



THE 2003 BUDGET: POCKETFUL OF MIRACLES?

Tom Mader

Residents usually show up at a budget meeting because they are curious, apprehensive, or both. It's predictable that some residents will be ready to do battle if the increase in the coupon is even a modest acknowledgment of rising costs. This year, residents who attended the October 29 budget meeting got two surprises. The first surprise: While our total Mutual assessment this year was \$266.68, for 2003 it will be \$250.28, a savings of \$16.40. The assessment is less because we are not paying for earthquake insurance. However, the GRF assessment has increased from \$160.32 to \$166.72, so we wind up with a savings of \$10 a month. Which is to say: the total basic assessment for 2003 is \$417; in 2002 it was \$427.

Now the **BIG** surprise: Treasurer Bob Blaschka says that Mutual 68 will early in 2003 send each Eagle Ridge unit a refund of about \$800. Why? We have too much money. How did this come about? Well, our previous directors made a reasonable calculation regarding expenses and there was an increase in our coupon. However, Shea Homes unexpectedly picked up expenses for irrigation and landscaping for Phases 1, 3, and 4. The result was we had about \$508,000 over and above what we anticipated.

However, the Reserve Study recommended that at

the end of 2003, we should have \$387,000 on hand for maintenance and improvements. So the present directors decided to allocate \$318,000 of the \$508,000 to our Reserves Budget; the Reserves Budget is now \$601,000. What was left was \$190,000 that had to be disposed of. Best disposal method: refund. And if you divide \$190,000 by 235, you get \$808.51. (It isn't clear whether you'll get the \$8.51 or whether that will become part of the Reserves Budget.)

We should thank the present Board for its munificent disposal of excess income and the previous Board for setting the stage for giving us a refund. We are fortunate; in a number of Mutuals it's not unknown that residents wind up with assessments, not refunds. This is the season for giving thanks, and we have reason to be thankful.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Mutual Work Session

Mon. Nov 25, 1 to 3 pm
Gateway Board Room

Quarterly Mutual Meeting

Thu. Dec 5, 3 to 5 pm
Hillside Las Trampas Room

DEALING WITH DESIGN DIFFICULTIES

by Earl Orum, Mutual 68 President

Deck Drainage Corrections for Cassia and Chestnut Units

In the Cassia and Chestnut units ("C" units) the overflow of water on each upper deck drains directly onto the railing of the deck below. The overflow results either from rainfall or a resident watering plants on the upper deck. Lee Harry (Grey Eagle Drive) developed a design that solves this problem.

Mutual 68's Construction Defects Task Force and the Mutual Operations Division (MOD) showed the design to Shea Homes, and Shea Homes has agreed to pay for the corrections to the "C" units. MOD has made some minor modifications in the design. They will do the installing on the remaining ten buildings and send the bill to Shea Homes.

Attic Ventilation May be Inadequate in Some Units

Perry Haviland, Mutual 68's Architectural Consultant, says that adequate attic ventilation is not possible in some Eagle Ridge units because of design deficiency. The "popping" and "cracking" in a number of units, more prevalent in hot weather, may be a result of inadequate attic ventilation.

Dick Weir, City of Walnut Creek Inspector, says that adequate attic ventilation is a chronic condition in the industry and believes that attic fans may be the only solution in some cases.

The Construction Defects Task Force has asked Craig Walker, Shea Homes representative, to have their architect come up with a design that will give each unit adequate ventilation.

SMOKE ALARMS & HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

by Jack Vollmer, Mutual 68 Vice President

Smoke Alarms: Annual Replacement

Recently residents have called the Mutual Operations Division (MOD) to replace the batteries in their smoke alarms, which means the batteries did not last for the expected twelve months.

The batteries may have been defective when MOD installed them in most of our homes last November. (Battery replacements on Saklan Indian Drive were not MOD's responsibility since SID was still under Shea Homes warranty). MOD has given Mutual 68 a credit for these defective batteries; funds to replace all smoke detector batteries in Eagle Ridge are included in the 2002 budget.

Each year MOD will replace all smoke detector batteries and test the smoke detectors. The 2002 replacement and testing should be completed during November. Please note that you do not have to replace any batteries yourself. If you hear a smoke detector "chirping," you have a bad battery. Contact MOD's Building Maintenance (988-7600) during regular business hours. During evening hours or on the weekends, contact Public Safety (939-0693).

Mutual Board Adopts Holiday Decoration Policy

The Mutual 68 Board has adopted a holiday decoration policy for reasons of safety and to ensure that lighting or displays that impact upon neighboring units are acceptable to the owners of those units. Given these criteria, the directors decided upon the following guides to lighting and displays.

First, you may place decorative lights on your unit. The bulb wattage must be no more than 25 watts, and you may not place lights on your roof. However, whether you are in a duplex, triplex, or fourplex, you may place lights on the entire building (but, again, not the roof) if your

neighbors agree to such arrangement.

Second, you may place decorative lights on landscaping, provided that those owners who share such landscaping unanimously approve. The arrangement must be such that it does no harm to the landscaping. In addition, no lighting is permitted on common area grass.

Third, you may have a holiday display in your private entry area, but it must not in any way impose upon adjacent areas.

Finally, you may have decorative lights and holiday displays in and around your unit from December 1 to January 31.

The Mutual 68 Board approved the holiday decoration policy at its meeting on 28 October. The policy takes effect in Eagle Ridge upon receipt of this newsletter.

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE ALAMO SUMMIT PROJECT

by Jack Vollmer, Mutual 68 Vice President

Rick Clark has sold Alamo Summit, the 175 acres contiguous to Eagle Ridge, to the Seeno Construction Company; Seeno began road construction work as soon as the sale was completed. Many Alamo residents to the east and to the north of the upscale Alamo Summit project are concerned that Seeno may deviate from the plan approved by Contra Costa County. As a result, these anxious residents have formed a "watchdog" group to ensure that Seeno follows the approved development plan.

These same residents are also maintaining close contact with Contra Costa County officials so that they can learn of any variances Seeno may request, such as increasing the number of units built.

Mr. Roy Slicker, one of the watchdog group leaders, has asked Mutual 68 to join them in observing what's going on. Mr. Slicker's group hopes that its contact with county officials will ease anxieties and minimize the number of angry home-owners making phone calls to county personnel. If you are interested in joining this watchdog group, please contact Jack Vollmer at 930-0106.

The Eagle Ridge News

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