

# TPHA Notes 'n Quotes . . . .

A news update from Trotter's Pointe Homeowners Association for the residents of  
Trotter's Pointe Subdivision

Return on Investment \* Safety & Security \* Camaraderie

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## Trotters Pointe Homeowners Association

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## **Another Whirl . . .**

*In the inconsistent search for the bare-knuckled, unvarnished, purely distilled truth about the goings on in and around Trotter's Pointe subdivision, TPHA Notes 'n Quotes is back . . . again.*

*The last time a publication under this banner appeared was in the Summer of 2004 – and there's not been a ground swell of roaring demand for it since.*

*It's been missed like a toothache.*

*But then again, pride has never had anything to do with this publication, so what the hey, let's do it again.*

*Besides, it's the only carry ride in town (for now at least) when it comes to printed news about the TPHA community . . . and one can get off this tilt-a-whirl (nausea is common among readers) whenever he or she pleases by simply making one of three easy choices: glance at it, pitch it, or make better use of it (cat box liner, bird cage . . . origami perhaps).*

*Regardless of what one does with it, a very debatable fact remains:*

*It's better than nothing.*

## **ACCESS DENIED . . .**

Picture this: A convenience mart peddling cigs, chewing tobacco, gas, lotto tickets and pre-wrapped microwavable fare sitting squarely at the northwest corner of Pontiac Trail and 11 Mile Road.

Now wipe it from the mind, *because it's not going to happen* – certainly not in the near-term, hopefully not in the longer term.

On July 9 – a date which TPHA homeowners will most likely christen "Thank the Heavens!" day – the South Lyon City Council unanimously agreed to proceed with a lawsuit against DeMaria Building Company in regards to the four-acre parcel of land and money owed by DeMaria to the city from previous bonds.

Here's a rundown of facts and history that illustrates how the decision prevents a "Suds 'n Stuff" – or anything like it – from being erected kitty corner from the high school (take a deep breath, it's a long story):

- DeMaria is the developer of Trotter's Pointe, and paid the city a \$1 million bond way back when (in or around 1994 – when Bill Clinton was still in his *first term*) for the privilege of controlling and developing the "open space" that is now

the subdivision and all land leading up to Pontiac Trail and the corner;

- When homeowners took control of the TPHA board in 1998 – at the time that more than 70-percent of the homes in the sub were built and sold – they also took control of all land associated with the development. By state law, a seat on the board was reserved for DeMaria at the time – but the company never sent a representative, nor communicated with the TPHA . . . about anything;
- DeMaria's seat on the board was later relinquished (in accordance with state law). To this day, DeMaria has chosen not to communicate with the TPHA;
- In the late 90's, and without notice to the city or TPHA, DeMaria attempted to take the four acres out of the subdivision – which was classified as open space and controlled by the TPHA – and tried to have it re-zoned as "B-3" – or commercial – which would allow for a "Sud's 'n Stuff"; strip mall; pharmacy; tanning salon; cell phone center; bank; consignment store; coney island . . . ;
- Surprised by the move, the city balked – like the TPHA, a gas pump at the "gateway" to the community didn't exactly whet its collective pallet – and DeMaria was not provided with a parcel number;
- Today, the city still holds the \$1 million bond because DeMaria has yet to complete a specific "punch list" of items (e.g. trees in common areas, paths, etc.) within the Trotter's Pointe development. The city has also charged DeMaria an additional \$60,400 for "engineering oversight costs" it performed via a contractor . . . after all, somebody had to do get some of the "punch list" chores done, and taxpayers tend to frown upon uncollected bills;
- For whatever reason, DeMaria decided it would be best to not to pay the \$60,000+, even though the bond it posted is there to guarantee payment of

services. The city filed suit for payment. DeMaria sought a mediator;

- On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the mediator – in the seemingly simplest of solutions – recommended the city split the corner parcel and change its zoning to "B-3" in return for the \$60,000 payment. Throughout the TPHA, a loud "Say What?" was heard;
- Finally, on July 9, the city council collectively ignored the advice of the mediator, and decided to proceed with the lawsuit against DeMaria in regards to both the land and money owed. "Quite frankly, the people that benefit should be the homeowners of Trotters Pointe," said South Lyon City Council Member Ron Morelli. All seem to agree.

### Dollars, Sense & Projects . . .

The ebb and flow of cash into and out of TPHA coffers can sometimes make managing and balancing the association's budget comparable to spinning plates on sticks while balancing a ring on one's nose.

Here's the breakdown on the 2007 TPHA annual budget:

- Income (dues and late fees) amount to \$104,500;
- Costs (PASCO management fees, social events, and grounds maintenance) amount to \$84,030;
- Approximately \$20,295 is earmarked for reserves (savings account); and,
- The TPHA has approximately \$14,865 in reserve as of June 30 (July books were not closed at time of publication).

Here's the caveat that requires occasional circus tricks: By state law, 10-percent of the association's annual income (\$10,400) *must be kept in reserved at all times*, leaving a paltry \$4,465 (at this time) for non-budgeted items, such as:

- Getting water, power and irrigation to islands, which costs about \$9,000 per;
- Clearing bushes and trees around the lake's (overstatement) shoreline, a costly endeavor to say the least that hasn't been cost-explored yet; or,

- Standardizing mailboxes (see related **"Mail Call . . . "** story).

Of course, that's not to say none of these things will be accomplished – just not right now.

When dues arrive later this month, and at the end of the year, the coffers will be somewhat replenished, enabling cash on hand for tasks such water systems on islands. ***In fact, beginning next summer, an island per year will be "water-ized", working from the front of the sub rearward.***

It's all about timing, cash flow, and thinking ahead.

For a detailed budget, please feel free to call PASCO at 734.677.2727 – it is available via email, fax, or hard copy.

### **PUAYP?**

TPHA dog owners have five words to live by . . .

Pick. Up. After. Your. Pet.

It's a simple rule that most adhere to, and quite frankly, the never-ending dog dropping saga is a tired, old story. Truth is – although this may sound hard for some to believe – things have improved dramatically over the years.

There was a time in the annals of TPHA history when some common areas were treated as nothing more than animal relief centers. Not good.

One island in particular was consistently abused, and on hot, sweltering days would omit a ghastly odor that would waft through the screens of surrounding homes.

Nothing like good 'ol country living.

Fortunately, no such scenario exists today. Yet, there are still some who disregard (or are maybe unaware?) of the rule of PUAYP. Perhaps they should try pronouncing it . . . then they'll get its real meaning.

### **No Parking, Dumping, or Rolling . . .**

Here are two items that shouldn't surprise anyone . . . a third that will disappoint some . . . and a fourth that's worth repeating:

- Parking of vehicles on islands is strictly prohibited. Believe it or not, it happens – whoever's doing this has got to be new to driving or wearing clown pants and face paint;
- Dumping of materials or waste of any kind on empty lots is strictly prohibited. The TPHA *still* fields occasional complaints about this; delivers a pristine look though . . . really helps drive up the home values;
- Roller blading or roller hockey is not permitted on the Tennis/Basketball Court. Sorry, but it cost a lot of money to resurface that area – don't want to do it again in the near future, thank you very much; and,
- PUAYP (see related story – it's another form of dumping, pun intended).

### **No to Door-to-Door . . .**

Door-to-door solicitation has become an art form in Trotter's Pointe . . . and a bit of an irritant for some, which is certainly understandable.

It's not uncommon to find some unshaven chap at the front door with a freezer full of beef in the back of his idling pickup parked in the driveway.

Such an encounter can be downright startling. What to do?

The TPHA is erecting "No Solicitation" signs at entryways (perhaps by the time of printing) – a move that has proved effective in many homeowner associations. If an uninvited solicitor does show up, it's not a bad idea to ask for a permit from the city they are required to have to perform such tasks.

Chances are they won't have it.

Also, one can now also ask: "Did you see the 'No Solicitation' sign when you drove in"?

### **Mail Call . . .**

Uniformity is not a term associated with the state of the post boxes within the TPHA. There are some in need of a facelift; others are ostensibly hurricane proof.

The association is exploring the possibility of replacing all mailboxes with a standardized, tastefully equipped version. If done, the project would be conducted at no cost to the homeowners, either in terms of removal of the old box, or erecting a new one.

No timetable for the project has been set.

Initial cost estimates for the endeavor have come in at more than \$50,000 (and that's a conservative figure) . . . so don't expect anything to happen soon, if it does at all.

## Welcome to the Neighborhood . . .

In the first six months of this year, 13 new homeowners have taken residence within the TPHA this year.

Here's a hearty welcome to all those (including dogs and cats) who reside at:

- 1189 Corral Lane;
- 1036 Cantor Lane;
- 1089 Appaloosa Court;
- 1077 Chestnut Lane;
- 1231 Corral Lane;
- 1054 Polo Drive;
- 1029 Equestrian Drive;
- 1143 Polo Drive;
- 1183 Corral Lane;
- 1072 Cantor;
- 1137 Equestrian Drive;
- 1180 Shetland Drive; and,
- 1024 Equestrian Drive.

No names were used to protect the innocent, and none of them have seen this publication before – imagine what they must be thinking.

## Broken Trails . . .

Shel Silverstein's 1974 children's classic – *Where the Sidewalk Ends* – was truly visionary in nature, in one sense anyway . . . it aptly describes particular walk areas within the TPHA.

The inexplicit gaps within sidewalk trails (most notably the one at the Equestrian entryway) mark lots that are owned, but not developed. Considering the current state of

the housing market, further investment into the properties isn't likely to happen anytime soon.

The TPHA is working to complete these broken trails, and has sent letters to the lot owners notifying them of the intention, and requesting permission to effectively bridge these gulfs.

## Useless (Yet Sometimes Riveting) Information . . .

Useless facts, drivel, hearsay and quotes can often be somewhat fascinating . . . even helpful. It is in this spirit the following is presented:

- According to PASCO (TPHA's property management company), at the time of publication, there have been no foreclosures within the TPHA since the beginning of 2007 . . . however, approximately three homes are still owned by banks;
- In the summer of 2004, the average transaction price of a home within the TPHA was in the neighborhood of \$318,652 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was around 9,500. Today, the average transaction price of a TPHA home is roughly \$260,500 and the DJIA crossed 14,000 (albeit briefly) in July;
- Here's something that proved to be quite useful: "The issue is obviously a thorny one to us in the subdivision, and the homeowner's board of directors unanimously rejects commercial development on that corner, and we strongly oppose any rezoning." – Terry Wilson, TPHA President, to the South Lyon City Council regarding the four-acre parcel at the northwest corner of 11 mile and Pontiac Trail; and,
- At the time of publication, 20 homes are for sale in Trotters Pointe . . . the average turn rate of homes within the sub, according to PASCO, is about one or two per month over the past eight months.