

MOUNTAIN VALLEY ASSOCIATION

11408 Halter Drive
Tehachapi, CA 93561
(661) 825-4MVA

May, 2020

Dear Members:

2020 has turned out to be some year, and it is not even half over. We hope everyone is staying safe and well with the social distancing and wearing masks to alleviate the spread of Covid-19. April's meeting was cancelled due to the "Stay at Home Directive" but the May meeting took place with the proper safety protocols in place.



To improve communications with our members, we have again needed to change our phone number and the routing of phone calls. The new number for Mountain Valley Association is (661) 825-4MVA. Hopefully, we will not need to change this number in the future as this number has been purchased for MVA and is permanent provided it remains active. The number is answered by an automated system (yes, we all LOVE talking to a machine) which will record your message and email it to the appropriate person for a response. This insures that your call is answered 24 hours a day and that the Association has a record of your call so we can be sure that we follow up with you and resolve any questions or concerns.

In the last newsletter we informed you of the 20% increase in the assessment amount for 2021 (\$172.80 per lot, late fees will be \$17.28). With the economic downturn caused by the pandemic response, the board voted to waive the amount of the increase - \$28.80 for the upcoming year. The increase remains in effect but if this increase is too great a financial burden for you, we will accept the 2020 assessment amount of \$144.00 per lot as payment in full. We will also gladly accept the full amount of \$172.80, if you are able, as the additional maintenance funds would be greatly appreciated by all since the cost of maintenance continues to rise.

Assessments may now be paid by credit card. To pay by credit card, please email treasurer@mymva.org and request an invoice by email. The emailed invoice will contain a link that will allow you to submit your payment online. **You may also break up your payment, either by check or credit card, and spread it over several months, provided your assessment is paid in full by November 1, 2020.** Any unpaid balance after that date will be subject to late charges and interest. 2021 Statements will be sent out in August 2020.

Speaking of assessments, part of our lack of maintenance funds stems from the fact that too many property owners fail to pay their assessments. We file liens but foreclosure is difficult and costly, and for most of the delinquent properties would actually cost the Association more than the property would sell for as the properties also have unpaid taxes that the Association would have to pay. Because of the relatively low amount of our assessments and the difficulty in collecting past due assessments, management companies that perform these services for larger associations are not available to us. These unpaid assessments result in the rest of us having to

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higher assessments to make up the difference.

While we are on the subject of those paying their assessments carrying the burden for those that don't, the subject of maintaining Sand Canyon is always a lively topic. All 3312 owners must use Sand Canyon to access their properties, but the county-maintained portion ends south of Bonanza, well outside of 3312. No other property owners that use Sand Canyon beyond that point participate in funding the maintenance and repairs needed, leaving it to MVA to fund if we want to be able to get to 3312. Funding the repair and maintenance of Sand Canyon greatly reduces the funds and volunteer labor available for maintenance of the roads in 3312.

We have had discussions with County Roads regarding acceptance of the remainder of Sand Canyon into the County Road system but their policy is that the road must first be brought to county standards at the property owner's expense. While this at first may seem unreasonable, on reflection it is totally understandable since it would be unfair to expect the residents of Kern County to fund our access the same as it is unfair for us to fund access for all of the property owners around 3312. This leaves the quandary of how to get the surrounding properties to pay their fair share. One solution would be to file suit against all the properties using Sand Canyon to compel them to fund maintenance, but this would be very costly, may not be successful and would take years. Another possible solution would be for property owners to form a taxing authority to fund maintenance. Various forms of a taxing entity are possible from a county special assessment area to forming a community service district. This solution also has costs that would be incurred and it may be difficult to get enough property owners to vote for adding a tax since they are now getting their maintenance courtesy of MVA. All of this is food for thought and we will continue to explore funding opportunities.

Speaking of Sand Canyon Road, you may have noticed some white markings down the centerline. Kern County has been surveying Sand Canyon Road in preparation of a project to add paved shoulders to mitigate dust from passing traffic. Supervisor Scrivner and County staff have received a grant to fund the project and are working through easement and environmental issues prior to construction.



MVA accomplished two major road repairs. We told you about the crossing on Sand Canyon Road at Horseshoe in our last newsletter and now we have completed installation of edge on Horseshoe between Fernhill and Roundup to stop the erosion of the road during storm flows. Oscar's concrete again did an excellent job and at a very reasonable cost. We have also



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purchased additional stop signs to replace some faded signs and add stop signs at blind intersections. Volunteers are being organized to begin the installation. We are also organizing volunteers to remove the broken tree limbs along our roads from the heavy winter snows we experienced this past winter. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our secretary to be added to the list (661-825-4MVA or secretary@mymva.org).



Thanks to Oscar's crew and our own Bill Gerring, Patt Birley and Rita Leonard.

Oscar's Concrete completed the much-needed repair of the badly eroded wash crossing on Horseshoe Lane and they did it within budget - \$1200.00 - they did a terrific job.



Everyone is aware and concerned that the dirt roads have not been graded in three years. With California's stringent diesel particulate standards requiring contractors to upgrade their equipment, costs are skyrocketing and the number of contractors doing small jobs is shrinking. We are investigating the purchase of our own grader so that dirt roads can be groomed on a regular basis and on our schedule, but we are also subject to the California emissions standards which makes it difficult to find compliant equipment at a price we can afford. If we continue to hire a contractor to grade the dirt roads, we will either only be able to grade roads every other year or grade half of the roads each year and as costs continue to escalate, either our assessments will need to increase at a much faster pace to keep up or we will have to reduce the grading frequency even further. Even grading the roads every other year will use almost our entire budget, leaving the paved roads un-maintained and deteriorating. We are really caught between a rock and a hard place!

As it is your money the Board would like to know **YOUR** opinions and we welcome your suggestions regarding road maintenance. We are asking you to ***please take a moment to respond to our questionnaire and returning the enclosed postage-paid, self-addressed postcard enclosed.***

While we are on the subject of roads, we would like to remind our members that Association roads are common areas and are for everyone's use. They are not for storage. Association rules prohibit parking vehicles or erecting structures of any kind in common areas and fines of \$100.00 per day may be assessed. Association rules also regulate the placement of real estate signs in these common areas and many thanks to our volunteers that recently removed a bunch of old, faded real estate signs from MVA roads.

The Third Restated Bylaws provide that elections will be held in odd-numbered years, making our next election in 2021. Director Tyer, Birley and Leonard's terms expired in 2019 and bylaws

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prior to September prevented them from running for re-election due to term limits. Since no other candidates were nominated, Directors Tyer and Birley were appointed by the Board to fill the vacancies. Director Leonard received two write-in votes and won her seat for another term. These terms will expire in 2023. Directors Hardenbrook and Grodewald (who was elected to replace Director Schlitz) terms were to expire this year but the bylaws adopted in 2019 extended those terms to 2021 to align with odd-year elections. As there will be no election this year, a Members Meeting will also not take place. We had discussed holding a social event, but not knowing what the pandemic situation will be in September the Board decided that it would be prudent to wait.

Sad news – we lost Liz Kachmar early this year after she did not survive injuries sustained in a single vehicle accident. She was the first to close escrow in Mountain Valley Estates and built her own sweet little log cabin here. She was quite the character and will be missed.

Finally, a reminder, fire season is here. It could be even more dangerous this year as the County's resources will be stretched even thinner due to the pandemic and the winter snow will encourage growth. Please clear your property of any hazards: overgrown bushes, weeds, low-hanging tree branches, trash. All indications are that Kern County Fire will be aggressively enforcing brush clearance requirements again this year! Snakes are also out and about so be careful!

If you would like to receive agendas and minutes via email, please let us know. Just send an email to secretary@mymva.org.

Please reach out to your Board of Directors with any concerns!

**Randy Hardenbrook – President - president@mymva.org
Patt Birley – Vice President
Rita Leonard – Treasurer - treasurer@mymva.org
Joan Tyer – Secretary - secretary@mymva.org
Jean Grodewald – Director**

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