

Permanent Membership Option to be voted upon March 31, 2016

On February 23rd, your board approved the adoption of documents which will establish a Permanent Membership option for Community members. Upon approval of the general membership, the Declaration of Mandatory Membership will be filed with Gwinnett County, making it possible for Steeplechase Resident Homeowners Association Community members to convert their voluntary, year to year renewal memberships, to a permanent membership.

Keep in mind, Community members are not required to do this, but if the documents are approved members would have the option to do this.

Once members convert their memberships to Permanent, those memberships will be tied to the property so that upon sale, the new owner will assume the permanent membership along with the benefits and responsibilities that go with it.

The primary purpose for this initiative is to develop, eventually, a more predictable revenue stream for the Association, making long-term planning more effective; and developing an Association in which all residents share in supporting the Association.

Questions that have arisen:

Q: What is the downside to adopting the Mandatory Membership option for the Association?

A: In the view of the Board there is no downside. The Mandatory Membership documents provide an OPTION for Association members to obligate themselves to the support of their neighborhood. If a member does not choose to do that, they can continue to support the Association year to year as they do now. Another option available is to become a Permanent member upon the sale of the property, thereby making the new homeowner a Permanent member.

Q: If the Mandatory option is adopted, will I be obligated to be a Permanent member?

A: No. You will become a Permanent member only upon signing another form which links your property to the Association membership. If you do not sign that form, you will not be obligated to Permanent membership.

Q: Will this affect the sale of my house?

A: Realtors tell us that homebuyers prefer mandatory homeowners' associations because mandatory associations will have the resources to maintain and upgrade their facilities. Also, regardless of whether a buyer prefers a mandatory association, the additional cost of the home at sale due to Community membership dues would not be substantial.

Q: What if the Board raises the dues substantially and I am obligated by this agreement?

A: The Association bylaws prohibit an increase of dues greater than 10% without a vote of the membership.

Q: Could a special assessment be levied by the Board?

A: Yes. As is the case now, the Board can levy a special assessment for capital repairs or improvements if three-quarters of the membership at a meeting called for the purpose approve the levy. (Bylaws, Article III, Section 6) Currently, if the levy was passed and a Community member did not agree to pay the assessment their membership would be terminated. Under the Permanent Membership option, the bylaws would have to be amended to reflect the rules set forth in the newly adopted documents. (Bylaw amendments are subject to a vote of the General Membership.)

If you have further questions or concerns, feel free to contact me or any board member. Thanks.

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