

Stillhouse Newsletter

February, 2020

For Stillhouse Canyon Residents

Volume 4, Issue 1

[HOA Board Meetings](#)

[Annual Meeting, Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 pm, Clubhouse](#)

COME VOTE ON THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE RAILINGS PROJECT – OR SUBMIT A PROXY

Next Monthly Board Meeting: March 10, 6:00 pm at the Clubhouse

[Railing Project Update](#)

At the annual meeting, the board will present a motion to the homeowners to approve a one-time Special Assessment in the amount of \$219,430 to modify existing railings on 180 balcony/patio units. The assessment is \$722 for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,444 for a two-bedroom unit. The payment is due in full on or before August 1, 2020. Invoices and payment instructions will be sent closer to the due date and residents are asked not to pay until they receive an invoice and payment instructions. The Special Assessment needs the affirmative vote of 30 homeowners in person or by proxy to pass.

[Reason for the Railings Modification.](#)

For the past several years, the HOA has purchased its \$28 million master condo policy from Farmers Insurance. Farmers now requires that balcony/patio railings be retrofitted to have opening no larger than 4-inches as a condition of continuing to purchase their insurance. The retrofitting is required because of large losses paid in recent years by Farmers as a result of small children falling through railings. Current code requirement is 4-inches. Stillhouse railings are 6-inches wide. Although our railings are grandfathered by the City of Austin because they were code compliant when built in 1985, Farmers is requiring a retrofit as a safety/loss control measure. About 30 homeowners attended an Informational Meeting in January to discuss the insurance decision, the process of choosing a railing modification acceptable to Farmers and the funding mechanism.

[ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER](#)

The Stillhouse News is written by the Stillhouse HOA board and distributed through the realtor boxes at the mailboxes.

We plan to publish quarterly in February, May, August and November of each year.

If you have suggestions for articles, please contact a board member or Granite Properties.

[YOUR BOARD AND PROPERTY MGMT. CO.](#)

Board members are:

Carolyn Wright, President

David Greene, VP

Marc Duchon, Treasurer

Phil Rothblum, Secretary

Seth Klempner, Member-at-large

Our Property Management Company is

Granite Properties

808 W. 10th Street

Austin, Tx. 78701

(512) 469-0925

www.graniteproperties.com

password: still11

Our Granite Properties contacts are Mike Hill, CPM, and his assistant Ashley Rodriguez.

Insurance. The Farmers policy expires in April and the board intends to make a decision by April 1 to proceed with the modifications or find alternate insurance. The board is exploring an arrangement with Beck Management Company in which Stillhouse would switch from Granite to Beck and be able to buy into Beck's insurance program, exclusive to its clients, for coverage that does not require railings to be modified. Policy premiums would also go down. It is unclear, as of this writing, if the insurance is as complete and effective as that offered by Farmers. The board continues to explore these issues with Beck. Also under review by the board is whether Stillhouse would retrofit the railings as a matter of safety and loss control even if not required by Farmers or another insurer.

Railings. The proposed Vertical Overlay mockup was presented and met with approval as both aesthetically pleasing and affordable when compared to other options. Homeowners will be able to view the mockup at the Annual Meeting.

Special Assessment. Most homeowners in attendance were supportive of the proposed Special Assessment. Some inquired if funds from the reserve fund could be used to reduce the amount of the Special Assessment. The board has reviewed that option in considerable detail and concluded that it is not financially prudent and in the HOA's best interest to use reserve funds for this project. The reserve funds are earmarked for numerous and costly capital improvements in the near future, e.g. re-plastering the pools, road/parking lot resurfacing, clubhouse maintenance, roof repairs and related contingencies. Borrowed reserve funds of substantial amounts such as \$70K must be repaid to do those projects and remain well-funded. As a result of these repayment costs and other factors, the board decided to assess the entire amount of the Railings Project in a single lump sum. By giving residents over 5 months' notice, the board anticipates that all residents will make their payment in full by August.

How We're Spending Money this Quarter

1. \$500 to WL Perkins Architecture firm for drawings/samples of a railing modification.
2. \$3,079 to two homeowners for repairs to irregularly constructed ductwork
3. \$23,564 to J.E. Services for periodic building maintenance to Building 4, now complete.

CodeNEXT Update

Austin's Land Use Code rewrite, known as CodeNEXT, is moving through City Hall again. The code will upzone most of Austin compounding existing infrastructure challenges like impermeable coverage/flooding, parking, transportation/traffic, water, sewage, etc. The Mayor and pro-development council members approved "first reading" of the code in December and want to have a final vote in March. For more information contact our Council Member Allison Alter's office at 512-978-2110 or district10@austintexas.gov.

Also see:

<https://communitynotcommodity.com/rezoning-map>

<https://communitynotcommodity.com/renderings>

for additional information.

Security Tips

Occasionally we have a vehicle break-in on the property. Here are a few tips to help protect your vehicle and those of others. Let us know if you have other suggestions.

1. Lock your vehicle and have nothing visible inside.
2. Report burned out exterior light bulbs to Granite for replacement.
3. Report any break-ins to APD, get an incident number and notify Granite to have a notice posted at the mailboxes alerting others.
4. See Something? Say Something. Call APD at 911 if you see suspicious activity.