leaves, there could be another cause of the poor state of the Oaks: *oak decline*.

Oak decline is not a specific disease, rather it is a term used to encapsulate the slow decline of a tree due to multiple factors and stressors. These stressors may include poor planting methods, poor growing site (e.g., compacted, urban soils), prolonged drought (which has hit Texas over the past four years) and winter storms. These issues will stress the tree over time, making it more susceptible to secondary (or opportunistic) diseases and insects like root/trunk fungi and wood-boring insects.

The most notable indicator of Oak decline is branch or tip dieback, where growth is diminished at the branch tips. With Oak decline, symptoms are typically exhibited over an extended period of time, often years. Proper tree care can help prevent decline and promote tree health. This includes proper pruning, especially not over-pruning your trees, and proper watering. Too much water = conditions for root rots and other fungi to grow. Not enough water during drought conditions = less sap which normally helps protect the tree from insects and disease.

Remember, Oak Wilt is a specific disease caused by a specific fungus. With Oak Wilt, there are typically clear symptoms on the leaves, which include *veinal necrosis* and *marginal necrosis*. On the other hand, "decline" is a term used to describe the multiple factors that lead to a tree's death, which can impact any species of tree (not just Oaks) and can develop differently and gradually, depending on the case.

If you have questions and to help you diagnose, consult with one of the certified arborists on the Whispering Oaks website: whisperingoaks.org.

WO Really IS a Friendly Place



"For years, they were the perfect neighbors. Then all of a sudden they introduced themselves."

Survey results confirmed what we thought (and what we hoped). That many of us DO have good relationships with our neighbors. What's more, a huge percentage of respondents have made new friends after moving into their neighborhood.

"Do You ... (select all that apply)"

have a relative living in the same neighborhood?	21.1 %
have friends from before you moved into the same neighborhood?	36.8 %
have new friends after moving into the same neighborhood?	63.2 %
know families of children your own children are friends with?	21.1 %
have acquaintances or friends you volunteer with in the neighborhood?	36.8 %

—Thanks to Neighborhood News

Wanna Know What's Going on in Council District 9?

The Council office regularly sends out information about goings-on in the area. If you're not getting the info and want to, just email: district9@sanantonio.gov.

Free Light Bulbs! Free, Really? Yup.

And, not only that, but lots of good, free advice on how to save money on utilities. How? Contact CPS and ask for an "energy assessment." An expert will come out to your home to look at everything that might be improved: door and window insulation, attic insulation, sunlight exposure—and light bulbs.

In the process, the assessor will just go ahead to change any traditional bulbs you still have for highly efficient ones—no charge for any of it. Just go to:

<https://www.cpsenergy.com/content/corporate/en/customer-support.html>

—Thanks to Pam Harrison-Martínez for the suggestion

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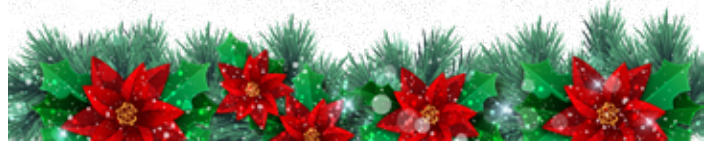
Here is a very brief sampling of what some of our neighbors have displayed this year, as of press deadline. Results of the contest will be on social media and in the next issue of *The Whispers*, early January.



Holiday Decorating Contest Again!

Following on the heels of an outstanding show of Halloween decorating, the Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association will again recognize our neighborhood homes demonstrating holiday spirit with lights, wreaths, garlands, inflatable figures, and all other manner of materials.

The Grand Prize of a \$100 HEB gift card will be awarded to one residence, and two runners up will receive a \$50 card each. WOHA judges have not yet set the exact date and time for their drive-around, but it should be sometime during the evening hours of **December 16-17**. Watch board@whisperingoaks.com and our social media for updates on the contest. Happy Holidays to All!



No, No, No!!!

Is it all right to hunt in the spillway between the two parts of the neighborhood? No! Hunting is not allowed within city limits.

Is it all right to drive carts in the spillway? No! Vehicles are not allowed there.

Is it all right for unlicensed minors to drive golf carts on Whispering Oaks streets? No, no, no! Only regular vehicles driven by licensed drivers may move on our streets.

New Project? Now reach our full listing of vetted and reliable service providers ONLINE

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BLUE, GREEN, and BROWN

The Whispering Oaks Garden Club had a colorful September meeting with a presentation by a woman from the San Antonio Solid Waste Department. Here are a few points she made:

1. Plastic bags are no longer wanted in the City's **BLUE** recycling bin. However, HEB and other local stores accept clean plastic bags for recycling. The **BLUE** cart likes clean plastic and glass jars. Try a little dish soap and vinegar in those peanut butter containers.
2. The **GREEN** cart will take pizza boxes and cooking oil poured on shredded paper. Small scraps of meat can be placed in the **GREEN** cart. But large meats, like a turkey carcass, go in the trash.
3. The **BROWN** trash cart is for all Styrofoam, plastic utensils and straws.
4. Lithium batteries don't go in any waste management cart. They present a fire hazard, not only for the carts, but also for the trucks. Take spent lithium batteries to an electronic store, home store, or the city hazardous disposal drops.



RED, GREEN, and TINSEL

As a federated club of the San Antonio Garden Center, the WOGC asks its members to contribute to the Operation Christmas Cheer effort on 27, 28, and 29 November, held at 3310 N. New Braunfels Ave. Starting at 9:00 a.m., we will put together gifts of cheer for non-profit organizations in need. Donate new or like new simple gifts for all ages. Bring gift bags, wrapping paper, and ribbon. We will also decorate wreaths and small arrangements as requested by the organizations. Learn to make wreaths, table pieces, bows and children's gift baskets and bags. For more

information and a list of suggested gift items, call Chair Jamie Whitfield, 864-933-1589. You do not need to be a WOGC member to participate. Note: Usually, two days are needed to complete the work. Call on the 29th to see if workers are needed.

Happy Autumn to All – Ann Parsons

"The weather just went from 90 to 55 like it saw a state trooper." —Anonymous

"Autumn leaves don't fall, they fly. They take their time and wander on this their only chance to soar." —Delia Owens, *Where the Crawdads Sing*

A worried-looking man went into a florist's shop and asked for potted geraniums. The shop was out, but the clerk suggested chrysanthemums. "No, they won't do," the man said. "I promised my wife I'd water her geraniums while she was away." —Anonymous



Charles & Nancy Falgout
11534 Whisper Breeze



James & Deborah Sherwood
11107 Whisper Ridge



Whispering Oaks Sales

Aug–Oct 2023

Prepared by Jean Marie Ruffini,
Resident Realtor®

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Per Sq. Ft.</u>
Sold listings – 5		
High	\$665,000	\$213
Median	\$420,000	\$199
Low	\$265,000	\$162
Active – 2		
High	\$519,000	\$175
Low	\$499,000	\$168

According to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Report from the San Antonio Board of REALTORS, the market has remained resilient with stable prices despite total sales experiencing a slight 4% year-over-year (YoY) decrease.

The latest data shows 3,168 home sales in the month of August. The average price for homes in the San Antonio area remained consistent at \$387,844, with no significant change YoY. This stability in average prices is indicative of a healthy and balanced market.

Wanna Read Sumpin' Funny?

For several years, a wife had been trying to convince her husband that he should do more cardiovascular exercise. One day, he announced that he was going golfing at our local course and that he was going to walk instead of riding in a cart.

She thought this was a good start to getting in shape and that my nagging was finally paying off. When he came back, he walked into the house moaning and groaning over how much his back and legs hurt.

"What does that tell you?" she asked him.

"It tells me I should have taken the cart!"

Y Otro en Español

Una madre concurre al médico.

"Doctor, a mi hijo le pica la cabeza.

"Use esto para le pediculosis, señora," le dice el médico dándole un remedio.

"¿Es bueno para los piojos?"

"No, al contrario, es malo. Los mata."

What's Our Speed Limit? Depends on Where You Are!

Now that the temperatures have come down, lots of us are out riding bikes, walking dogs, strolling with children, and just enjoying the lovely streets of Whispering Oaks. One aspect that no one enjoys, however, is that cars, trucks and delivery vans seem to be racing by at unsafe speeds. So what is our neighborhood speed limit?

The standard for City of San Antonio residential areas is 30 miles per hour. Just a few of our entrances have that limit posted. On Whisper Willow, Whisper Valley, and Whisper Dew, there are multiple warnings to slow to 20 miles per hour to cross the "traffic calming" bumps, and at the approaches to the pool entrance on Whisper Valley, the signs dictate 25 miles per hour.

Because of our narrow and curved streets and relative lack of sidewalks, some of even these speed limits seem to be too rapid. In the coming year, WOHA will be working with CoSA departments to ask for a review of our sign postings to see if Whispering Oaks merits a traffic study to ensure our residents' safety.



Fall Is the Best Time for Planting & Trimming & Sodding—



Let's Clean Up While the Weather's Nice

After a brutal summer and drought following two miserable winter freezes, many of our trees, shrubs, and lawns are looking horrible. It seems almost every street in Whispering Oaks has examples of dead trees, dried-up shrubbery and non-existent grass that really impacts the appearance of the whole neighborhood.

While none of us could predict the weather or overcome its damaging effects on our yards, now we should clean up and cut down all those trees and shrubs that are not coming back to life. The free City brush pick-up will be in the first week or two of January, but an individual address brush pickup for a small fee can be requested at any time by calling 311.

Fall is known to be the best time for planting trees and shrubs, as well as an excellent season for installing new sod. In the fall, plants have time to establish new root systems while the temperatures are moderate, and rain is more likely.

When trimming or cutting back on our native Live Oaks, be sure to spray paint to seal any and all cuts within 30 minutes—a City of San Antonio ordinance in effect 365 days a year.

This fall, please consider cleaning up your yards and removing dead and diseased greenery. Your efforts will go a long way towards making Whispering Oaks an attractive and desirable neighborhood, and certainly your neighbors will appreciate it, too!



Check Fraud Is Real

The following is an account sent me by my financial adviser (in another state) about something that happened to him. The story is all-too-true.

After some pool repairs that cost \$500, I sent out a check. A few days later, I received an email from my bank looking for approval to clear a strange check from my account written to someone I do not know for \$8,500. It looked like my check, had my signature, and had the same reference on the check that I sent to the pool company—but not payable to them. The pool company confirmed that they had received and deposited the check.

What happened is that, in transit, someone made a copy of the check and changed some of the info, then tried to cash it. Check fraud is becoming a huge problem these days, creating a pain for the account holder. I had to change my account number and notify every organization that receives automatic payment, same as happens with a credit card.

Changing the account numbers does not prevent another scam like this from happening again. However, the bank came to me with a way to protect all of our accounts by using what they call “Positive Pay.” Positive Pay allows one to approve or deny any check or debit from all of our Bill Paying Accounts. If a check or debit does not match your records, then the request is denied and your accounts remain safe. With Positive Pay, you will have full security, as well as save all of us many headaches, in having to change account numbers in the future.

I recommend that you contact your bank to be sure they have this or a similar service.

Note: One common way that check fraud is committed, as posted on Nextdoor.com, is by raiding residential mailboxes looking for checks, then performing the trick mentioned in my financial adviser’s post.

—The Editor

Establishing & Setting Neighborhood Boundaries

In recent years, the practice of setting personal boundaries has become integral to navigating lives and valuing the immediate space around individuals. Boundaries delineate where one person ends and another begins, fostering a sense of respect and harmony. This principle holds true not just for individuals but extends to entire neighborhoods, where boundaries are essential for maintaining peace and cooperation. Let's delve into the importance of personal boundaries and explore how they apply to property, noise, pets, and children in a community.

Property Lines

The phrase "Good fences make good neighbors," often attributed to poet Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall," emphasizes the significance of well-defined boundaries.* Clear property lines, marked by fences or other landscaping features, contribute to a shared understanding of physical space. Collaboration with neighbors in planning and discussing these boundaries fosters a sense of mutual respect and consideration.

Children's Boundaries

Perhaps the most important, boundaries for children are vital for safety and involve everything from traffic, schools, new people, and even curfews. Awareness of local safety regulations, encouragement of designated play areas, and teaching children about traffic safety contribute to their well-being. Open communication with neighbors regarding children's activities, consideration of noise levels, and collaboration on community rules for children's behavior create a cohesive and respectful environment.

Noise Boundaries

Establishing and respecting noise boundaries is crucial for a harmonious living environment. Clear communication and understanding local noise regulations are key. Open conversations with neighbors about noise preferences, especially during events or activities with potential increased noise levels, contribute to mutual understanding. Designating quiet hours and being mindful of cultural and lifestyle differences further promote a peaceful coexistence.

Pet Boundaries

Ensuring the well-being of pets and harmony within the community requires setting boundaries. Familiarity with local regulations regarding pets, such as leash laws and waste disposal, is essential. Advocating for designated off-leash areas and addressing concerns about pet noise or behavior through open communication with neighbors contribute to a pet-friendly and considerate neighborhood.

In the intricate dance of life, personal boundaries serve as threads weaving a narrative of self-respect, empowerment, and meaningful connections. Whether manifested in property lines, noise considerations, pet regulations, or guidelines for children, establishing and respecting boundaries fosters a sense of community. By embracing the art of boundary setting, neighborhoods create safe, welcoming environments where individuals and families can grow, play, and thrive collectively. It is a shared commitment to well-being that transforms boundaries from mere lines to integral components of a balanced and enriching life.

—Thanks to Neighborhood News

***Editor's Note:** While it's true that "Mending Wall" has the line "Good fences make good neighbors," the process of the poem is one of questioning such a simplistic idea. It also argues that property barriers also isolate people from each other. Walls are seen, then, ambiguously, as both good and bad.



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