



Spring Valley Lake Association
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Message from the Board President for SVLA Breeze September 2015

I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer. Hopefully the worst of the summer heat is behind us and we should start seeing some beautiful weather in the High Desert. I was glad to see that the weather gods finally cooperated for our Concert-in-the-Park event this month, and as I write this, I'm crossing my fingers for the September 11 Beach Concert!

The semi-annual Budget meeting was held on Aug 22 and the proposed FY2016 Budget was presented and discussed in detail. Based on the recommendations of staff and our independent reviewer, along with review by your Board, the FY2016 SVLA budget was unanimously approved at our regular Board meeting on Aug 25. The new assessment, effective Nov. 1, 2015 will increase a modest 3.9%, from \$1016 per year to \$1056, or \$3.33 per month.

Over the past five years, assessments have increased from \$900 to \$1016, which is an average annual increase of about 2%. When you consider the many cost increases SVLA has incurred over that period to operate and maintain our community – landscaping water, insurance, electricity, etc., plus all the capital improvement projects that are currently planned or completed, this year's increase is quite reasonable. Recent real estate reports continue to show SVL as having some of the highest home values in the high desert, while continuing to show low crime rates. These two things don't just happen by accident - they happen because of our community's continuing effort and commitment to improve SVL. Next year's budget will continue SVL on that path.

The portion of the new budget that will be most visible to residents will be the Capital Improvement projects totaling \$250,000 over the coming year. This will be the third year in a row with significant improvement projects planned for our community. The biggest project planned for next year is the start of a multi-year project to upgrade Meadowlark Park. Thank you to the Planning Committee volunteers, staff, and residents who are helping to define the plans for this project. Stay tuned for more details as they evolve.

We've had a few questions recently about SVLA's tenant membership policy which allows tenants to enjoy our amenities by paying an annual fee and becoming Associate members. This policy has been in place since at least 1978, and the original tenant membership fee was the same amount as the regular homeowner assessment every year. The tenant fee was reduced several years ago to the current 50% rate as a way to include more renters in our community activities and allow them the use of our amenities.

SVLA is a private Homeowners Association (HOA), which was established to protect the interests of homeowners in SVL. In an HOA like ours, homeowners always bear all of the cost and liability of operating our HOA. Therefore, they retain the rights and privileges that go along with those responsibilities, even if they become a landlord and rent out their home. In other words, even if a homeowner rents out their property and does not live in SVL anymore, they still retain the use of all our amenities and guest passes and may use them anytime they wish.

Since there is no provision in our CC&Rs or By-laws to allow an owner to transfer their amenity rights (or responsibilities) to anyone else, allowing an owner's tenants free access to our amenities, in addition to the property owner, creates more crowding on our lake, beaches, equestrian trails, parks, fishing areas, and facilities, as well as adds wear and tear to these

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amenities. All SVL homeowners should not be asked to endure larger crowds or subsidize landlords and investors just so that they can offer “free” use of our amenities to their tenants.

Finally, most people appreciate that getting something for free does not create the same level of responsibility and appreciation as if they had to pay for it themselves. We all know of examples of “free” programs and how well that usually works out for those footing the bill. Charging a reduced fee for tenants to use our amenities makes everyone have some “skin in the game”, while trying to minimize the impact to the majority of homeowners in SVL who are not landlords or investors.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held at 6PM on September 22 in our newly remodeled Community Building. Please come out and take a look at how some of your assessments are being spent to improve our community.

Scott Eckert
SVL Board President