

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF SUNRISE MOUNTAIN VIEW ESTATES COMMUNITY, TUCSON, AZ 85750**

On February 20, 2006, we celebrated the 15th meeting of **Sunrise Mountain View Estates Homeowners' Association (SMVEHOA)**. Many new homeowners have joined the community over the years. Many present owners are not acquainted with the history of Fairfield in the Foothills, Sunrise Subdivisions, or the establishment of our Association. This communication attempts to share just a bit of the history of our community. We hope you enjoy the story about where you live in the Catalina Foothills.

### **Forging an Organization**

Sunrise Mountain View Estates (SMVE) was the eleventh of twelve sub-divisions to be completed on approximately 1,500 acres of land south of Sunrise Drive, along Territory Drive from Craycroft to Kolb. Fairfield Arizona, a subsidiary of the parent resort building company, Fairfield, built communities all around the U.S. In the 1970's, Territory Drive was constructed by Fairfield, through the 1,500 acres, as an access road for ongoing construction. Twelve, wholly independent subdivisions, each with its own homeowners association, began emerging starting from North Craycroft Road. As one area would approach completion, the next would be started farther east until the early 1990's when Fairfield Sunrise Village, Inc. completed its development of the entire 1500 acres. Emerging subdivisions evolved to offer new models and as construction moved toward Kolbe Road, employed cluster housing. Homes were built closer together often on a ridgeline while the remainder of the acreage, primarily steeper hillsides and washes, remained in a pristine natural state known as "common areas". These Sonoran desert common open spaces within Tucson were and are distinctly unique. These subdivisions are owned and governed by each Homeowners' Association.

Subsequently, the 12 independent Sunrise Homeowners' Associations formed an umbrella organization, the Sunrise Associations Council (SAC), in which designated representatives of the dozen Sunrise Homeowners Associations meet several times a year. SAC provides a program that discusses areas of common interest, helps inform members of local issues, and often share county plans and policies important to homeowners in Fairfield.

Sunrise Mountain View Estates began its existence in June of 1986, with the building of the model homes on Strada de Acero. The north pool, clubhouse, and tennis court were constructed in early 1987. Initial lots were sold along Largo Salici, Via Sempreverde, Via Frassino and Via Cedri for subsequent home construction. Rapid development of this planned community expanded to include 238 individual homes. A second pool and tennis court was added. The latter facilities were constructed along Territory Drive in early 1990 while home construction in SMVE was completed in 1992.

Arizona statutes dictate that since common land exists with Association- owned private roads and common use recreational facilities, the Developer, Fairfield Sunrise Village, Inc., was required to submit to the state and county a document called "Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (hereinafter called the CC&Rs), together with Bylaws for approval. These CC&Rs

and Bylaws set out rules, guidelines, and restrictions by which any prospective resident must agree to conform as a homeowner in SMVE. A Homeowners' Association with a Board of Directors is required by law to make and enforce uniform written rules, to oversee and manage the common areas (including roads), and to collect revenues for ongoing operations and maintenance. Such funds are necessary to accomplish these legal directives in compliance with Arizona statutes. Consequently, every prospective homeowner receives a copy of the CC&Rs, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations prior to purchasing here and is requested to sign an agreement to abide by the CC&Rs upon purchase of a home.

Initially, in accord with usual practice, upon state approval of the CC&Rs & Bylaws, the Developer (Fairfield) became majority owner, established a Fairfield Board of Directors, and appointed three of their own staff to manage the Association. As homes were completed and before they were sold, the Developer was required to pay the \$35/home/month dues set by the Board. Moreover, the Developer was required to keep an accounting of dues collected and expenditures. As homes were completed and sold, the new homeowners had to pay association dues but were not entitled to elect representatives to the Board. In effect, they did not have any voice in setting the amount of dues, reviewing budgets, or establishing priorities for expenditures.

As the sub-division home sales exceeded fifty percent, new residents naturally inquired as to the allocation and priorities of dues monies for community expenditures. The Developer asserted that the dues were inadequate and that Fairfield was subsidizing the Association for necessary expenses. No documentation or accounting of finances was forthcoming to support that company assertion.

Frustrated by Developer (Fairfield) stonewalling and lack of acceptable feedback, most early homeowners became increasingly concerned about community upkeep and financial accounting. For example, when the Developer was finally required to turn over the Homeowners' Association to the new homeowners, the residents might inherit a zero balance in the treasury. Unfortunately, such was a common practice in Tucson at that time. SMVE residents formed an ad hoc liaison committee to attempt to have a voice at the Board meetings of the Developer. However, the Fairfield never allowed input for any homeowners in attendance at its Board meetings. The only avenue provided for resident feedback was to bring their concerns to the desk of the project construction manager. Predictably, that arrangement was frustrating as well as totally unworkable.

### **Homeowners Take Charge (1992)**

When about ninety percent of the homes were sold, the builder began the turnover process to homeowners. Notice went out to SMVE residents and the first Association meeting was held in the clubhouse by the north pool. Some members submitted their résumé and volunteered to run for election to the Board of Directors. A Board of three members was duly elected and in turn, elected Officers to enable the Board to function. An empty treasury posed an immediate financial concern when Fairfield informed the Board that there was a zero fund balance. In fact, a few previously completed Fairfield subdivision associations had already

inherited their own empty treasury. To compound the matter, the national Fairfield parent company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and still held mortgages on some of the Arizona properties.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

The newly elected homeowners' Board was not deterred! They compiled a detailed list with cost estimates of incomplete and/or neglected maintenance concerning all the common areas, pools, tennis courts, streets, sidewalks, and recreational facilities. Fairfield was offered a choice of completing all the repairs to the Board's satisfaction or providing appropriate funds for the community treasury before legal turnover could occur. Fairfield chose not to complete the "punch list". Through a series of meetings, the Board's representatives were able to negotiate a starting sum of over \$50,000 for repairs. Board members immediately began work as an operating not-for-profit corporation (SMVEHOA). Delayed maintenance included resurfacing tennis courts, as well as the interiors and Kooldecking of both pools which yielded immediate cosmetic as well as functional updating. For security purposes and to dissuade non-resident use of recreational facilities, the Board established a system of non-duplicatable key locks issued to each homeowner.

### **New Meaning to the phrase "Waste Not, Want Not"**

Imagine having waste removal trucks and waste containers on SMVE streets six days a week! Welcome to the early 90s before the homeowner run SMVEHOA. Initially, there were three different waste removal companies servicing SMVE homeowners, billing each member directly. The Board seized the opportunity to improve the situation. It proposed a resolution to the membership to raise the dues to include waste haulers fees. That move allowed the Board to sign an exclusive contract with only one waste hauler, Waste Management, and pay one bill monthly for the whole subdivision. In addition, carefully negotiated contracts allowed residents to enjoy a forty percent (40%) reduction in fees to remove garbage twice each week and recycling once per week. Reducing waste removal trucks on our private roads to several days per week was not only a traffic relief to residents but decreased road abuse by heavy truck traffic.

### **A Living, Learning Association**

Over time, the Board and residents learned the necessary "in house" jobs of a vibrant organization. These "jobs" as well as volunteer residents to help continued year-round. The Board also had to accommodate the reduced community population during summer months and still keep the Association responsive and functional while many residents were away. Expanding the Board to its present size of potentially eight elected members helped. Subsequently, several Committees were formed. Additionally, as Board experience built, the Board began to predict the known recurring maintenance costs. Homeowner's dues were adjusted upward to permit an accumulation of operating funds plus prudent reserves. Capital-intensive projects could now be scheduled over several years. With the exception for emergencies or special projects, sudden assessments were avoided. An example of a special project occurred in mid 2001. The Board

hired an engineering consulting firm to take core samples and evaluate the condition of all SMVE private roads. The Board requested a ten-year maintenance schedule for repair and maintenance. What resulted was a comprehensive assessment and plan for refurbishment and resealing of our private roads. Such roadwork is scheduled about every three to five years. A second 10-year road plan followed. However, the Tucson sun, the passage of time, and heavy use all shorten the lifespan of roads. Major repairs were completed on Via Cedri, Via Frassino, and Via Velazquez north of Otoño in 2009-2010 thus bringing all roads up to the agreed upon standard. A complete crack sealing and seal coating of all community private roads was completed in May, 2012.

### **Association Committees Rise to the Occasion**

Perhaps the most time intensive tasks of Board Committees have become the maintenance of structural standards and appearances as well as landscaping of the common areas. Architecture, Maintenance, and Landscaping Committees are committed to a high standard of care for the SMVE community. Enforcing rules, regulations, and standards throughout this community has earned SMVEHOA the admiration of homeowners in surrounding subdivisions. In managing the compliance of these standards, committee members expend enormous effort and exhibit real dedication as community volunteers. In addition, individual homeowners can be commended for their almost unanimous cooperation in submitting plans for any changes in structures, colors, or landscaping, and maintaining roadside yards with recognized street appeal. Dumpsters, "port-a-potties", construction debris, and unsightly yards with an overage of weeds do not characterize this community!

Moreover, all homeowners also express consistent gratitude for efforts of the Recreation Committee and its sub-committee, developed only in the last few years, known as the Hospitality Committee. This large group of volunteers works diligently to make this community socially unique. Deserving special mention, for example, is the activity of welcoming new homeowners with a personal visit. A friendly welcome certainly makes moving into a new community most inviting and much less stressful. The committee also plans a minimum of three social programs a year for members. In addition, the Annual Homeowners' Meeting each February just wouldn't be the same without committee members serving as tellers and providing beverages and delicious snacks. Our clubhouse is managed diligently by the Recreational Committee Chairman who schedules meetings and social gatherings. That effort also includes scheduling for other subdivisions that do not have their own clubhouse. Among the twelve independent Sunrise Homeowner's Associations, only two have a clubhouse so we share the SMVE Clubhouse for occasional meetings.

### **Security, Safety, and the Future**

Challenges remain. Because of our location in the Foothills, this subdivision functions as a convenient "cut-through" route between Sunrise and Territory Drive. Faced with cars speeding through SMVE streets, in the early 1990's the Board authorized the installation of speed humps to slow traffic to the established 25 MPH speed limit. Relief was immediate. To date, the speed

humps have served us fairly well. Even so, the previous widening of Craycroft Road (from River to Sunrise) in October 2005, as well as widening and realignment of Sunrise (from Craycroft to Kolb) in 2010 provide increased challenges to preserve safe and secure roadways in our community. Ongoing planning and projections by the Board will continue to address these challenges going forward. Proactive planning remains a vital and essential function that Board members take quite seriously.

### **News & Views Newsletter Established**

Effective, timely, written communication becomes another vital function for any vibrant corporation. Fortunately, in February of 1991 *Sunrise Mountain Views* became an occasional publication of the Homeowner's Liaison Committee to Fairfield and new homeowners. This sharing of information among homeowners facilitated information transfer during the turnover process in 1991-92. What emerged from this early publication was a new newsletter, *SMVEHOA News & Views*, which has continued to evolve under dedicated leadership. Volunteer writers and editors maintain *News & Views* at a high level facilitating communication among homeowners and the Board. At minimal cost to homeowners, because of lots of volunteer time by Board members, this publication is provided by first class mail two times a year to all 238 lot owners. Newsletter production becomes quite a project (six weeks) as written thoughts and ideas survive several rough drafts and eventually turn into edited manuscripts for inclusion in the published newsletter. Periodic photographs and a community Bulletin Board have been recent additions. The editors continue to welcome informational items and written contributions from homeowners that can be included as space provides.

### **Summary (Update 8/2012)**

Over the past 20+ years, selected and service-oriented volunteers have contributed their time, talents, and enthusiasm to shaping and maintaining community service to SMVE members. Indeed, "Project SMVE" continues at a creative though reasonable pace as dedicated homeowner volunteers develop and operationalize projects. Each of the present homeowners can be indebted to those volunteers who have gone before. Keeping our community at the high standard set by the Board remains an ongoing challenge. Volunteer members have provided that free service to fellow homeowners. A learning organization such as SMVEHOA continues as a real example of what community service can accomplish with dedicated leadership.

**[Special Note: This article could not have happened without contributions from Seymour Alberts, Bill Page, Sue Vaughan, and Bob Vaughan. This joint effort began in June of 2005, with the express purpose of enhancing a sense of community and providing the history for SMVE residents. We hope that purpose was fulfilled.]**